

THE MONTH.

ON Sunday the 12th, at St. Petersburg, the Emperor of Russia was cruelly assassinated. Four determined attempts on his life had failed. Even on the present occasion he escaped unhurt from the first bomb, but a second did its terrible work. The Emperor had nearly completed his sixty-third year.

On the following morning a proclamation appeared in the Government journal, commencing:—

“We, by the grace of God, Alexander III., Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias, Czar of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, &c., hereby make known to all our faithful subjects that it has pleased the Almighty in His inscrutable will, to visit Russia with heavy blows of fate, and to call her benefactor, the Emperor Alexander II., to Himself. He fell by the hands of impious murderers, who had repeatedly sought his gracious life, and made their attempts because they saw in him the protector of Russia, the foundation of her greatness, and the promoter of the welfare of the Russian people.”

Alexander Alexandrovich III., the new Emperor, was born in 1845, and was married in 1866 to Maria Dagmar, daughter of the King of Denmark, and sister of the Princess of Wales.

An armistice with the Transvaal Boers was concluded by Sir Evelyn Wood, with the permission of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry, Mr. Brand, President of the Orange Free State, acting as a negotiator with a view to peace. The war, happily, is now at an end.

A Court of Law has decided against the claim of Mr. Bradlaugh to sit and vote, after affirmation made in the place of an oath, as a member of the House of Commons. The decision may be reversed on appeal.

The Arms Bill, under the new “Urgency” regulations, passed through the House of Commons on the 11th. Mr. O'Donnell described the Arms Bill as “a bad, Bashi-Bazouk Bill, cursed with despotic Liberalism from beginning to end.” An attempt to apply the new regulations to votes in Supply was resisted with success by the Conservatives. Under the Protection Bill several arrests have been made in Ireland.

The proposal of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the House of Lords, that an Address be presented to the Crown praying for the nomination of a Royal Commission to inquire into the “constitution and working” of the Ecclesiastical Courts, was voted without a division.

A “Church Boards Bill” has been introduced in the House of Commons. The proposed Board is to be elected by “the same persons as would be entitled to vote for churchwardens in such parish if the same were an ancient parish.”

The “Counter-Memorial” has received nearly 4,000 signatures.

In replying to some resolutions adopted by the Sheffield branch of the English Church Union, the Archbishop of York says :—

I should advise you, if you think well, to get put before the Commission which will be appointed your view of 'what the ancient position of the Convocations was with regard to 'ecclesiastical legislation.' If you suppose that it ever had such powers, you must have come across a different view of history from that with which I am familiar. Your second resolution, that there should be no resort to the Crown for appeals in ecclesiastical causes, would do away with the supremacy of the Crown, and would amount to disestablishing the Church. It is, of course, quite open to the members of the Church Union to promote disestablishment; but would it not be well, if this be so, to clear the ground by saying so? As to the proposal that Convocation should be made a court of appeal for ecclesiastical causes, I know that it has never had such power, and I think that it would not wield it well. This is on the supposition that the Church and nation would ever seriously take steps for such an end, which I do not at all expect.

At the annual meeting of the Church Association the chairman, referring to the work of now sixteen years, declared that the Association had been successful. He said :—

The Lord Chancellor of England, a most estimable man and a good Churchman, said from the Woolsack last week that the term of three years introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury, or by some other member of the House of Peers, into the Public Worship Regulation Act ought to have been three weeks, or, at the most, three months. (Cheers.) Such an expression of opinion would never have been heard but for these imprisonments. Although a Commission is now to be issued—and I admit that the arguments of the Archbishop on this subject were to a Government unanswerable—yet if the Commission is intended merely to hang up our proceedings, and to keep this thing going for three or four years, they will do it with men in prison in order to cry out for their release. We are still prosecuting, and we intend to prosecute. (Loud cheers.) There will be no difficulty in the Lord Chancellor introducing, should he think fit to do so, a bill to alter the term from three years to three months. Then we should be nearly satisfied, for we should see that justice was within reach. But as long as the law remains as it is now, so long we shall say that the law must take its course. (Cheers.) We did not make the law, but we will enforce it.

The Earl of Dunraven brought forward in the House of Lords a motion for opening all public museums and art galleries on Sundays. The motion was lost by seven votes only. An amendment, proposed by Lord Shaftesbury, approving of a suggestion made some years ago by a committee of the House of Commons, that such institutions as the British Museum and the National Gallery should be opened to the public from seven to ten o'clock at least three evenings in the week, was unanimously carried.