Art. XI.—THE MONTH.

FROM Afghanistan there are no indications that peace is likely to prevail. On the contrary, the country is in an unsettled state; and at Cabul a skilful and most determined attack has been made upon the British force. Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry, in more than one branch of Foreign affairs, has been at the least unfortunate. To what extent the influence of Russia is now working in the disturbed countries, north and west of Afghanistan, has not yet been made manifest.

The attempt on the life of the Czar recalls attention to the Nihilism which terribly threatens the Russian Empire, weakened as it is by official corruption, and the recklessness of military ambition. The greatest crime of a most desperate conspiracy had all but succeeded. Religious Nihilism (and the Nihilism of extreme German scepticism is at least an ally of Communistic Nihilism) will say the Czar escaped by chance; but Christians in such a deliverance will recognise the hand of God. We trust that the Czar will be led to adopt a policy of peace. The shocking series of crimes in Russia, and the Socialistic organisations which alarm the statesmen of Germany and of France, point to the infinite importance of religious education. What is needed is the cultivation of that reverence for Christian liberty in which "the duties of man" is recognised as a deeper watchword than the "rights of man." The repressive measures of Military Despotism have proved a failure.

In Belgium, Sacerdotalism seeks to have supreme sway. In England, trade seems slowly but surely reviving. In Ireland, the Home Rule agitation, which has taken the form of an anti-landlord movement, has, to a certain extent, been checked. Roman Catholic Bishops and influential laymen have, as a rule, pronounced against it. The condition of the country, however, is undoubtedly serious. Distress and disaffection are working together. In Scotland, Mr. Gladstone has made a triumphal progress. Whether his series of speeches—wonderful in many respects as they are—has really been an electioneering success is, by some Liberals, much doubted. In regard to the Church of Scotland, Mr. Gladstone gave no certain sound. His remarks, indeed, on the Presbyterian National Church, remind one of his unstatesmanlike reply to Mr. Miall's attack on the Church of England. We remember hearing him, a few years ago, in the House of Commons, advise the Liberationist leader to convert the country; and his recent language in Scotland seems intended to encourage the Voluntaries and other Radical opponents of a National Church. Mr. Richard, M.P., it is true, has confessed

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that the ex-Premier's language is hardly clear enough to satisfy his Nonconformist supporters, south of the Tweed; but the hon. gentleman added that inasmuch as the Scottish Radicals were satisfied, Mr. Gladstone's views were probably sufficiently advanced.

Mr. Mackonochie refused, as we anticipated, to submit to the Law. The *Record* announced the course which had been agreed upon by the Council of the Church Association—viz., to commence a new suit.

The course pursued by the Church Missionary Society in regard to the high-handed proceedings of the Bishop of Ceylon has been from the first eminently temperate and prudent. A sagacious step has recently been taken. A memorial from the Society's Missionaries in Ceylon has been presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury. With the Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of London, Winchester, and Durham, his Grace will in due course consider this appeal.

The Church Sunday School Institute, which for many years has been doing good service, deserves the hearty support of all Churchmen who are loyal to the principles of the Reformation. It has recently circulated some interesting papers concerning the proposed centenary. In the Midsummer of the year 1780, Mr. Robert Raikes, a layman, opened his first Sunday School. With the Rev. Thomas Stock, Master of the Gloucester Cathedral School, and Curate of the Parish of St. John's, Mr. Raikes founded the Sunday School system, a system which has now deep roots in many countries and in many ecclesiastical organisations.

The information which we received during the early part of the month, with regard to the circulation of this Magazine, leads us, in wishing our readers a Happy New Year, to thank many supporters of THE CHURCHMAN throughout the country for their hearty good wishes and welcome suggestions. That a periodical representing the Evangelical School was really needed, has not anywhere been denied. We have received from influential Churchmen, both Clerical and Lay, during the last three months most gratifying testimonies as to the character and work of this Magazine. We hope that our readers, so far as they are able, will increase its circulation with the beginning of a Year which seems likely to be momentous, as regards both the Church and the State.

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