

Dominion Presbyterian

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Note and Comment

It is a gratifying testimony to the revived interest in the Great Protector, says the Christian World, that the first issue of 5,000 copies of the popular shilling edition of Dr. Horton's 'Cromwell' has already been sold out, and a second issue of 5,000 is printing, and will be ready next week. This will make a total publication up to date of 15,000 copies of this admirable work.

In the U. P. Foreign Mission field there is at present a staff of 157 fully trained agents, of whom 62 are ordained European missionaries, 16 medical missionaries, 21 native pastors, 15 evangelists, and 43 Zenana missionaries. There are 114 congregations, with a membership of 26,971. At the day schools 20,146 children are being educated.

An Elder having supplied the pulpit of Foss Church, where there is at present a vacancy, objection was taken to this at last meeting of Weem Presbytery, one speaker declaring that the heresy which had opened the door to the entrance of laymen into the pulpit, was not of native growth, but was due to the malign influence of Independency, as it came up into Scotland in the train of Oliver Cromwell.

In the midst of the High Church controversy, it is refreshing to turn to the calm and dispassionate article in The Nineteenth Century, in which Mr. Edmund Robertson, Q.C., M.P., effectually disposes of the claims of the Church to govern itself. According to him the Church of England has no constitutional status. It has a legal status, but nothing more. Lord Halifax's dream of a Church having a Divine right of self-government is only a dream. If there be such a Church, it is not the Church of England by law established. He clearly shows that the functions of the Judicial Committee, Convocation, and of the bishops are completely under State control and everywhere the controlling hand is apparent. "In the British constitution, there is no recognition of any authority, call it Church or clergy, entitled to treat with the State on equal or any terms." Mr. Robertson does not deal with the right or wrong of this—there is the fact.

A mission church is being built at Goldenacre, Edinburgh, under the auspices of St. Cuthbert's congregation. Seats will be provided for 350, and there will be no distinction in the amount of the pew rents. Subscriptions to the amount of £434 have already been received toward the cost of the building.

Among the reports of the various committees laid before the United Presbyterian Synod, that on 'Church Life and Work' states that the increase of material comfort which the commercial and industrial progress of our time has brought to almost all classes has its influence in adding to the Church's difficulties and lessening its power to overcome them. The growing facilities for pleasure excursions, week-end visits, the holiday travelling, are making inroads upon the regular habits of family life, the continuous attendance on religious ordinances, and the prosecution of systematic Christian work, and helping not a little to break down Scottish use and wont in relation to family religion, Sabbath keeping, and the ministry of the Word.

In a practical article on the working of the Habitual Inebriates Act of 1898 in The Contemporary, Mr. Thomas Holmes gives a graphic picture of the types of women who will be dealt with by the new law. Tottie Fay and Jane Cakebread he holds to be types of a class of women, not victims of drink craving, but of mental disease and 80 per cent. of the women who will come under the operations of the act are not so much victims of drink as of an even more terrible tyrant. Mr. Holmes computes that there are about 400 women in London who will fulfil the requirement of being charged four times in one year. The men are few compared with the women, but are the worst of their kind—loafers, beggars, and men living on the immorality of women. Mr. Holmes makes two complaints against the act; first, that the State ought itself to deal with the inebriates and not hand them over to outside organizations; and secondly, that the act does not touch the fringe of inebriety. As long as a man is not charged four times in one year, no matter though he may be squandering everything and turning his home into a hell, yet the law moves not a finger to help him.

It is said that a strange religious sect has appeared in Russia in the government of Austra-khan. Its members are called Enochists. They refuse to recognise the civil authority, regarding it as an institution of Antichrist, and admit no religious ceremony. The end of the world is, in their belief, near at hand. Priest John, of Cronstadt, and Priest Nicholas, are held by them to be the prophets Enoch and Elijah. They hold secret meetings at which the Scriptures are read. Their most zealous propagandists are women.

The North Dakota Senate has passed a bill requiring all applicants for marriage licenses to be previously examined by a board of physicians as to their mental and physical fitness for the marriage state. The certificates must show that they are free from hereditary diseases, with special reference to insanity and tuberculosis. The idea is to insure that the children born of future marriages shall be sound both mentally and physically. Legislation of this kind is interesting, but that is about all that can be said for it, for there is nothing to hinder the contracting parties from going over the border into adjoining States to have the ceremony performed.

The Glasgow Society of the Sons of Ministers of the Church of Scotland, at its annual dinner held recently, had as its chairman Sir Henry Smith, K.C.B., Commissioner of Police for the city of London, who is not only the son, but the grandson, the great-grandson, and the great-great-grandson of ministers of the Church of Scotland. This society does a splendid benevolent work, and although it carries the name of Glasgow, it would be more appropriately styled Scottish. At the dinner the toast of "The Church of Scotland" was proposed by Bailie Thomson, a member of the United Presbyterian Church, who said he believed that every Scotchman should be proud of the Established Church, as from it there had come men who were the sinew and backbone of the country, and who could have emanated only from a national institution backed by national independence. In replying to the toast, the Rev. Dr. McAdam Muir, of Glasgow Cathedral, said there was a growing feeling of friendship for the Church of Scotland among the laity of the country, and an earnest desire for her prosperity.