

# Dominion Presbyterian

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## NOTE AND COMMENT

The Swedish Parliamentary election has resulted in 86 members of temperance organizations being elected, 35 being Good Templars—an increase of 10. A majority of the whole Lower House are total abstainers.

The Ontario License Department is still "er the liquor peddlers of the north county, who are not confining themselves to backwoods villages alone. There is a complaint that in East Fort William, with a foreign population of about 4,500, orders are solicited and liquor is delivered daily at the doors of the residents. The Government officials are looking into the matter.

Berlin is in the midst of a heated discussion on the subject of employing Christian organists in synagogues. The playing of an organ is work, some say, and should not be performed by a Jew, and others insist that being part of the service, the organ should be played by a Jew. Meanwhile the Orthodox Jew smiles and says that the only way to settle this question is not to have an organ at all.

The Ottawa sanitary inspectors report that out of 155 milk premises inspected at the recent quarterly inspection only 22 were found below the mark in the matter of general cleanliness, and of these none was found to be in a particularly bad condition. Since the inauguration of the inspection system each successive inspection has indicated better conditions, some of the places a year ago having been found in an alarming state. Upon notification that their stables were unsatisfactory, dealers have at once to remedy defects or forfeit their licenses. No such action has yet been found necessary.

The Belfast Witness says: A Congregationalist paper records the extinction of their "Causes" in Scotland one after another, even of some which had existed for a long time. One-third of its present strength have been closed in that denomination. Well, we say frankly, we cannot regret the fact, Congregationalism has in Scotland no reason for separate existence. If Evangelical the people can worship and spiritually thrive in one or other of the Presbyterian churches—if not Evangelical their extinction is a public gain. The same remark applies to Ulster where small, independent "Causes" create only local friction and overlapping.

A physician in a neighboring city is calling attention to the evils of cheap candy, and asking if it is not time to forbid shop-keepers selling candy to 'children at all. Hundreds of children,' he says, 'sneak every available penny in candy. They do not buy some more manly brand, but select that of which they can get the greatest quantity, highly colored and adulterated. The total amount spent in a year in that city in this injurious, and in some cases, poisonous, candy, he says is very considerable. Taken daily into the stomachs of little children its effect cannot be other than injurious, and in many cases disastrous.' Would it not be well for the Health Officer in each locality to give some attention to the quality of the candy offered for sale to our children?

The Congregationalist states that the recent elections—under a sort of local option principle—in Massachusetts towns and cities "show as great progress in temperance reform as in any other part of the country, and in some respects greater." The total vote gives about 26,000 majority against licensing saloons. Of the twenty-three cities in the commonwealth, twenty have voted no licence. Six of the ten largest cities in the United States in which the saloons have been closed are in Massachusetts. Of the 321 towns, 270 have voted against the saloon.

It is claimed that in no country in Europe is Sunday rest so complete as in Norway. All stores, offices, factories and liquor saloons are closed from 5 p.m. on Saturday until 8 a.m. on Monday. Since 1892 no newspapers have been printed on Sunday, and since 1895 no bread has been baked on that day. In Christiania, street cars do not run on Sunday mornings, nor are letters distributed on that day, as in most European countries. Since 1890 a special appropriation has been made to the railroads (State property) with the express purpose of so adding to the number of employees that each may have one Sunday in three for rest. All these laws, it may be stated, are made in the interest of working people and of family life, says the Belfast Witness.

When the Cape to Cairo railway is finished, Africa will possess the longest stretch of railroad in the world, about 6,400 miles. Two thousand, five hundred miles remain to be completed, which will require in the neighborhood of 3 years' work. The chief engineer of the railway syndicate estimates that the total cost will be very close to £200,000,000, or one billion dollars. "A comparatively small amount," he says, "when it is considered what a glorious thing it will be for Africa, one of the greatest and richest countries of the world. It will be possible for the traveller to journey from Berlin or Paris to Cape Town in ten or eleven days. Just think of that, and then it will open up a country rich in almost everything in the mineral world—gold, silver, copper and diamonds. What else they will find there remains to be seen." We cannot but think that such a mighty achievement will have boundless issues for the kingdom of God.

One duty of the United Free Church of Scotland when it was formed in 1900 was the consolidation of churches covering practically the same ground. Sixty-eight such unions have already taken place, twenty-two of which have been accomplished during the year 1908. A number of small charges are yet to be brought together, one small town showing two United Free Churches with only eighty-four members each, and three congregations in one small city having but 410 members in the aggregate. In the Local Free, however, an opposite condition prevails. Despite the large funds allotted them by the Royal Commission, one of their Presbyteries has twelve congregations to five ministers and another four men to eighteen charges. As a whole, Presbyterianism gains on the population, since before the Disruption in 1843 the then undivided church numbered one communicant to seven of the population, while today the Church of Scotland and United Free together show one communicant to every four of the population. This is not only an advance, but a notable advance.

An appreciation of Puritanism appears in the Episcopal Church "Gazette." The writer says—"Matthew Arnold could only see its unloveliness; the rest of the world can see the value to England and the world of such men as Dr. Arnold, Matthew Arnold's father. Dr. Arnold was able to be both a scholar and a Puritan; Hebraism and Hellenism were excelled in him. The peaceful, quiet Christmas, unspiced by drinking, gluttony, and horse play, has been won for us by the Puritans. The Irish (Episcopal) Churchmen even more than the English, are inheritors of Puritan traditions. The sons of Trinity College can think with pride of its Puritan origin. All that is good and strong in our land comes from Puritanism. It seemed to fall after its first great strength, but the fire shone forth again at the end of the eighteenth century, the long years of decadence. It is a certain thing that it will shine forth again."

The decline in the number of theological students is not peculiar to any one college, or denomination, or land; it is true of all colleges and churches and countries; but the decline seems to be greater in Germany than elsewhere, taking for authority The Interior, which has the following: "The number preparing for the pulpit at present—2,206—is less than half what it was in the nineties. Moreover the decline is all along the line, the 'positive' and the 'critical' schools showing nearly equal loss. In Greifswald it amounts to seventy per cent, in Heidelberg to thirty one. In Berlin it is fifty-eight. The paper called the Reformation lays the falling off to the influence of the secondary schools and the gymnasiums, where few of the professors seem to be men of Christian faith, if we may believe The Koelner Evangelische Gemeindebote, in Germany the state appoints theological faculties, and evangelical people have always felt that the influence of the state was hostile to vital piety. A movement is on foot to separate the teaching of theology from state control, but chances of this kind come but slowly in the Fatherland."

Reports of the international conference at Shanghai, China, for consideration of the opium traffic, have been exceedingly meagre. However, we shall soon be hearing from Canada's representative, Mr. Mackenzie-King, who is expected here in a few days. The success of the movement, it is recognized, depends largely upon Great Britain, which derives revenues amounting to between \$30,000,000 and \$40,000,000 annually from the traffic, toward the administration of the Government of India. Most of the opium is exported to China. England has indicated her willingness to at last take measures to wipe out the trade which the House of Commons, in 1796, decided was too important a source of revenue to the East India Company to be abandoned, and which in 1842 led to the bloody Opium War. This willingness, however, is dependent upon the ability of China to suppress the production of the drug in that country. The manifest earnestness of the latter country in its efforts to carry out the decrees that have been issued, and the success attained in at least six provinces, where the production has almost entirely ceased, together with the marked advance in other provinces, give promise that the Chinese Government will be able to do its part. The final action of the conference, and of the nations represented, will be awaited with greatest interest.