

Dominion Presbyterian

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NOTE AND COMMENT

Work was begun on the first gyroscopic railway in America, to be devoted to commercial transportation purposes at New Westminster, B.C.

British Peers were announced to speak at 116 meetings during the past week, they being debarred from taking further part in the campaign after writs for election are issued.

Prince Albert of Belgium, the new King of the Belgians, will be the tallest monarch in Europe, for he is 6 ft. 3 in. in height. King Leopold was uncommonly tall, and so are the Emperor of Austria and King Haakon.

John R. Bradley, who financed Doctor Cook's Arctic expedition, offered to send Otto Sverdrup north in June. Bradley, it was said, is eager to locate the "new polar continent" which Cook alleged he found and named after his backer.

For more than a quarter of a century, Brussels, Belgium, has been shunned by foreign sovereigns and officials with social position. There have been few visitors except the Shah of Persia, the King of Siam and sovereigns of this class. Many years ago Brussels was a favorite visiting place for royal personages.

Let us not be too much discouraged, says the Michigan Presbyterian, if we see occasional set-backs in the cause of Temperance. Occasionally there will be misunderstandings among the workers, and the enemy is always ready to profit by our mistakes. But we shall grow wiser as the work goes on. There is not going to be any serious reaction from the splendid results already achieved.

The English suffragettes, by their foolish tactics and insufferable violence, have alienated sympathy from themselves, if not from their cause, in both America and England. The sooner women who really are convinced that they should have the suffrage separate themselves from such obstreperous agitators the better it will be for all concerned. Such questions can be settled in the end, not by violence, but by reason.

Our great enterprises for Christ and His church are to advance by the hope that maketh not ashamed, says the Presbyterian Witness. The hopes we entertained in 1844 and 1848 for missions have been greatly more than realized. The hopes we had of union in 1860 and 1866 and in 1875 have been far surpassed. Our hopes educational and concerning our home mission fields—have not these also been more than fulfilled? Let us then be found workers together with God and willing in all things to do His will.

Spain has taken a great step backward in granting to a syndicate of foreign financiers a concession to erect a large public gambling establishment, almost identical in all essential characteristics with Monte Carlo. The Syndicate is to pay an annual rental of \$2,000,000 to the Government, together with a considerable percentage of its earnings, in return for the privileges granted. A neat sum to go into the national treasury of a country already overburdened with taxation and whose people are impoverished to an extent that makes the full collection of ordinary taxes almost impossible. It is this fact that has made the Government yield to the temptation in spite of the king and the better element among the people.

Ardent advocates of temperance reform some times feel that progress is made very slowly. In reality, however, the progress of that reform has been remarkably rapid. There died recently in England Dr. Dawson Burns, a noted Baptist minister. It is said that fifty years ago Dr. Burns prepared an appeal on behalf of total abstinence and that it was with great difficulty that he persuaded two hundred fellow ministers to attach their signatures to his plea. There are still left some representatives of the generations which did not consider it wrong or even improper for ministers to drink, but they are becoming scarce and the tipping preacher is now exceedingly rare, for all of which we may well thank God and take courage.

The Zionist Congress were in session in Hamburg last week. There was considerable enthusiasm for a Jewish colony in Turkey on the plan proposed some time ago. It is proposed to seek authorization from the New Turkish Government for a State in which the Jews shall have full control of their local affairs. There are many difficulties in the way, the first being to secure the consent of the Turkish Government. The reclamation of a portion of Mesopotamia was proposed, but those best informed say it would take immense sums of money, probably more than could be had, or than it might be wise to spend. Others are opposed to the movement. The Jews have much to gain from the revolution in Turkey, but the Zionists hold that they should not follow the Young Turk party without discrimination.

The British Weekly, in making an investigation of the workings of the "referendum voting" in Switzerland, finds that nearly all questions thus submitted to the people fail because a majority will not vote. Under the law, questions have been submitted so frequently as to make elections burdensome—sometimes one a week. The referendum had its home in Switzerland, and is an extreme form of the submission of questions to the vote of the people, which has been customary in important matters in this country almost from its beginning. The name is particularly objectionable because it implies an extreme in such reference and suggests the superseding of the Legislature. Good government is more likely to be attained by the opposite plan, the election of fewer officials by direct vote and the placing of more responsibility on the few elected.

At a New Year's prayer-meeting last Saturday, something was said that is worth repeating:—There is Biblical authority for saying that the Lord loveth a cheerful giver, with the emphasis on 'cheerful.' But there is equally clear Biblical authority for saying that the Lord loveth cheerful service, with the emphasis again on 'cheerful'; for although these exact words may not appear in the Scriptures the idea is there. This is needed by many of us as a motto for the New Year. The service in the Lord's cause that counts is not the service that is dragged out from grudging or unwilling workers, but that which goes out as the expression of a cheerful gratitude and loyalty. Perhaps some of us may not be able to add anything this year to the list of undertakings that we assume, but we can all put a new element of cheerfulness and readiness into those duties for which we are already responsible, for the Lord loveth a CHEERFUL servant.

A nephew of Wm. Watson says that the poet is suffering from a mental disorder which came before attacked him. Watson's sudden decision to visit the United States, and the reason he assigned—to wage war against Mrs. and Miss Asquith, where the columns of the press would be open to him—suggest an unbalanced mind. His admirers hope it is the true explanation for no man living has written verse so noble in sentiment and so perfect in form. More than any other poet he is fitted to wear the mantle of Tennyson.

The interest in the sufferers from the earthquake in Italy a year or more ago has largely been forgotten in the multitudinous other interests that have followed. Their immediate needs were met, and then they were expected to do what they could for themselves. Still, it is interesting to know what has happened, and what the present conditions are. The "Advance" says that "over \$16,000,000 has been spent by the Italian Government in building wooden huts for the earthquake survivors, providing them with food and clothes and affording them work, generally burying the dead and clearing streets blocked with the dust and rubbish from collapsed buildings. Perhaps quite as considerable a sum of money has been distributed or spent in the earthquake area by private contributors, relief committees and charitable organizations. The earthquake survivors have been sheltered, clothed and fed at the public expense and many of them now are richer than they were ever before in their lives. The effects of the disaster still continue to be felt, however, and what is worse, despite all that has been done and all the great expenditure in the earthquake area, the cities of Reggio, Messina, Palmi, Scilla and Dagnara, as well as hundreds of villages in Sicily and Calabria, are practically the same as the earthquake left them. No attempt has been made at rebuilding them."

Far East war clouds have been blown toward Peking from an unexpected source. After dilly-dallying negotiations extending over five months between China and Portugal on the question of the Macao boundary the two countries are at swords' end. The Chinese Government has sent a formal message to the Portuguese Government that it will under no circumstances consent to arbitrate. It is demanded that the territory under dispute shall be immediately evacuated by the Portuguese. The Portuguese settled in Macao three and a half centuries ago, and since then they have had more or less undisputed possession, save and except the ineffective Dutch attempt to oust them and one or two brushes with the Chinese in the years ago. For a time they paid ground rent ranging from \$700 to \$500 per year, but in 1848 that was abolished and China formally recognized the jurisdiction of Portugal over Macao and its dependencies in a treaty signed in 1887 and ratified the following year. No boundary was ever fixed, but a clause in the treaty provided that "commissioners appointed by the Government shall proceed to the delimitation of the boundaries, which shall be determined by special convention," and the Boundary Commission which has just proved abortive was a result of that clause. The belated desire on the part of the Chinese to have the boundary fixed beyond all doubt dates back from the time of the capture of the gun running Tatsu Maru II., in the early part of 1903, when the claim was made by Portugal that China was in error in seizing the steamship, since it was lying in Portuguese waters off Macao.