

Dominion Presbyterian

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Notes and Comments

The Japanese are still hunting about for an official religion. A proposal to acknowledge Christianity has been rejected.

An agreement has been concluded whereby Russia disavows any design to obtain a port on the Island of Tuelport, Korea promising not to concede such a port to any other Power.

Mr. Newnes' arctic expedition under Captain Borzhvink, has returned to New Zealand waters after getting further South than any previous explorers, and succeeded in locating the magnetic pole.

No fewer than 12,000,000 acres of land have been made fruitful in the Sahara desert, an enterprise representing perhaps the most remarkable example of irrigation by means of artesian wells which can anywhere be found.

Principal Rainy took part in a public meeting held at Perth, Scotland, in connection with church union. His main contention was that the question was not whether the two Churches should agree to join, but who gave them the right to keep separate.

Somebody once said to D. L. Moody, "Have you grace enough to be burned to the stake?" "No," was the reply. "Do you wish you had?" "No, sir, for I do not need it. What I need just now is grace to live in Milwaukee three days and hold a convention."

The death is announced of Rev. Hugh McKail, who went out to Australia in 1858 as one of twelve ministers, under the leadership of the late Dr. Cairns. He was born in Ayrshire, and was a direct descendant of the Scottish Covenanter and martyr, Rev. Hugh McKail.

Mrs. Mary I. Anderson was last week admitted to the office of deaconess of the Church of Scotland, in the Banff parish church. There was a large congregation and Rev. Dr. Bruce officiated. Mrs. Anderson is the first lady to be ordained to this office north of Aberdeen.

The Duke of Norfolk, who has announced his intention of proceeding to the front, has earned a great reputation for industry among the officials at St. Martin's-le-Grand. No previous Postmaster-General, within the memory of the Service, has given so many hours a day and such unremitting attention to his work.

Dr. Fritjof Nansen, who has been in Berlin for a day, states that the Norwegian Government is fitting up a scientific expedition, the leadership of which has been confided to him. "This," he told a journalist at Berlin, "will take me to the Northern seas, but not far up, Iceland will be about the latitude where we shall make our explorations, and these will principally be directed to examining the state of the ocean currents. A special ship will be built for this voyage, like the Fram, according to my designs, but only of from 800 to 400 tons, but there will be a larger crew than on the Fram. Then we were 16, and now we shall be 20. In about two months I hope to leave Christiania.

A north of Scotland correspondent of the British Weekly gives an instance of the interest taken in the war by the school children. In a Sunday School class the question was asked, "What river is meant in the hymn, 'Shall we gather at the river?' The answer came from a six-year-old girl: "The Mollder."

The extra pressure of this year's famine in India has two special causes: it follows close on that of 1897; and it results from the failure of both the rice and millet crops as well as of the wheat and pulse crops whereas in 1897, it was only the autumn crops that failed, the winter crops being saved by seasonable rain.

The death has occurred with tragic suddenness of Dr. E. B. Spiers, minister of Morningside Parish Church, Edinburgh, at the age of fifty six. He attended a meeting in Morningside Baptist church on Monday and had delivered an address when it was noticed that he had fallen back unconscious in his chair. Despite medical attention the seizure had a fatal effect.

The Regular Baptists are as staunch Calvinists as are the Presbyterians. The first confession of the Baptists in England, A.D. 1644, antedated the Westminster Confession. In 1689 the Baptists adopted, with some slight changes, the Westminster Confession. This denomination is one of the largest in the United States. The Unitarians and Universalists who reject this Confession are among the smallest.

Dr. Watson (Ian MacLaren) bears testimony to this, that there is no preaching which ever grips the human heart like the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified,—the preaching of the cross, where there is now the living Lord, not hanging upon the cross, but, with the cross as a background, the Lord alive forever.

The students of Aberdeen received their new principal on graduation day with a hostile demonstration, said to be the outcome of some feeling against Dr. Marshall Lang, from the fact that he is not a graduate in arts. The disturbance, however, gradually subsided, and Dr. Lang subsequently put the students in the best of humor by his calm demeanour and the happy comments he occasionally made on the noisy antics of the young men.

Mr. C. L. Clements, in evidence before the Copyright Committee of the House of Lords, said that permanent cheap editions of deathless books would be assured by perpetual copyright. He believed there was only one book in the world which had been justly and fairly treated since Queen Anne's time—the English Bible was the only existing book, so far as he knew, which possessed that fair and honourable grace of perpetual copyright.

British rule has added 600,000 acres to the wheat-bearing area of Egypt. At present British contractors are engaged in building two great dams to gather and retain the waters of the Nile. By means of these dams 600,000 more acres will be added to the fertile belt, and the dangers from the "low Nile" will be obviated. These improvements are a vast boon to the people of Egypt, adding immensely to the wealth and comfort of all classes.

The Christian Leader remarks: One curious result of the Sheldon experiment is a quarrel amongst the proprietors of the "Topeka Capital." Some wish to continue it on Sheldon lines the others desire to go back to former methods. After a careful reading of the Capital, during the week of Mr. Sheldon's editorship, we say deliberately that our own Montreal Witness is a much better paper, as clear, as interesting and more ably written every lawful day in the year, and year after year, than the Topeka experiment, whose coming was heralded over two or three continents, as a most wonderful event.

Sir George White, the gallant defender of Lady Smith, has a little daughter who inherits her father's kind thoughtfulness. She is six years of age, and recently she was walking with her nurse near the Windsor Great Park when she met the cripple boys sent down by the Ragged School Union to Princess Christian's holiday home. To the most helpless she cried: "Poor little boy! poor little cripple boy!" and she would not rest satisfied until she had provided all the little sufferers with oranges and cakes. When the news of the relief of Ladysmith came she was allowed to further show her sympathy for the cripples by inviting them to a hearty tea, followed by fireworks.

Mr. Leslie Stephen, in the National Review, gives an appreciation of Ruskin, Of "Modern Painters," as a defence of Turner. Mr. Stephen says that it was "the most triumphant vindication of the kind ever published," and that "it is the only book in the language which treats to any purpose of what is sometimes forgotten or denied that Ruskin's rhetoric was founded on acute and accurate observation. Mr. Stephen considers, by the way, that the most perfect of all Ruskin's essays is the chapter on "The Mystery of Life and its Art" which is added, in the large edition, to "Sesame and Lilies."

There is a telegram from Lord Roberts which has not been published, and yet it deserved publication. It was in these words, and was addressed to his wife: "Received your dear flag." It may be remembered says M. A. P. that Lord Roberts flew a Union Jack at Bloemfontein, which had on its corners four-leaved shamrocks. It was the work of his wife and daughters, and the telegram announced its safe arrival. There is something very fine in this faithful family circle, joined together perhaps even more closely than ever before by the new-made grave which contains the brightest hope and joy of them all—the gallant fellow who died saving the honour of his regiment.

Lord Provost Chisholm, speaking at the "diamond jubilee celebration" of Greyfriars Sabbath school society, Glasgow, said that Sabbath Schools were now even more needed than ever. One reason for that was the great growth of cities, and another was the almost entire absence of family instruction and the great absence of family control. He could look back to the time when, as a boy, he did not know a family in the circle of his father's acquaintance where there was not a family instruction in the Bible and Shorter Catechism. He wondered if any of them could point to such a state of matters now. He ventured to remark that the Bible instruction of the schools was not what the Bible instruction of the schools was sixty years ago. In his time there was Bible instruction for two hours every Saturday, and one hour on every other day of the week. The lessons were given lovingly by men who knew their Bible, and it was the most delightful lesson they had.