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NOTE AND COMMENT.

Earthquakes were recently felt in Sicily for three days, and the persistence of tremors have caused a panic among the inhabitants.

The Presbyterian Deaconess Home and Training-school in Baltimore, Md., is so well endowed in the beginning that it is able to offer training without cost to young women of the church who will enter the deaconess service.

At a meeting in St. Petersburg, attended by thousands of students, it was resolved to re-open the universities, thus putting an end to the paralysis of the educational system of Russia which has endured for the last two years.

Many railroads in all parts of the United States have obtained permission from the Interstate Commerce Commission to reduce their freight rates. Their applications were filed voluntarily. How long will it be before our Canadian Railway corporations take similar action?

Temperance has its friends yet in Maine. Honest effort at doing duty as duty is revealed to one is not allowed to go unrewarded even in Maine. Governor Cobb was a stern insister that the laws regulating the liquor traffic in Maine should be enforced. The liquor interest tried to discredit him. But Maine made him Governor for a second term and he will still stand for the enforcement of law.

Bible in the World says: Eleven new languages were added to the Bible Society's list during the year ending March 31, 1906. Five of these have been undertaken since 1906 began. This accession brings the number of languages in which the translation, printing or distribution of the Scriptures has been promoted by the society up to four hundred. Four of the new editions added to Asia, three to Oceania and one to America. The total number of volumes issued last year was just under 6,000,000.

It is good to know that though the Minister of Public Instruction on Worship practically instructed the Chancellery of the Legion of Honor to elect Sarah Bernhardt for the cross of the Legion of Honor, they declined to do so. It was later officially insisted upon and again refused, on the ground that she was an actress and without official status. If the Legion of Honor is to stand for "honor," and if honor is to have any connection with morality and the sanctity of the home, the great French actress, with all her fame, would have no fitting place in its ranks.

Mayor Dempsey, of Cincinnati, a Roman Catholic, who some time ago brought severe criticism on himself by refusing to allow Salvation Army lassies to collect money for charity on the streets of the city, has ventured to give his police strict orders to stop all gambling at Catholic fairs and picnics. It was a bold thing for him to do, in view of the almost universal custom of the churches of his faith to utilize gambling schemes to fill their treasuries, and the open defence of gambling by priests, but it sets an example that officials in other cities would do well to follow. Church gambling, whether by chances, "guesses," riddle-wheels, or cards, is just the same before the law as any other gambling and far more dangerous in its moral influences.

The Salvation Army has been able to offer some substantial aid to the Japanese peasants of the northern provinces who have been suffering from famine on account of the failure of the rice crop. The army in Japan now has a force of one hundred officers. There are students' homes for men and women, rescue homes and lodging-houses maintained by the Salvationists in the large cities. The Japanese authorities have been kind to these slum workers, giving them free access to the jails, although the prisoners are supposed to be under the spiritual direction of the Buddhist priests.

A colporteur of the American Bible Society in making a recent tour in the Philippines in company with two priests of the Independent Catholic Church, reports a significant incident. In confirming the many candidates who presented themselves, the bishop handed each one a copy of the gospel instead of the usual candle used upon such occasions. The people said for the Bible what they would otherwise have expended for the candle, and at the end of the tour the colporteur found that there were left but few of the 18,000 Bibles with which he was equipped at the beginning in his possession.

The work for the child widows of India which was begun by Pandita Ramabai seventeen years ago, has now grown from the original home into a populous village where 1,500 child widows are sheltered and trained. No effort is made to gain proselytes from Hinduism to Christianity, some of the teachers even still adhering to their Hindu faith. Ramabai is acknowledged to be the most learned woman of her race as the title Pandita signifies—a title which she alone of all the women of India bears. "A statesman-like servant of God" and "one of the great personages of her generation" is the characterization which Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall gives to her personality.

A recent visitor to Canada, writing to the "Speaker," deprecates the high rate of British postage "as playing into the hands of the publishers in the United States, to the serious injury of our own trade with an interest in the Dominion." He further notes the fact that flooded with United States literature instead of British, the spirit of the former must be more or less imbibed by the readers; while convinced apparently, that were the conditions equal, British serials would have the preference. He pleads for the "binding together still more firmly the chain of Empire by affording an equal opportunity to the publications of the Mother Land."

Ninety-five per cent. of the Cubans do not habitually attend any Church, says Bishop Warren A. Chandler, of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Of the remainder who go to Church the bishop is inclined to believe that their sympathies are more nearly with the Protestants than with the Roman Catholics. But Protestantism, upon a general and permanent basis, is of so recent establishment (dating practically from the year 1890), that there are not enough places of worship on the island to meet the demands of the situation. When the Protestant missionaries began their labors they found the island filled with religious indifference in which there was a considerable amount of downright and outspoken infidelity of the Voltaire type. Very much the same state of things continues, though there are tangible results to be observed for the seven years of missionary effort.

Lord Curzon, during his coming tour on this continent, is contemplating a visit to the headquarters of the various missionary societies whose representatives have accomplished much for India's betterment. As viceroy of India he has had an opportunity to witness the far-reaching results of the work of the missionaries, and this public expression of his appreciation of their labors, especially in connection with the famine relief, refutes his views on this subject as voiced in his book on the Far East, written some years ago.

After the Church has had an opportunity of explaining itself to the labor unions, the Assembly's "Department of the Church and Labor" should be done away with, says The Michigan Presbyterian. The Michigan is no respecter of persons. It has no special message for one class that it does not have for another, and the attempt to reach men by classes is not according to the divine plan and can never yield the best results. The ideal congregation will include the employer and employee, capitalist and workman, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, old and young, and the gospel will offer the same bread of life to all. The only two classes which the Church should recognize are the saved and the unsaved. When Phillips Brooks was once asked to preach a sermon to workmen he said: "I like workmen and care for their good, but I have nothing to say distinct or separate to them about religion; nor do I see how it will do any good to treat them as a separate class in this matter in which their needs and duties are just like other men's."

It would be well for Canada if our people were to cultivate, with downright earnestness and pluck, the spirit of honest and fearless independence, which so much impressed the Premier of Ontario on his recent visit to England. We wish for peace with all men; but there can be no truce with dishonesty. The wretched spirit of avarice, which so readily leads to over-reaching and fraud in dealing with others, should be checked. A clever and unscrupulous man, who has large means, is ever a source of danger to the community. Especially so when he holds a position of trust. We want more men in public and private life who will come to the defence of the community against the perpetrators of fraud, be it public or private. Men who are willing to make personal sacrifices for the cause of truth and for the good of their fellowmen. Such men will have their reward in the consciousness of standing for the right; of faithfully aiding their fellowmen, and in the knowledge that they are setting a good example to others, an example which is bound to be followed, an example of honest dealing in an unselfish and disinterested fashion. The type of man we need is not the self-glorifying, self-advertising, self-seeking demagogue, who is always only too ready to rush to the front of any movement for the improvement of public morals. Of this type there is enough and to spare. Rather let us have quiet, determined men of upright life, men staunch and true in all the relations of life, men who have helped to make and keep their own homes pure and sweet, and who have the noble desire, dauntless courage and requisite skill in these modern days to venture forth, as did the knights of old, to battle for the weak and the oppressed and to smite the powers of darkness with might and main.