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NOTE AND COMMENT

Twenty years ago a German taught the Japanese how to make shell buttons. Now Japan is exporting shell buttons to Germany, France, and other countries.

The Geological Survey has found large coal deposits in Alaska. At least 12,000 square miles are underlaid with coal, and only a portion of the country has been investigated.

Mr. James Bryce, English Ambassador at Washington, who is on a brief visit to Great Britain, has been enjoying his favorite pastime of golf in the North of Scotland.

The New York State Charity Association, in its campaign against tuberculosis, is making use of phonographs to deliver health lectures at country fairs.

At the close of 1907 there were in the Synods of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia 1,519 preaching stations and 714 Sunday-schools and 172 of the latter were Union schools.

The lady students of Aberdeen University are proposing to run Mrs. Henry Fawcett, president of the National Union of Women's Suffrage societies, as a candidate for the Lord Rectorship of the university.

In the effort to reduce the number of rats in San Francisco, in stamping out the bubonic plague, it has been discovered that a considerable number of rats from the Chinese quarters are afflicted with a disease resembling leprosy. Whether it is transmitted to human beings has not been determined.

The decline in the French birth-rate is causing great uneasiness among political economists, one of whom points out that in 100 years the rate has fallen from 32 per 1,000 to 19.7, and for the first time in history, and in France alone among the nations, the deaths exceed the births. In 1907 there was 794,000 deaths, and 774,000 births.

Elaborate calculations seem to indicate that the turbine engines of the new Cunard steamships are more economical of coal than reciprocating engines. The difference is not very great, but seems to be established. These large ships burn a thousand tons of coal a day; yet seem to develop a horse power for every pound and a third of coal used. A portion of the power is used in electric lights for the ship, running its elevators, and for other uses on board, as in a big hotel. Other uses on board, as in a big hotel, through the water at the rate of twenty-eight miles an hour is enormous.

The Hon. James Bryce, the British Ambassador to Washington, speaking to the University of Wisconsin, protests against the university's confining itself so largely to agriculture, mining and engineering, disparaging the study of theoretical science, and denying the value of history, economics, philosophy or language. He makes his case clear in the fewest possible words. Whatever an individual or nation achieves is the result of keen observation and close reasoning. The university exists for the sake of training men to observe and to reason, therefore it must provide training for them in all branches of thought and give them the opportunity of getting every kind of knowledge.

The new patent and trade-mark law of Great Britain takes effect this month. All persons from other countries taking out patents must establish factories for the manufacture of their goods in Great Britain within three years from the granting of the patent. If not, the patent is forfeited in Great Britain, and any one can make the articles for either home or foreign trade.

Otto Pfeiderer, the distinguished German theologian, is dead, at the age of sixty-nine. He became professor of systematic theology at the University of Berlin about forty years ago and has been prominent in the theological world for over a quarter of a century. He published a number of books, notable among them being "Christian Origins," "The Philosophy of Religion" and "Evolution and Theology."

The Minister of Justice, in France, has prohibited the publication of photographs of criminals in the newspapers, and the press will be denied all material for sensational stories by the police. The French Government believes that the notoriety given to criminals by the daily papers is the cause of a large portion of all the crime. On this continent there is great need for just such a law as has been passed in France.

Great Britain, by a treaty recently concluded with Siam, has extended its dominion over two Siamese States, covering a territory of some nine thousand square miles. As a price for this concession England agrees to the abandonment of the privilege of extra-territoriality, so far as Siamites are concerned, in the kingdom. The two States affected are Tringano and Kelantan, which lie near the British Malay States.

The ship Denmark arrived in Bergen, Norway, from its Arctic exploration cruise. During the explorations an extensive group of islands was discovered between latitude 78 and 79. The members of the expedition found the depot left by Commander Robert E. Peary near Cape Bridgman during his progress northward. The expedition carried out the objects for which it was formed, but it paid dearly. Mylius Erichsen, its leader, and Lieutenants Hagen and Broenlund perished.

Denmark has approved a measure, both the Folkthing and the Lansthing concurring, which will have the effect of extending the franchise, so far as town and city elections are concerned, to women. All taxpayers, male and female, and all married women whose husbands are taxpayers, will now be entitled to vote in municipal elections. It is thought that perhaps the right to vote in national elections will follow before long. In taking this action Denmark has followed the example of Norway, Sweden, and Finland in giving women a communal vote.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is President of a Committee which has been formed in England for the purpose of raising a fund to place in Westminster Abbey a memorial window to John Bunyan. The meeting of the organizing committee was held in the Baptist Church House in London, with Dr. Clifford in the chair. The Dean of Westminster has granted permission for the installment of such a memorial. It would be strange, remarks the N. Y. Christian Advocate, if there were not considerable contributions from the inspired tinker's friends in lands which he never saw even in a vision.

The Protestant Alliance of England has sent a memorial to the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, objecting to the proposed ceremonial audience by King Edward to Cardinal Vannutelli, the Papal legate, at the forthcoming Eucharistic Congress.

Denunciation of the liquor traffic, an appeal for sanctification of Sunday and the exclusion from membership in Catholic societies of those engaged in the liquor traffic were the striking features of the resolutions adopted by the national convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union at New Haven, Conn., last week. The committee in opening called attention to the fact that this was the thirty-eighth annual convention when declaration is made anew that "not in drunkenness and riotous living can any man make effective profession of the Catholic faith. With indignation the union protests against the taunts of its critics. It does not feel that it should stoop to contest the claims for ultra-orthodoxy which have been so blatantly made by those who have tried to substitute the beer mug for the standard of the cross. The day for apology for total abstainers is over."

The handling of the vast wheat crop in the North-West necessitates the gathering together and transporting thither of a large body of men from the outlying provinces of the Dominion year by year. Some of these men represent the rowdy element in our population, and this year especially they have marked their journey through the country by disreputable and injurious conduct at some places along the line. Innocent, law-abiding settlers, living near the railway, should be protected in person and property by Government and Railway authority from these ruffians. Proper precautions should be taken to prevent a recurrence of almost incredible outrages reported as having been perpetrated on unprotected women along the line of railway. It is hard to believe that such things should have been allowed to occur in a civilized country like Canada.

Africa is an immense region. It has long been known as the Dark Continent, but the light of the Gospel is rapidly dawning upon it. Europe, India, China and Canada could all be laid down on the map of Africa and still have some room left around the margins. This huge continent has now 2,470 missionaries, with 13,089 native assistants. There are 4,789 places of regular worship, 221,156 church-members, and 527,700 professed Christians. There are in Africa 3,937 missionary schools, with 202,390 pupils. There are 95 hospitals and dispensaries, 18 publishing houses and printing establishments. North of the equator Egypt has more missionaries than any other region; the West Coast countries come next: Fifty years ago Krapf, the missionary, was laughed at for his dream of a chain of missions across Central Africa, from ocean to ocean. Now his dream has come true. Thirty years ago Uganda was a pagan state, where savagery was rampant. Now, as the result of a most heroic struggle, of its 700,000 inhabitants, 360,000 are strong Christians. In Cape Colony, where Moravian missionaries tried to work nearly two centuries ago, they were treated as criminals for attempting to reach the blacks. Now Cape Colony alone has 700,000 Protestants and 200,000 of these are colored.