

Dominion Presbyterian

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Note and Comment.

A copy of Wycliff's New Testament brought \$580 at a sale in London a short time ago. It was almost five hundred years old, having been written in 1425.

Germany is a great reading nation. Russia reads less than any other country. In 1893, 22,607 books were published in Germany, as compared with 8,082 in Russia. Its newspaper reading is equally small, for with a population of 130,000,000, Russia has only 800 newspapers.

The fact seems to be dawning upon Russia that Great Britain and the United States are firmly standing by Japan for maintenance of the commercial open door in Manchuria. Realization of this fact may impress Russia with the danger and folly of going to war with Japan.

President Palma, of Cuba, has vetoed a lottery bill which has been passed by the senate. The senators are trying to pass the bill over his veto, by a two-thirds majority. President Palma says that he always considered a state lottery abomination. Cuba seems to be making progress morally as well as materially. By and bye she will pronounce all lotteries "abominations."

The New York Sun is quoted as saying in a recent article on New Year resolutions, "The time when drunkenness was looked on as a rather comical manifestation of jovial spirits has passed away. It begins to be put into a category along with lunacy." Unquestionably correct. What but something akin to madness can tempt an intelligent being, made in the image of God, to drink that which steals away his senses, converts him into a human beast, and ultimately, if persisted in, sends him to a drunkard's grave!

The slump in the stocks of the United States steel corporation—from which it shows no signs of recovery—and the reduction of wages in all the plants of the great industry, has led the Boston Morning Star to raise the question: What has become of the profit-sharing scheme of this corporation by which employees were "allowed to subscribe for stock" at eighty cents a share, which is now selling at fifty cents? The profit-sharing scheme is probably somewhere in the dim and distant future. The capitalist millionaires will be cared for first.

Abbe Loisy, the greatest Biblical Scholar in France, is in trouble. In fact he has been on the ragged edge of trouble for five or six years; but things are worse. His book, the "Gospel and the Church" was condemned by Cardinal Richard of Paris, who asked the Pope to suppress it. Loisy bent before the storm and held back the book. The demand for it was urgent, and he issued a new edition and a defense of himself. This brought down upon the Abbe the thunder of the Vatican. Five of the poor Abbe's books are now placed on the Index of Prohibited Books. The new Secretary of State, whose name is familiar here—Merry Del Val—wrote: "The Pope is profoundly grieved by the volumes which are bristling with the

gravest errors." Father Loisy had better cut the ecclesiastical hawser that binds him to the Church of Rome, if he desires to enjoy the freedom of speech and liberty of conscience which is the precious birthright of every lover of the true Gospel.

The Michigan Presbyterian thus pertinently illustrates the indifference of so many people to the Gospel story and the claims of godliness: "A notice from the pulpit that next morning flour could be bought at a discount of twenty cents on the dollar would arouse a good many drowsy or indifferent listeners. But the message that salvation can be obtained without money and without price is such an old story that people can go to sleep under it." This indifference cannot always exist, but the arousing of conscience may come too late to many. "My spirit shall not always strive with man" is the warning that comes from the Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Eternal Jehovah.

Italy's new minister of public instruction, Signor Orlando, has lost no time in setting to work upon what is undoubtedly one of the gravest problems of modern Italy—the illiteracy of the nation, and deplorable condition of the state schoolmasters. At the present time the number of Italians who can neither read nor write is 53 per cent of the whole nation, and 57 per cent in the south of Italy, with an even higher percentage in some of the southern provinces. This is a humiliating record for a people who have dwelt so long under the shadow of the Vatican.

Rev. George Alexander, D. D., pastor of University Place Church, New York, has been appointed president of the Foreign Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Dr. Alexander has been for almost twenty years a member of the Board. His church at University Place has the splendid reputation of giving away every year from three to six times as much as it spends upon itself. There are a good many churches in Canada that could, if they would, give to missions a good deal more than they spend on themselves. If they did that there would be no deficits in the treasuries of missionary boards.

Dr. Coltman, writing in the New York Christian Intelligencer, demonstrates that the beginning and historic development of Protestant Christianity in Japan clearly reveals the fact that, different from the usual course of Christianity on so-called mission fields, the greatest successes have there been obtained among the educated classes. A conservative estimate would doubtless put the percentage of educated membership of all the Protestant churches as high as seventy-five or eighty. The story has been told that ex Premier Count Ito, called in Japan "the power behind the throne," in speaking to his son, advised him not to take for his ideal a certain man very noted in the affairs of the country, nor himself, his father, but men like Ebara, and Kataoka, members of the House and leading Christians in the land.

Toronto holds her municipal elections on New Year's day. The Canadian Baptist

commends the plan as "eminently wise and salutary," saying: "Not only is it much more convenient for many of the electors to go to the polls on that day, which is largely taken as a holiday, but the clause in the election laws which prohibits the sale of liquor on polling days will henceforth have the effect of making the first day of the year noted for its quietness and sobriety, instead of the debauchery and drunkenness which have too generally shamed the day in the past." This point is worth noting. It raises another question: If merchants and manufacturers and public offices are expected to be closed on statutory holidays, why should not hotel bars and liquor saloons also be expected to close on such days?

Sir Gordon Sprigg, Premier of Cape Colony, S. A., says Dr. David Livingstone had a better claim to the title of "Empire Builder" than Cecil Rhodes, valuable as were the services rendered by the latter to the empire. In a recent public address at Cape Town, Sir Gordon Sprigg said: "He added tracts untold to the British crown; he opened up trade routes for future streams of commerce; but he put the keystone on his splendid achievements when he proclaimed himself the pioneer missionary, and declared that all his passion for exploration was secondary to his desire to carry the Gospel to those who never heard it. Great as were his achievements as a traveller and explorer, the greatest of all was when he with unerring certainty, pointed out Lake Nyassa, and Nyassaland generally as being the best site for the missionary operations of the future."

The Glasgow Leader says that a remarkable increase has taken place during the past year in the membership of the Baptist Church. Last year (1902) their net increase was 4749; this year (1903) the increase is practically doubled, and totals 10,610. The number of chapels has increased by 16 to 3977, and of churches by 72 to 2875. There is now sitting accommodation for 1,368,666, or 24,132 more than a year ago. The total number of communicants is 388,357. The Sunday schools show a gain of 1081 teachers and of 5039 scholars, the totals being for the former 54,630, and for the latter 557,635. There are 2117 ordained pastors (an increase of 45) in charge of churches, while there is an increase of 411 recognized lay preachers during the year, the total number being 5851.

The first Sunday under this city's new administration, says the New York Christian Intelligencer, was to all intents and purposes, was an open and wet Sunday. There were fewer excise arrests than on any Sunday in the year past. Lately, the number of arrests has been growing smaller and smaller. A week ago Sunday there were thirty five, the Sunday previous forty-one. Last Sunday there were only twenty-six. The saloon keepers seemed to be less cautious than usual. In a large number of saloons men could be seen standing at the bar drinking. In some precincts the police paid no attention to the saloons. They seemed to be under the impression that they were not expected to insist upon the enforcement of the law. A Tammany administration may be expected to stand by the saloons.