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NOTE AND COMMENT

Holland is near to national prohibition of absinthe. The second Chamber of the Parliament has adopted and the first, it is said, will soon concur in a measure abolishing its legal sale in that nation. There are about 11,000 members enrolled in the temperance societies of Holland.

Recently there was found a letter written in Kingston, in 1843-67 years ago, which is interesting as showing the market prices which then prevailed in Ontario. "Our markets," the letter of long ago says, "are most excellent and very cheap. Mutton in the shambles sells for 2c per lb, butter brings from 6c to 7 1/2 per lb., but more frequently the former price. Geese can be bought for 1s 3d, turkeys for from 3s to 4s per pair, and fowls for 1s to 1s 3d per pair. Potatoes are going at 10c per bushel and apples 6s 3d. per barrel."

The Canadian Boy Scouts, organized in December last, held their first parade in Montreal last Saturday. A hundred strong, they assembled in front of the house of Lieut.-Col. Gardiner, and marched to Lord Strathcona's house, where there was a large assembly of those who had an interest in the movement. Some manoeuvring was gone through, and His Excellency Earl Grey was received with the royal salute, the colors being lowered and the boys presenting their quarterstaffs. His Excellency went down the ranks in company with Colonel Gardiner and inspected the boys, taking a special interest in the patrol leaders, who were drawn up in front. His Excellency seemed to be much pleased with the appearance of the boys and was heard to remark that here was the nucleus for a new territorial army for Canada.

The Italian Cabinet has resigned. Premier Sonnino has been in power only a hundred days. He is, however, one of the most capable of Italian statesmen, and was called on in an emergency, without hope that his cabinet would long continue. It has fallen even sooner than expected. The problems confronting the Italian government are many. Abuses of the past are largely responsible for present conditions. The influence of the Pope and the Roman Church is, in many ways, a hindrance. There are still many nobles and large land-owners fighting against curtailment of old privileges, and against taxes on their land. Most of the people are miserably poor, and, as for criminals, we get some specimens in the United States. Nevertheless, Italy is making progress, and conditions are far better than a generation ago.

One of the worst enemies that the South African colonists have to combat is the brown locust of the Kalahari Desert, which periodically sends forth devouring swarms into the settled regions on the south. In March, 1909, enormous swarms of these destroyers invaded Cape Colony, over-spreading an area of 125,000 square miles. The insects lay their eggs in the invaded regions during the winter, and the eggs are hatched during the next summer's rains. The South African Central Locust Bureau—the existence of such an organization shows the seriousness of the plague—gives warning that great energy will be required during the coming summer to destroy the insects. Nothing, it is thought, could be done to combat the locusts in their desert stronghold, and attention must be concentrated upon the destruction of the young locusts as they hatch out.

The prevalence of suicide in China is seen in a report from Hwalanfu, in

which it is stated that thirty-one cases of attempted suicide were brought to the notice of the missionaries in a few days, all of which, with one exception, were opium cases. In a single day 125 Chinese came to the Hwalanfu dispensary for medicine.

Says the Manitoba Free Press: It is already plain that the present year is to see a great inflow of settlers into this country. Last week newcomers headed for the West, landed at St. John and Halifax to the number of 4,846, and the arrivals for this week, ending next Saturday, will number 11,972, the majority of these intending settlers from overseas being British. The movement across the international boundary into this country continues, and the indications are that a special feature of the accessions to the population of western Canada this year will be the large number of settlers from Eastern Canada. The growing time of the West has only well begun.

Mr. Asquith's programme for curbing the veto power of the House of Lords was disclosed March 21 by three resolutions of which he gave notice. These resolutions declare that the House of Lords should be disabled by law from rejecting or amending a money bill; that the powers of the House of Lords over bills other than money bills should be so restricted, that a bill which had passed the House of Commons in three successive sessions, and has been rejected by the House of Lords in each session, shall become a law without consent of the House of Lords, on royal assent being declared, provided that at least two years shall have elapsed between the first introduction of the bill and its final passage; and that the duration of each parliament should be limited to five years.

Word comes that the new Turkish government will undertake the reclamation of Mesopotamia by irrigation. Some Jewish leaders at one time considered the feasibility of asking it to set aside Mesopotamia for the Jews on condition they would reclaim it by irrigation. A little investigation led them to believe that an investment of \$40,000,000 would be necessary to begin with, and that it would not pay. Labor is cheap, however, and the Turkish government may find it worth while. It is reported that some 4,000 acres are already at work, and that about 12,000,000 acres are expected to be reclaimed within the next seven years. The government can well afford to expend \$40,000,000 to bring 12,000,000 acres under irrigation—that is, if it is able to maintain good local government, and protect the occupant and his crops.

The "Mad Mullah" of Somaliland is getting ready for a British punitive expedition. Since early in February he has been on the war path in the sultanates under the British protection. It is estimated that at least eight hundred of the tribesmen friendly to the sultanates have been slaughtered. Vast areas have been laid waste, and whole towns razed. Natives in great numbers are fleeing to the coast. In February, a large force of Dervishes raided the sultanate of the Mijerins, killing and burning in all directions. The administration of this sultanate is entrusted to the government of Italian Somaliland. The "Mad Mullah" began stirring up the natives of Somaliland after making a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1896, and, after much fighting, an agreement was reached in 1905, whereby the Mullah undertook to observe the peace towards both Great Britain and Italy.

The House of Lords, on motion of Lord Rosebery, has adopted resolu-

tions declaring the necessity of a strong and efficient second chamber, admitting that it should be reconstituted, and declaring that a preliminary to the reform is the acceptance of the principle that the possession of a peerage in itself should no longer afford the right to sit and vote in the House of Lords.

The latest achievement of wireless telegraphy is reported from Nauen, Prussia. The station there claims to have communicated successfully and at length with the Cameroons in West Africa, 4,000 miles distant. The wireless people say that they were in constant communication with one of the vessels of the Woermann Steamship line from the time that the steamer left Hamburg until proceeding down the West Coast of Africa she reached the Cameroons. Neither the Alps nor the high Algeyan plateaus interfered with the transmission.

churchgoing?

The Department of Trade and Commerce, on behalf of the government, has entered into an agreement with the New Zealand Steamship Company to inaugurate a monthly steamship service on the Atlantic, between Canada and Australia and New Zealand. The boats will sail from Montreal in the summer, and from Halifax and St. John in the winter months. This arrangement has been entered into in response to the representations made to the government by a large deputation representing the business interests of the country, who recently waited on the ministers declaring that the bulk of Canada's exports to Australia have to go via New York, where the steamship rates are subject to the United States shipping ring, and that good results would follow the inauguration of a direct service between Canada and the Antipodes. Arrangements for a renewal of the subsidy for the Pacific service are at the present time under way.

The New York Tribune has a notable editorial on "The Day of Rest Demand," referring to the agitation which is going on in labor and civic circles for the more general suspension of work on the Sabbath. The Tribune says: "A suggestive exhibition of the more or less unconscious perversity of human nature, in destroying the very things which it wants and then setting about replacing them at great pains and cost, is to be perceived in the current movement for what is called a day of rest once a week for everybody. For a day of rest, one in seven, precisely such as we are now told it is necessary to establish for everybody, was long ago instituted and generally observed. But then there arose a wide-spread movement against it. And thus, step by step, the long established and beneficent day of rest was impaired and largely abolished, until now for a considerable proportion of the community there is none; and now arises a demand for the re-creation of the very thing which has been destroyed, largely from the very persons who destroyed it." The Tribune recalls other history in its further remarks: "Once Paris observed Sabbath as a day of rest. Then it abandoned that practice and prided itself, with the super-bigotry of extreme anti-bigotry, upon its emancipation from Sabbatarianism and upon the fact that all days were there alike. But not so very long ago humanitarians and publicists perceived the ruinous effects of the unresting system, and in response to the overwhelming demand of obvious necessity there was enacted a law re-establishing the day of rest in a particularly strict manner."