

Dominion Presbyterian

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Note and Comment.

The first locomotive reached the terminus of the Victoria Nyanza Railway in Africa on Dec. 20th. The 582 miles of line have been completed in 4½ years.

Lord Roberts has made a formal denial of the charges in the German Press that the British soldiers had been guilty of gross outrages upon Boer women.

Newgate Prison, which will shortly be removed, was first built in the 12th century, but was destroyed in the great fire of 1666 and again in the Gordon riots of 1780.

Lord Roberts has accepted the Star and Badge of the Order of St. Patrick, the gift of the ladies of Ireland. The badge is set with diamonds, and the star is composed of diamonds entirely.

Only two universities in Germany, Jena and Strasburg, did not have any women students in attendance during the last semester. All the others together matriculated 102 female students.

One of the latest acquisitions of the Botanical Gardens at Kew is a specimen of the original flower from which all cultivated chrysanthemums have been developed. This flower is known as the *Chrysanthemum Indicum*, and the only surviving plants of it exist in remote parts of China.

The war against trailing skirts as a means of communication of disease is carried on with vigor in Germany. Thus at Ems the authorities have put up a notice that no long skirts are to be admitted within the precincts of the gardens, and the keeper excludes ladies whose skirts are in his opinion too long, while in Saxon Switzerland, outside Dresden, notices are posted on the trees that wearers of trailing skirts will be fined.

Ever since the Forth bridge was opened—eleven years ago—painting has gone on continuously. Beginning at the south end, the workmen take three years to cover the entire length of the bridge, and, as three years represent approximately the life of the paint, no sooner are they finished than the men have to begin again. In this way every square inch of steel comes under observation at least once in three years. The staff of men employed varies in number from the maximum of thirty-five.

Robert Gren, for many years the dean's verger in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, who died the other day, was an institution in himself, and more clerical than the clerics themselves. He knew all the leading dignitaries for the last fifty years, and he would compare the divines of old with this of the present day, not always to the advantage of the latter. He had served under many bishops of London, and, as Ostrarius of the Lower House of Convocation, he had taken part in the enthronement of no fewer than four archbishops.

Lord Curzon, the viceroy of India, insists that temperance work in the army is materially benefitting the British soldier in India. Lord Curzon says that, should he ever be called to high office in England, total abstinence will have a prominent place in his public efforts.

The Revue de Paris has begun publishing Renan's letters to his mother from the Paris seminary. These are of extreme interest, fully bearing out the remark of one of his professors when Renan had failed to excel in some department, that in letter writing he could defy competition.

A New York Legionary, a tithegiver for 12 years, began to give a part of his tithe to educate a young man. When this beneficiary secured a position, the two started in to educate another young man. When this third young man became able to earn money he joined the other two in educating a young lady and a young man, and when he heard from them the latter task was just completed. Each time the money was repaid, and used over again for a similar purpose. They intend to continue the blessed operation.

The age of fishes, according to a dissertation by Dr. Hoffbauer in the new number of the "Unschau," may be discovered by their scales. The theory is new; but the Frankfort scientist has proved it to be true, as he affirms, by a series of microscopic investigations. The scales exhibit a regular succession of streaks or bands, like the annual rings of a tree. These stripes stand nearer to one another or farther from one another "according to the nutrition condition of the fish," which in the winter sinks almost to nil.

There has lately been considerable discussion as to whether Mr. Chamberlain, British Secretary for the Colonies, would change his policy in consequence of Lord Rosebery's speech at Chesterfield, but the consensus of opinion now is that he will not do so, and will set his face sternly against a revival of peace negotiations. His friends say that he will continue the war in South Africa until every Boer in arms is a prisoner, for he considers that everything in reason was done by Lord Kitchener to facilitate the conclusion of an armistice, and that to re-open negotiations with Kruger would simply expose the British cause to ridicule.

A cousin of the Pope is now a messenger in the Postoffice Department at Washington. He is Augustus Prosperi, "a first cousin once removed of the holy father." He is sixteen years of age, and strange to say (in view of his close kinship to the head of the Church of Rome), is not a Catholic. His grandfather, the head of an old Italian family, was a prominent Catholic, who had trouble with the authorities of the holy office and was obliged to leave the country in disguise. His sister, who remained behind, married Il Signor Pecci. Their son, Gioacchino Pecci, is Leo XIII., the present head of the Catholic Church. The boy lives in Washington with his mother, and has been in the office one week.

A missionary from China says that there the native Christians have denominational names of their own. They call the Methodists the "handshakers," the Presbyterians "the won't-let-women-speak-in-meeting" society; the Baptists the "bathing society," and the Congregationalists the "one-man-as-good-as-another" society. In another place a Christian native said that they called the Baptists "big-wash," the Anglicans "little-wash," and the Quakers "no wash." The writer who is quoted in the "Illustrated News" adds that these differences do not blind the heathen eye to the essential oneness of all Christians.

In the *Annales d'Hygiene* Dr. Paul Garnier, an official of the Paris police, presents statistics showing an enormous increase in juvenile crime both as compared with thirteen years ago, and as compared with adult crime during the same period. For a translation of it we are indebted to the *Literary Digest*. In 1888, the number of adults (from 30 to 35 years of age) arrested for murder in Paris was 20, and the number of young people (from 16 to 20 years old) was just the same—20. In 1900 the number of adults thus arrested had risen to 27; but the number of those between 16 and 20, thus arrested, had increased to 138. In explanation of this enormous increase Dr. Garnier cites the use of alcoholic drinks as a chief cause. The world knows that France used to be a wine-drinking land; in the last half century it has become a whiskey-drinking country; and the fruits are becoming evident. He attributes these evils not all alone to the direct influence of alcohol on those who use it, but to the inherited effects.

The first year of the new century has, says "The Presbyterian Banner," so far fulfilled the prophecies that ushered it in. Science and invention have made brilliant discoveries that promise to realize some of the most daring dreams of men. The dirigible balloon has navigated the air, wireless telegraphy has leaped across the ocean and is about to connect up all points on the earth so that it will be a huge whispering gallery, and the electric wire, it is claimed, will soon transmit the human face as well as the human voice. Brotherhood has put forth new buds all over the planet. In the political world the great Powers united in solving the problem of China, whereas in former times they would probably have quarrelled over it. England and America have united in a treaty that will open a peaceful channel between the two great oceans and benefit commerce by shortening up the equator of the world. The Pan-American Congress is drawing all America into closer unity. In the industrial world capital and labor have united to form an arbitration committee that may be an important factor in preventing industrial conflicts. In the religious world the Presbyterian churches of Australia have united, and the spirit of union has made marked progress everywhere. Thus the new century is keeping up the pace that was set for it by the old. The works that the old century did will the new do also, and greater works will it do. "Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day."