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NOTE AND COMMENT

The result of the conferences between the British and German statesmen at Berlin has been highly satisfactory, the nations agreeing on practically all important questions of foreign policy.

The Methodist church has tribulations of her own, says the Christian Guardian, but from recent happenings in this city, she should be decently grateful that she does not have the task of electing a bishop.

In the Victoria B.C., police court a few days ago, a Hindu giving evidence in an assault case, testified that a local Hindu priest was busy raising money to send rifles to natives in India, to help them fight the British Government.

Lincoln was ever a staunch friend of the temperance cause. Here is one of his pithy sayings: Let us make it as unfashionable to withhold our names from the temperance cause as for husbands to wear their wives' bonnets to church, and instances will be just as rare in the one case as the other.

In Halifax, last week, a delegation from the Provincial Alliance waited on the Government and asked for the enactment of a prohibitory law for the province. The Premier, in a lengthy speech, held that the Scott Act was more effective than any provincial law could be, but he promised to consider the representations made.

News received from Teheran, Persia, shows that the violent earthquake recorded Jan. 23 at almost every scientific observatory in the world where seismographs are installed had its location in the Province of Luristan, in Western Persia. Sixty villages in this district were wholly or partially destroyed, and the resultant loss of life is placed at between five thousand and six thousand.

The Mormons are carrying on mission work in Norway with a vengeance. Lately they held a meeting in Christiania, at which 400 persons are said to have been enrolled. The president of Scandinavian missions and 33 missionaries from Utah were present. Plans were devised for carrying on an active and extensive mission work over all Europe, where, it is said, 2,000 missionaries are at work teaching Mormon doctrines and inducing people to migrate to Utah. In Alberta they are carrying on their work noiselessly but, doubtless, none the less effectively.

The following facts, culled by an exchange from an article in the January number of the "Missionary Review of the World" by Dr. D. L. Leonard, are full of encouragement and hope. The figures throughout are for 1908: "The total foreign missionaries reaches 19,875, with whom are associated 4,999 ordained natives and 98,955 unordained native workers. The entire missionary force is given as 118,901, occupying 41,563 stations and ministering to 2,056,173 communicants, besides 4,285,199 adherents. The total membership in Sunday schools is 1,290,582. The total contribution of the evangelical churches of Christendom to foreign missions in 1908 was \$22,864,465, while \$4,843,814 was given on the fields. As to the character of the converts, no one who knows the martyrologies upon the fields ever speaks slightly of these new disciples of Christ."

In the Japan Mail we are told that the Western practice of separating young married couples from parents is being adopted in Japan. The new families originate new ways of living, and this tends to weaken traditional family notions. "Individualism," says the editor, "is an essential fact of Western civilization. Hence nothing can keep it from spreading in a country that has gone so far as Japan has in the adoption of Western thought and institutions."

Figures issued by Manchester University point to the fact that women graduates rarely marry. Out of 560 women who have taken degrees, only 64 married. Twelve of these wedded male graduates of the same university. The same state of affairs prevails in London, where the percentage of marriages of women graduates is very low. The secretary of London University explains this by the fact that men are afraid of women with a degree, and consequently fight shy of them. This statement does not appear to apply to Canadian lady graduates. Are our young men braver than they are in Britain?

The Recorder of Philadelphia deploras the custom of burning cancelled mortgages. He suggests that if there must be some ceremony incident to the satisfaction of a mortgage that a copy and not the mortgage be burned. The Recorder's attention to the custom has been called by recent experiences he has had with persons, who once their mortgages are satisfied, regarded them as worthless paper to be thrown into the fire. Subsequently they have been called upon to produce the paper to straighten out a title and have been put to the expense of a court proceeding. While a record of all satisfied mortgages is kept at the Recorder's office, a copy, he says, is worthless.

A recent issue of The Intercollegian contains a list of 275 student volunteers who left America in 1907 to enter upon their missionary service in distant lands. They are now at work in all parts of the world. Some of the fields to which they have gone are: China, Mexico, India, Japan, Brazil, Columbia, Peru, Cuba, Africa, Korea, Turkey, Philippine Islands, Egypt, Persia, Chili, Assam, Malaysia, Burma, Syria. Of these 275 volunteers three were members of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The returns from all the mission boards of the United States and Canada show that 647 new foreign missionaries were sent out by them during 1907. Of these 332 were student volunteers.

A writer in the Homiletic Review for January very truly says: Ministers are often called time-servers and popularity-hunters and cowards because they refuse to preach against tobacco, cards, dancing, and other moot practices. The unvarnished reason for their conduct is not far to seek; it is because they have no time. They generally have more important things to do. They have to fight giants and not men of straw. They are called to oppose the giants called spiritual pride, religious selfishness, bigotry, uncharitableness, hypocrisy, and a whole army of the satanic brood, and it takes not only courage, but also some special grace of tact and wisdom to fight such enemies successfully. It is no skilful play to contend against the Pharisees in Christendom, for they speak the language of genuine piety, to deceive the very elect, and often occupy the places of greatest influence.

After a half-century of most intimate acquaintance with China and its people, Sir Robert Hart has been telling where the emphasis should be put in missionary work. The measures which he specially urges upon missionary societies are an increased force of medical missionaries and trained nurses; the opening of new schools and colleges; the enlargement of work among women and girls; the establishment of more philanthropic agencies to help the blind, deaf, and dumb foundlings and lepers; and the sending of missionaries specially qualified to influence the ruling and literary classes through lectures, literature, and friendly intercourse. The result of such measures, he is confident, will be hopeful and rewarding.

In Scotland, says the British Weekly, the Presbyterians used to celebrate the Lord's Supper only once or twice a year, and they did it with elaborate preparation. A day was set apart for humiliation and prayer. The whole intensity of religious meditation and passion were thrown into the observance of the sacred rite. We cannot but think that the blessing was great, and that much was lost when in most places the public preparation day was disused. It may be well that the observance should be more frequent, but in any case it should be serious, and it should be preceded by earnest self-examination and prayer. The communions of the old days represented to many fresh starts in the religious life. They do so still, but their results would be more visible if greater stress was laid on the observance and its meaning. We can very well recall similar celebrations in our boyhood days in Glenargy, Bruce, Beaverton and other places, where north of Scotland people predominated. There was an attendance from a distance of thirty or forty miles, and the services lasted, as in Scotland, for five or six days.

"What the Chinese are Reading" is the subject of an editorial in The Outlook from which we make this extract: "China seems to have turned, almost in a day, toward the West, eager to learn what Western civilization has to give, and opening the doors to Christianity as wide and with as generous an intellectual hospitality as it once locked and bolted those doors. The Rev. S. Harrington Littell, one of the most devoted and able of the younger missionaries in China, in a recent letter presents a group of facts which indicate how complete the whole wall of separation has fallen. An energetic native firm is advertising on its latest list of English books translated into Chinese, Ivanhoe, David Copperfield, Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver's Travels, Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Westward Ho! and even John Gilpin. To these are added a group of Dumas' novels, Hugo's Les Misérables, books from Spencer, Mill, and Huxley, Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare, Tolstoy's works, and Aesop's Fables. The Chinese taste is evidently as catholic as its interest in the literature of the West is eager. Mr. Littell also reports that, while the best foreign literature is being put within reach of the enormous reading public of China, the language, which has been as stationary as the people for generations, is undergoing marked enlargement as the result of the contact with foreign nations and the introduction of Western ideas, customs, and inventions."