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"Some lives there are to angels' seem akin,
Dwelling on Earth, yet keeping ever near
The golden city gates, so they may hear
The harmony before they enter in.
Through all the discords of this world of Sin
They hear the voice of God and feel no fear;
They look above and see with vision clear
The purer life, the happy walls within.
They live as on a space of holy ground
By some invisible defence hedged round,
So near to evil, and yet so far away
So close to God, waiting the welcome day
It may be early, or it may be late,
When He shall take them in within the gate."

OVER LAND AND SEA.

The Dundee Free Presbytery had under discussion at its last meeting, the temperance question. The Rev. Dr. Patrick, of that city, referred to the degradation existing in Dundee in consequence of the drink traffic. He held that drunkenness should be treated as a specific offence, and that any man seen on the streets under the influence of drink, and proved to be incapable, ought to be dealt with as a criminal and treated as such. But Mr. Henry M'Intosh, a worthy elder, went further to the root of the matter when he asked the Presbytery if it was consistent to have men in the eldership of the Church, as session-clerks, and superintendents of Sabbath schools, who sold whisky and other liquors. Until they took a stand against this, he did not think they would be doing their duty as a Church.

Nevada has disgraced herself. The bill legalizing prize-fighting has been signed by the Chief Executive, and it is now a law. Prize-fight licenses may be obtained for one thousand dollars. We may expect bull fights and lotteries next, and the sporting fraternity have a general invitation to the State. Bruisers, ruffians, thieves have by this infamous law been tendered a welcome. While other States are drawing the lines more closely around lawless men and striving to purge society of everything that tends to bring down the standard of public morals, this exceptional State is throwing her doors wide open to crime and criminals.

The Japanese spare no pains in converting Formosa into a loyal province of their empire, and not, it seems, without some success. In the Pescadores, too, the natives are being transformed into Japanese. "There is," says *The China Mail*, "a flourishing Japanese school in which Chinese lads get from \$3 to \$4.50 to come and learn Japanese. A few of the Chinese have cut off their queues and adopted foreign dress."

All the Christian churches in Japan together have 111,588 members. There are in the country 858 missionaries, 331 native ministers, and 981 catechists. Of the church-members the Roman Catholics have 50,302 (including all baptized children), the Greek Church has 22,576, the Protestant churches have 38,710.

The "Christian era" was suggested or devised by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman monk, who in 527 began its use and proposed that all public documents should be dated "in the year of our Lord." It did not come into general use in France until the eighth century, nor

in England until July, 816; in Spain it was not adopted until the eleventh century; in Portugal it was made legal in 1415; in the Empire of the East it was established by royal edict in 1453, a few weeks before the fall of Constantinople.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism is nearly 250 years old. The Assembly met on July 1, 1643, and sent up to Parliament the Directory for Public Worship, November 21st and 27th, 1644; the Confession of Faith on December 4th, 1646, and April 29th, 1647; the Shorter Catechism, November 25th, 1647, and April 14th, 1648; the Larger Catechism, October 15th, 1647 and April 14th, 1648; and held its last meeting, March 25th 1652. Thursday, November 25th, 1897, is the anniversary of the completion of the Shorter Catechism, and it is becoming that throughout the whole Presbyterian world the fact should have proper recognition. No one can compute the value that this remarkable compend of Scriptural truth has been to those who have made themselves acquainted with its contents.

An unknown ruined city, covering a space larger than New York City, with two temples and two great pyramids, has just been discovered in the mountains in the State of Guerrero, Mexico, by William Niven, the well known mineralogist of New York. He has just returned from a ten weeks' trip into that country, and brought back more than 300 photographs of the ruins. So says a Mexico special.

A very interesting late discovery is the nearly complete account, on a Greco-Egyptian papyrus, of a suit brought before the Emperor Claudius against Herod Agrippa, king of the Jews, mentioned in the book of the Acts, by the two leading anti-Semites of Alexandria, Insidorus and Lampo. These two men, who had been condemned to death under Caligula for their misdeeds, attempted to gain time by bringing a charge against Agrippa; but the emperor confirmed the judgment against them, and ordered their execution. The papyrus contains an official account of the trial.

In order to commemorate the great International Exposition, to be held at Brussels, in 1897, the Government of Belgium has followed the example of the United States with the Columbian stamps by adopting special designs of postage stamps during the year of the exposition. They are all of beautiful designs, symbolical of the arts and sciences, and very elaborate in the details of engraving.

In the seventy-three years of its existence the American Sunday-school Union, has founded 100,000 schools, from which 6,000 churches have sprung. Last year alone it started 1,800 Sunday-schools, and during that time 108 churches developed from schools which previously had been opened. The greater part of this work is being done in Minnesota, the Dakotas, Montana, Idaho, Texas, Kansas, Indian Territory, Oklahoma, and the mountain regions of the Virginias, Tennessee, the Carolinas, and Georgia. It costs \$100,000 a year to carry on these missionary efforts, and most of the money is used for actual expenses, the salaries cutting a small figure.