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NOTE AND COMMENT

Huge icefields halt coastwise traffic on the Newfoundland coast. Ocean steamships have been imperilled and several have arrived at St. John's badly damaged.

Professor Rochefort, one of Russia's most distinguished scholars, has been banished to Siberia for life. He is, perhaps, the ablest of contemporary revolutionists.

Great Britain has more than \$300,000,000 invested in electric traction railways. The number of passengers carried during a year is equal to about thirty times the entire population.

Dr. Sheldon Jackson is dead, says the Herald and Presbyter. His going will set to thinking all who have watched and shared in the progress of the kingdom during the past half century. His view compassed a continent, and his labors did not cease till he had reached the farthest bound. He pioneered for the Church and all the spiritual forces from the Missouri River to Point Barrow in farthest Alaska. What marvels have one generation revealed!

It may be an occasion of surprise to read that Italy is among the liberal nations of the world in the amount of money it spends in maintaining charitable institutions. It has over \$466,000,000 invested in institutions. It maintains hospitals, homes for the aged, orphans, blind, helps poor girls to marry, provides subsidies for young mothers, free kitchens, and hygienic lodging houses. The much despised "Dago" has more to his credit than is commonly known and acknowledged.

An overture from the Cape Town Presbytery to the South African General Assembly asks the assembly to pass a declaratory act defining the relation of the Church to its official creed. The suggestion is made that the act should declare that the Church, in demanding of its ministers and office-bearers an acceptance of the system of doctrine set forth in the twenty-four articles of faith, requires of them a sincere confession of the evangelic faith in God through His Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, but does not demand a literal agreement with the precise forms in which that faith is set forth in the articles.

It is gratifying to notice that the strong influence of Roman Catholic Bishops is being steadily exerted against the liquor traffic, not only in Canada but in the British Islands. From an Irish exchange we clip the following:—"Dr. Hoare, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Ardagh, has issued a pastoral condemning the custom of supplying strong drink at wakes, and holding 'sprees' the night before boys and girls emigrate for America. There is no charity or friendship in that farewell party," the Bishop asserts. "Murders, homicides, and sinful assaults have been perpetrated at these orgies." He also condemns the use of strong drink in connection with corn-threshing festivities. "The misery of it is," he says, "that you seize upon a time when God is lavishing upon you the fruits of the earth to insult Him, teaching the young to break their pledge and become drunkards, unfitting the laborer for his work, and killing industry."

Two prominent scholars and educators have recently passed away in Scotland. Rev. Dr. Marcus Dods, principal of New College, Edinburgh, passed away on April 26 at the age of 75, and Rev. Dr. John Marshall Lang, chancellor and principal of Aberdeen University, died at Aberdeen on May 2, in the 75th year of his age. Each of these men had been distinguished in the pastorate as writers and scholars, and as educators and leaders in the life and work of the Presbyterian Church.

An exchange tells of how, in Auckland, New Zealand, the Anglican clergy invited the ministers of all other religious denominations in the city to meet with them and consider the organization of a society for "common prayer, mutual study, and frank discussion of our differences," with a view of promoting thereby ultimate church union. The invitation was accepted, and in an assemblage representing all the Christian forces of the city a "Christian Unity Society" was formed. This is the New Zealand way of meeting the suggestion of the Lambeth conference of last summer that Episcopalians all over the world should "get together" with their "separated brethren" for mutual acquaintance and common understanding.

Sir Robert Parks, representing capitalists offering to build a canal from the Georgian Bay to the St. Lawrence, is now in this country attempting to secure the aid of the Canadian government for the project. He says the capital has already been secured for building the first section of the canal, from the Georgian Bay to North Bay, on Lake Nipissing, a distance of eighty-five miles. The government is asked to guarantee the bonds at three per cent., and he declares that if this is done the work will be started next spring. Sir Robert believes that the traffic for the canal will be created by it, and without decreasing any other traffic will produce enough revenue to cover the government's guarantee and in addition to create a sinking fund which would extinguish the bonds in probably fifty years or less. The company would be a Canadian one, and the government would have the right to fix the rates.

Mexico is the land of mystery of the American continent. Its civilization has been attributed to the Chinese, and learned studies of its archeological remains have been made that seem to support the contention. Now the theory is advanced that Egyptians crossed from the land of the Nile by means of the lost continent of Atlantis, and that the Mexican civilization was Egyptian in origin. The author of the theory is Colonel E. R. Fox, a civil engineer of Los Angeles, and an archaeologist of some note. According to the San Francisco "Chronicle," Colonel Fox shows an interesting archeological specimen dug up in the city of Mexico while workmen in his charge were excavating through the ruins of an old Toltec temple for the purpose of constructing a drainage canal. Fourteen feet beneath the surface they found a porphyry god, very Egyptian in appearance, resembling the Sphinx, weighing about thirty pounds and a foot tall. Nearby was an urn of terra cotta, painted vermilion, proving that it was for use in the temples and not for the common people, and bearing representations of asp, Egyptian priests and chieftains, small heads of priests, arrowheads, and a spindle bearing hieroglyphics similar to the Etruscan.

The death of the Rev. George MacFarland, who for the past twenty-four years had been general secretary of the Board of Missions of the Irish Presbyterian Church, removes one of the best-known figures in the Church. For fifteen years before he was appointed to the office which he held until his death, he was minister at Ballycastle, on the coast of Antrim. Although he was at work until within a few days of his death, Mr. MacFarland had not been in robust health for some time.

On the east as well as the west of the Ottawa river, law-breaking liquor sellers are having a hard time. At Hull last week four people were fined, Robert Smith, of Ironsides, \$150; Hector Champagne, of South Hull, \$150; Flossie Stewart, of Tetreauville, \$50; and Mrs. Driscoll, of Ironsides, \$50, all being with costs. Barney Stevens, of Ironsides, was also summoned to appear upon a similar charge, but he has left the vicinity, so it is alleged. The evidence was obtained by watching the houses, but defendants all pleaded guilty.

Turkey, with its Sultans, old and new, its massacres and horrors, has so filled the centre of the world-stage that the contest in Persia has been well-nigh forgotten. Yet with Abdul Hamid actually deposed, there suddenly comes the word that the Shah of Persia has seen a new light, and has proclaimed the granting of a Constitution, and that elections to be held in accordance with a new election law are to be completed by July 19, when the deputies will assemble in Teheran. The struggle between the Shah and his people has been on since November of last year. Great Britain and Russia are credited with having brought pressure to bear upon him to secure the restoration of the constitution and the inauguration of certain reforms, but one cannot help noting a certain coincidence between the happenings in Turkey and the final surrender of the Shah. Abdul's fall might seem to have been an illustrative argument more powerful than any brought to bear from other quarters.

And now it is in South Africa that Church union is in the air. For some time negotiations have been in progress between representatives of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and Congregational Churches, and at a recent conference the sub-committee on doctrine submitted a short creed as part of the basis of union. There is a note prefaced to the creed, in which the united church declares its historic continuity with the Church of the New Testament and the Reformation, and reserves to itself the right to revise and alter the declaration of its faith as may be deemed necessary or expedient from time to time. The following is the creed:—(1) This Church acknowledges and receives the Word of God delivered in the Old and New Testaments as its standard of faith and life. (2) It accepts and holds as the central message of Scripture the evangel of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us; in whom God is revealed as the righteous and loving Father, who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; through whom God has established His kingdom on earth; and by whom the Holy Spirit draws men to faith and penitence, inspires them to a life of service, and brings them into ever-deeper harmony with God's holy will. (3) This Church exists for the proclamation of Christ's Gospel and the extension of His kingdom."