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NOTE AND COMMENT

Under the new government the dogs are to be banished from the streets of Constantinople, but not all at once. A few are taken away each night in carts, not to excite too much prejudice.

A sample group of candidates for the ministry recently examined by American Presbyterians shows that of 348 candidates 172 were the sons of farmers; 44 were ministers' sons, and the fathers of the rest were in twenty-five different trades and occupations, nearly twenty per cent. being laborers.

The health of the German Emperor, it is said, is again affected by the ear trouble which for years past has caused him considerable pain. The latest attack is due to a cold, followed by a severe catarrh, and it will not yield to medical relief. As a consequence the Emperor is subject to a great deal of nervous irritability.

An old London minister, Rev. J. Macartney Wilson, B.D., of Highbury Presbyterian Church, is starting a class for the study of New Testament Greek at the close of his Wednesday evening service. "I hope," he says, "that those who enrol themselves will see the thing through. They will never regret having learnt to read the book of Jesus Christ in the tongue in which it was written."

The British Government is about to send Captain Scott, of the Naval Service, on an expedition to the South Pole. It is hoped that he may be successful. Those polar expeditions, while involving no great moment, belong to the spirit of the century. God commanded the first man to subdue the earth, and discovery is one form of obedience.

The Journal and Messenger says that "Baptists are not sticklers for a mode of baptism," and describes various methods of immersion, all of which it approves, but has only withering scorn for the "putting a little water on the face and calling it baptism." On this the Herald and Presbyter remarks: "This reminds us of the man who was no stickler for color. He did not care what color his wife wore, provided only that it was red."

Chicago will vote on April 5 as to whether saloons shall be permitted. To secure such an election the petition of 61,000 registered voters was required. The petition was filed with 75,000 signatures. In securing this all the churches were active. The liquor interests plan to find enough flaws in the signatures to bring the number under 61,000, but it will hardly be possible. A new spirit is coming into activity in the great city.

An exchange tells of an interesting article on the shrinkage of the birth-rate in France, by Charles Turquet, in a French monthly, "Le Sals Tout." During the last five years France's population increased only 330,000, while that of Germany grew by 4,000,000. As the average population of a French department is 447,815, Germany has in five years added to her population a number equal to that of nine French departments, while France has only gained the population of a moderate-sized city. M. Turquet believes that by 1950 France will occupy, so far as numbers are concerned, the lowest place among the great powers. In 1870 France's men capable of military service were as numerous as those of Germany, but in 1910 Germany can put into the field, this writer says, almost twice as many men as France. And yet the soil of France is rich enough to feed as large a population as could be sustained on any equal area in Europe.

The census in England is to be taken next year. By the last census, England and Wales have a population of 32,500,000, or an average of 558 persons to the square mile. This is almost one person to each acre of territory, including lakes, highways and parks. The exact figure is one person to every 1.15 acres. The population is believed to have increased something more than 10 per cent. since, and, to be almost exactly one person to the acre. The population in London is 3,800,000 to the square mile.

Concerning the entry of the Chinese into Tibet, it is stated that they are doing their best to reduce the number of Lamas, their policy being not to allow more than one hundred to a monastery, whereas at present there are often as many as 5,000. The remainder they are inducing to get married and go on the land. The Chinese are also holding out every inducement for Chinese emigrants to go into the newly opened part of Tibet. They are offering grants of land, and are also advancing money for outfit, seeds, etc., for five years without interest.

A history of Kirriemuir, the birthplace of J. M. Barrie, has just been published, and it is pointed out by a reviewer that the little Scots village has given birth to not a few men who have become famous. Dr. John Campbell, the well-known leader of English Nonconformity, who, in his early days, worked as a blacksmith; the Rev. Dr. W. D. Morrison, one of the leaders of the broad school in the Church of England; Dr. J. A. Wylie, a well-known literary man; John Hamilton Fyfe, of "The Times"; and Miss Dorothea Maria Ogilvy, the poet.

An old country change says:—Keen sorrow has been caused by the death of the Rev. Duncan Clark MacNicol, minister of Stockbridge United Free Church, Edinburgh, who was injured through a serious bicycle accident near Malling, in August last, and who never fully recovered. Mr. MacNicol has found time for authorship, and had written the life of Master Robert Bruce, minister of Larbert, and a book of addresses to young people, entitled "A Famous First Eleven." Much sympathy is felt for Mrs. MacNicol, who is a daughter of the late Rev. Horatius Bonar, D.D.

Sir Oliver Lodge is a great scientist, but also a man with many peculiar views. His guesses at things in the universe need not always be taken seriously. Yet it is worth noting that even with his vagaries he has been led by his studies to feel the power of the Christian religion. He says the whole human race has been helped by an agency they could not have imagined, an agency they have not fully and completely recognized yet. "A Divine Helper actually took flesh and dwelt among us." He says there is much to learn about this truth, but believes the Christian churches have gotten hold of a great reality.

The liquor dealers of Detroit recently gave a ball, the purpose of which was "to draw their members together socially, and to develop sympathy for their interests in the spring election," when the question of local option will be up. "The function ended in an order from the police to have the hall emptied and closed at 2 a.m." after a fight in which a murder was committed. The murderer surrendered himself to the police, saying that his victim had "tweaked his nose for refusing an offer of a drink, and that he had knocked him down." Altogether, as a means of "creating sympathy," the ball was a great success—but the sympathy will hardly be with the liquor cause!

Says the British Weekly. Rev. John McNeill has consented to act as minister-in-charge of St. George's Church, Liverpool, for three months (April, May and June), in the hope of being able permanently to revive the congregation, whose affairs have given much cause for anxiety to the local Presbytery for several years past.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is the latest author to come under the ban of the book censors. It is reported that, "owing to a murder committed recently by two Swiss farm hands, who nearly exterminated the whole farm household, it has been decided by the Swiss railway authorities, as a beginning, that no literature of a tragic sort, especially of the kind dealing with detective stories, shall be on public sale. Among others, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 'Sherlock Holmes' books are (says the 'Standard') on the Swiss index, and cannot henceforth be bought at Swiss railway stations." It appears that the farm lads declared that they were led to commit their crime through having read fascinating stories of how murders were committed.

The Herald and Presbyter asks, where has the Presbyterian Church made such headway during the last ten years as in the Philippine Islands? Beginning with nothing there are now ten thousand communicants, in three presbyteries. The people are now working for self-support and for the evangelization of this country, and are already supporting several evangelists, who are hard at work. The people are hungry for the gospel which, in its purity, they have never had up to this time. And yet there are those who say that we do not need to do missionary work in lands that have been held by the Roman Catholics. The fact is, that no places in the world need the pure gospel worse than these very lands.

The British battleship Dreadnought, which was completed in 1906, was of 17,900 tons, and was the largest warship at that time afloat. Since that year larger and larger battleships have been built. The three British ships of the St. Vincent class, the keels of which were laid in 1907 and 1908, were of 19,250 tons; the three of the Neptune class, which were next laid down, were of 20,250 tons; and the four ships just ordered are of 22,500 tons. Secretary of the Navy Meyer is now pressing upon Congress a program which contemplates the beginning this year of two battleships of 27,000 tons, besides two colliers, five submarines and one repairship. The Secretary also urges the enlargement of all the dry docks in the country to accommodate ships of great size.

The Scottish correspondent of the Belfast Witness writes:—It is possible to state with confidence that the joint conference of the Union Committees in Edinburgh, last week marked a decided step in advance in the way of mutual understanding. Those who had been hopeless before, for the first time saw union ahead of them as something possible and practicable. Members of committees separated with the assurance that a firm basis for union could be found somewhere between the present positions of the two great Churches. The change that has come so swiftly and so unexpectedly is one that gives promise of a better day for religion in Scotland. No plan of union has as yet been formulated, and it would be premature to speak as if the difficulties were overcome, but what has happened is that a project, desirable and longed for, and worthy of discussion, has become to all parties something near and possible attainment. The current is setting strongly in the right direction.