

# Dominion Presbyterian

Devoted to the Interests of the Family and the Church

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## Note and Comment

For the first time in five years the Fraser river is frozen over. The thermometer is now about zero. There is good sleighing, coasting and skating. It is phenomenally cold for British Columbia.

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Gordon's sister says that the General was very fond of the evening hymn, "Abide with me," and used it often while at Gravesend. Also, up to the last he very much liked the hymn "For ever with the Lord."

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A united Protestant demonstration "to uphold and maintain the Protestantism of the nation, and to demand the suppression of the Mass and the confessional in the Established Church," will be held in the Royal Albert Hall on Tuesday, January 31, under the auspices of a large number of Protestant bodies throughout the country. The chair will be taken by Lord Kinnaird.

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The election of the Rev. Roger S. Kirkpatrick, of Jedburgh, to the pastorate of Govan Parish Church, says the Christian Leader, means that the former traditions of the High Church ritual, inaugurated by Dr. John McLeod, will be continued. \*\*\* The living of Govan is one of the best in the Church of Scotland, and the position is one of great responsibility and influence.

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Mr. W. Houston, M.A., who has held for several years past the position of Director of Teachers' Institutes for the Province of Ontario, has resigned to engage in academic work. He has been appointed to lecture on history, economic science and constitutional and administrative law in McMaster University. Mr. Houston is well qualified for the lectureship in question, and McMaster is to be congratulated on having secured his services.

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The returns of the Presbyterian Church of England show an increase in the number both of congregations and of members. There are 327 churches and preaching stations, as compared with 271 in 1876, affording accommodation for 162,044 persons. For all purposes £270,577 was raised last year, an increase for

the year of £9,007. In the Presbyterian Alliance, of which the next council will be held in Washington in September, there are now 26,578 affiliated congregations, with a membership of 4,059,751.

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Not long ago Principal Salmond, in an address, called attention to two dangers menacing the Churches of Scotland. "One was the recrudescence of the old Moderatism, which lacked evangelical nerve, and the other was the wave of priesthood and sacramentarianism coming over the Scottish people." The Churches of Scotland are not the only ones threatened by these two dangers, both of them spring from a low state of piety.

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The Scotch novelist, S. R. Crockett, was at one time pastor of a country church at a salary of \$1,200 a year. His income at the present time is estimated at \$12,000 annually. He is an early riser, and writes as follows concerning his habit: "Every morning, summer and winter, I've had my cold tub, and am ready to begin work at 4.30 o'clock. I should feel I'd missed one of the keenest pleasures of my life in missing the sunrise. I always go out to look at it, no matter how busy I may be. I seem to see the world recreated then, and to share in the sense of being newly born myself. Perhaps I've gone to bed discouraged, feeling it is not—never can be—in me to do the work I would do. But in the dawn everything seems possible to me. Six hours' sleep is all I take because it's all I need." Mr. Crockett is a typical-looking Scotchman, with a full beard and a brawny arm.

### The Missionary Instinct.

This is something more than an eagerness to preach the Gospel and a passion for souls. It is that rare endowment of wisdom by which the soul-seeker chooses unerringly the way into the citadel of the sin-entrenched soul. Those who possess it work quietly but effectively. Those reached by them are held, and often they, too, catch something of that Divine wisdom and begin the search for other souls.

It is the development of this rare endowment that Ralph Connor has undertaken to trace in his sketches of Western mining and prairie life. Craig and Mrs.

Mavor, in the "Tales from the Selkirks," and the "Sky Pilot," in "Tales from the Foothills," are remarkable for the possession of this gift and for the use they make of it. It requires some spiritual perception to discover traces of the divine image in the old-time whiskey trader, who has turned rancher or stage-driver; still more to see such traces in the reckless miner, the gambler and the debauched saloon-keeper. Yet many who see in these men souls worth saving turn helplessly from them because there seems no possible opening into such lives. That there is such an approach is Ralph Connor's message to the Christian Church. Such men as Nelson and Nixon and Slavin and Bidy Green and the "Duke" can be reached, and splendid recruits they make.

It is well that such a book should find its way into the homes of Christian people. It will teach a much required lesson that missions to the miners and to the ranchers are not merely civilizing agents, but have a deeper purpose, the reaching of great souls, sadly disfigured, yet still dear to the Master's heart. It will inspire the prospective missionary, whose determination to spend a year or two in Western mission fields rests upon no more worthy foundation than the wish to see something of Western life, or the desire to fulfil the expectation of the Church in her young men. It will strengthen the disheartened missionary upon the field, who has watched for a year for an opening in just such lives, and who has given it up; and he will make another effort. Such, we take, is the motive of the missionary-litterateur, who seeks rather to present One "able to save" than to gain for himself a niche among literary celebrities.

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