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NOTE AND COMMENT

The Presbyterian Record has a circulation of 60,000—a very fine circulation. It contains a great deal of information about our missions at home and abroad and on this account it should find its way into every family.

The Irish Presbyterian church has drawn up a curriculum for the training of deaconesses, consisting of instruction in scripture, christian doctrine and church principles, parochial work and social questions together with a course in practical training.

A brewer, in a neighboring city, alarmed by the temperance advances, and trying hard to prove that he is a good man and a nice man and all of that, says: "Of course, local option is all right. If a saloon is obnoxious to a community, let it be voted out." Why, yes, that is what is being done.

Missionaries in the Philippines complain that the old time Spanish persecution spirit is waking in the remoter sections of the Philippine Islands. The priests do not feel able to see that converts from the R. C. faith have any right to live. Religious liberty is a strange doctrine to them, and they detest it.

A dispatch from Oklahoma City says that that city's first prohibition Thanksgiving Day broke all police records. Not a drunken man was arrested on the holiday nor was one seen on the streets by the police. What a great blessing it would be in Canada if we could have the liquor saloons closed on every public holiday. The results would boom prohibition.

The saloon men in one of the cities of Florida have raised a formal protest against the singing of songs that teach temperance in the schools. They insist that neither politics, religion nor temperance should be taught in the schools. They want temperance songs all eliminated. This is in line with the demands of the Jews in New York, that all songs with the name of Christ must be put out of the schools. What next?

The hotel keepers of Moncton, N.B. have threatened to close their hotels if the sentence of imprisonment is enforced against those who have recently been convicted of violation of the Canada Temperance Act. This seems to be a case in which the vigorous enforcement of law—the Scott Act—convincing some people that prohibition does prohibit. It does not pay to defy law and public opinion.

Brazilian coconut palms live from 600 to 700 years, and the Arabs assert that the date palm frequently reaches the age of 200 to 300 years. Wallan's oak near Paisley, Scotland, is known to be more than 700 years old, and there are eight olive trees on the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem, which are known to have been flourishing in 1099. The Yews at Fountain Abbey, Yorkshire, were old trees when in 1132 the abbey was built, and a redwood in Mariposa grove, California, is a manifold centenarian. Baobab trees of Africa have been computed to be more than 5,000 years old, and the deciduous cypress at Chapultepec is considered to be of a still greater age. Humboldt said that the *Dracaena Draco* at Orotava, on Tenerife, was one of the oldest inhabitants of the earth.

The Lutheran church of the United States is being congratulated on having gained during the past twelve months 72,253 members, an increase of 4 per cent., and advancing their membership roll beyond the two million mark. This practically doubles the membership of 1888, the year the one million mark was passed. These two million communicant members from 13,142 congregations, with 8,062 ministers. The total benevolent contributions were \$2,200,471, a little over one dollar per member, which is an increase over last year of \$278,209, which shows that the church is not only increasing in numbers but likewise in the grace of benevolence.

The Tonto dam in the Salt River Valley, Arizona, which is now in course of construction, is a huge undertaking on the lines of the famous Asswan dam in Egypt, and it is claimed will be 30 per cent. larger than the latter. It is estimated that it will supply water to about 250,000 acres from a reservoir which will be twenty-five miles long with an average width of a mile and a half. The dam itself will be 280 feet high, and the water will flow into the canal system through a 500-foot tunnel cut through the solid rock around one end of the dam. The flow into the tunnel will be controlled by six steel gates, set in series of three, built to operate under a pressure of 100 pounds to the square inch. With the reservoir full they will be capable of discharging 10,000 cubic feet of water a second.

Hugh R. Magill, M.D., writing in the United Presbyterian on "The Anglo-Egyptian Soudan," tells us that at an early period in the Christian era, Christianity was embraced by the Dongolese and by the Berberines and by people around the kingdom of Soba, or, in other words, a very large proportion, if not all of the people of the Northern Sudan were Christian. When by fire and by sword the religion of Islam was forced upon the people, many continued secretly to cherish the true faith. It is recorded that for generations after the Arab conquest, it was customary for those secret disciples to whisper in the ears of the dying: "Look to Jesus and trust Him, for He only can save." "And in that day shall a present be brought unto the Lord of Hosts from a nation tall and smooth, a people terrible from the beginning onward; a nation that smeth and treadeth down, whose land the rivers divide." Such is the gracious ending of the terrible prophecy literally fulfilled.

In the Christian Advocate of Dec. 5, we find the following question: "Awhile ago an account was given of the death of an eccentric and wealthy man who left the church of his faith \$50,000, on condition that his spirit be elected a member of the board of trustees of the church and be permitted to attend its meetings. He provided liberally for his wife and children. The will, of twenty typewritten pages, contains a plan for the government of the church and provides that the trustees are to meet often and consult with his spirit regarding details. Will the law allow such a provision in the will to stand?" The Advocate gives the following reply to the enquiry:

"We have written for information and find that the case has just been fought out in the circuit court. The will was set aside on the ground of unsoundness of mind in the testator. It required but thirty minutes for the jury to reach a conclusion. This man was a believer in Swedenborg."

A meeting was recently held in Regina, attended by representatives from the different churches and temperance organizations, as well as from the Labor Council, and a representative provincial organization was formed, to be known as the Social and Moral Reform Council of Saskatchewan. A constitution was adopted which allows for representation on the part of all the forces of reform, and states the object of the organization to be "the promotion by educational, legislative, and administrative action of such moral and social reforms as are approved by a two-thirds vote of the council present at any regularly-called meeting." The principle of government ownership and control of the drink traffic was not entertained by those present, but the convention pledged itself to press for legislation having for its object the abolition of the bar, prohibiting of public treating, permitting sale of intoxicating liquors only in sealed packages, to be consumed off premises, and granting to municipalities option of having sale of liquor or its prohibition.

Dr. W. J. Dawson, Evangelist, who has spent some years in the United States, and has also visited Canada, in a letter to the Christian World of London, G.B., tells the people of the old land that there is not even a whisper of political union with the American Republic in the Dominion. Among other things he said of Canada: "Her sons believe in her. Among all the young men I have met from England, no one wishes to go back. It is the land of opportunity, and they know it. Here there is abundant work for all who are not too fastidious—high wages, and the certainty of success for ability and industry. The immense resources of Canada are only just beginning to be understood. What is wanted—so every one says—for her development is capital. But her chief want is men. Kipling's recent invitation to England to pour in English emigrants touches the heart of the problem. It is the sons of Great Britain who are most needed, men of sturdy strength and high character, and for such Canada offers a warm welcome."

One evidence that the world is growing better is the fact that the Bible is having "free course" in nearly all the earth to-day. As to this the Bible Society Record has the following: "From the point of view of the Bible Society one direction in which the world is growing better is seen to be the extraordinary freedom which it gives to Bible circulation. Men who use violence to check the circulation are less numerous. How different the situation was half a century ago is shown by a tragedy recorded in one of the old reports and described in the New York Tribune of November 10, 1852. A man named Perandelli, mate of an Italian ship, obtained a Bible in New York which was discovered by the custom house officers upon the return of the vessel to Naples. The possession of that Italian Bible was treated as a criminal offense. An inquiry was at once instituted, and Perandelli bravely came forward, in order to free his comrades from suspicion acknowledging the book as his property. The poor fellow was tried by court-martial and sentenced to ten years hard labor in the galleys for the crime of bringing a Bible into the country. At present such punishment of a Bible reader is possible, thank God, in one or two Mohammedan countries only!"