

Dominion Presbyterian

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Notes and Comments

When the railway across Siberia is completed, it will be easy for a person to go from London to Japan in 18 days.

It is estimated that at the beginning of the new century England will have 82,000,000.00 tons of coal still unused and available.

Norway has a law dealing with cremation. According to the act every person over fifteen years of age can be cremated after death if he or she has made a declaration in the presence of two witnesses. For those under fifteen a declaration on the part of the parents is necessary.

The Prince of Wales, when staying with Lord Rothschild recently, said to his host, according to *The Gem*: "Your life, Rothschild, may at times be an arduous one compared with mine. I long for a private life, and I know that can never be mine.

With reference to Lord Roberts recent statement that there never was a more temperate British Army than that now under his command it may be mentioned that one temperance organization alone, the Good Templars, has several dozen regimental lodges.

A microbe so small that, as we are told, two hundred and fifty millions of them would be required to cover a square inch of surface, is declared to be the primary cause of the plague. Is it not one of nature's marvels that what is almost infinitesimally minute may cause terror more widespread and prostrating than the alarm created by earthquake convulsions?

An exchange tells of a very busy man who preached twice for somebody and "raised his church debt." The phrase is misleading. We once heard, says the *Herald* and *Presbyter*, a lady congratulate Dr. Willis Lord that he had raised a church debt. He answered that the church had secured pledges for three-fourths of it, and asked him to come down and exhort them to raise the other quarter. He exhorted them, but they did the raising.

The first great controversy of the Christian Church was over one letter in a Greek word. These come near being a serious time of it in a Scotch Presbytery the other day when a resolution referred to the "unavoidable war." The debate turned on the question of retaining the syllable "un." It was finally decided by a majority of ten that the war was unavoidable. But doubtless a great deal was said on both sides.

The death of Mrs. Gladstone coming so long after the death of her husband has not attracted much attention, but had she gone home first it would have been to Mr. Gladstone an irreparable loss. The late great statesman depended upon her judgment and sympathy as all good men depend upon such perfect wives. The world never knew how much his life was influenced by her. It was not necessary to know it. Certainly she would not have wished it. But all through his remarkable public career her true womanly intuitions were to him of untold value. She was a wise and good woman, and a model wife and mother.

We see the statement that the Russian Council has determined that no one shall be exiled to Siberia without judicial inquiry. The exiles have numbered about 20,000 a year and of these a very large proportion, some say one-half, have been sent to their horrible life on suspicion alone, being arrested and exiled without trial of any kind.

A Baptist church in Cincinnati has been connected by telephone with such of its members as desire it. A transmitter has been placed in front of the pulpit. The number of members of that congregation who will rarely be found in the house of worship is likely to increase. Some of them will, probably, have the receivers connected to their bedside so that they won't even need to rise from bed to hear the preacher. It is a very unwise scheme, except in so far as it may convenience confirmed invalids.

In the differences that would sometimes arise between members of his tenantry the Duke of Argyll was often invited to arbitrate upon the matter in dispute, and he used to tell a characteristically Scottish story of one of these occasions. Two tenants having waited upon him and asked him to decide the question at issue, the Duke put what he always regarded as a very necessary preliminary question—"Will you abide by my award?" "Well, your Grace," was the reply of one of the hard-headed old disputants, "I'd like to ken first what it is!"

Perhaps the Scotsman most in the public eye during the present week, remarks an old country exchange, is Dr. Robert Rainy, Principal of the Free Church of Scotland. Dr. Rainy, who has striven for many years for the consummation he is now about to witness in the union of the Free and United Presbyterian churches of Scotland is one of the most liberal-minded men within the pale of the former church, and has always led the van in the forward movement. For his great tact, and the marvellous influence he exercises over would-be recalcitrant members and ministers, Dr. Rainy has long been styled "the Gladstone of the Free Church." Dr. Rainy is seventy-four years of age, and by reason of his long experience and great abilities is considered at present the one indispensable man in the Free Church of Scotland.

The ignorance of the Boers concerning places and people outside of their own farms is amazing, and would be amusing if it were not so pitiful. Their delusions as to the strength of the force that would oppose them was no doubt largely responsible for the confidence with which they went to war. A British officer in one of the transports conveying prisoners to St. Helena gives an admirable illustration of this sublime lack of knowledge in a letter which he sent to a friend in Newcastle. "The prisoners," he writes, "are a job lot,—all sorts and sizes, descriptions and nationalities. When some saw the other side of Table Bay they asked "is that Europe?" Now, when they cannot see the land, they say "it is a very big river." One asked how long I had been out, and when I told him, he asked if I was the last man to leave England; and when I said, "No, there are now in London more men than there are in South Africa," he only said, "Almighty God!" He said, "We were deceived; and now we must be British again?" and I said, "Yes."

A great army of young people graduate this month from our literary and professional institutions. They may well be likened to soldiers, for they will have to fight, for the most part, for recognition and success. Let them deserve success as the first preliminary to securing it. The world needs and is looking for those who are absolutely trustworthy and reliable. For all such there are places, and they will find them sooner or later if they search for them.

The agitation for a brief creed to take the place of the Westminster confession continues. Some are advocating the adoption of the "Evangelical Catechism" of the English Free Church Council. Numerous other creeds have been suggested. One Presbyter proposed that the Lord's Prayer be the only creed. One prominent agitator affirms that the text "God so loved the world," etc., would be sufficient, and still another that the one confession be the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

It is curious to notice how the Presbyterian form of Church government is commending itself even in high church circles of the Anglican communion. At a meeting of the Church Reform League last Friday, Lord Hugh Cecil said that all parties were agreed that a representative body must be established—a synod—like the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. But, as the "Daily News" points out, "equality is the essence of Presbyterianism, and the Church of Scotland is not represented in the House of Lords."

Prof. Cesara Lombroso recently had an opportunity to test scientifically the effect of alcohol in developing latent criminal tendencies. The subject of his experiments was a man who had surrendered himself to the police with the avowal that Anarchists wished to make him their instrument for assassinating the king of Italy. The man seemed sane, but no corroboration of his story could be obtained. Unexpectedly, after drinking wine, he broke out in anarchistic threats. Acting upon this hint, Professor Lombroso administered alcohol to him in carefully measured quantities and discovered that after he had drunk a certain amount he developed violent criminal tendencies, all recollections of which appeared to have vanished from his mind when the effects of alcohol had passed off.

The instinct of animals in the matter of self-preservation is curiously illustrated by the fact that several dozen cats found refuge during the Ottawa fire in a wooden house which, although the buildings on each side were burned down, refused to catch fire and remained intact. Cats have a peculiar gift in this direction, since, in addition to their reputed nine lives, there is a popular superstition that they will only eat what is good for them. This may or may not be a fallacy; but the instinct of self-preservation which is common to all animals, except perhaps horses (who, being very bags of nerves) will during a fire behave with suicidal obstinacy, has been proved time and again. The rats which, in practice as well as theory, desert the ship which is no longer seaworthy as a notable instance of it; and there are many animal lovers who would not consider it in any way extravagant to suggest that the quacking of the geese in the Capitol was due to a knowledge on their part of the facts that the entry of the enemy would mean the cutting of their throats, while the rousing of the Romans would earn them a debt of gratitude and perpetual immunity from the poulterer's shop window!