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NOTE AND COMMENT

Portugal has again suffered from a severe earthquake. A number of villages were wiped out and many persons were killed and injured.

With the death of Algernon Charles Swinburne, who recently died at the age of 72, the last of the distinguished line of poets known as the Victorian poets has passed away.

The inheritance tax of Great Britain yields over \$90,000,000 of annual revenue out of a total internal revenue of about \$480,000,000. These taxes are paid by a population of 44,000,000.

The Beatification of Joan of Arc, on April 18, in Rome, was witnessed by 30,000 French pilgrims and nearly the entire French episcopate. Pontifical mass was said in honor of Joan by the Bishop of Orleans.

It is claimed that during 1908 the amount of money saved in the public schools of London was \$182,000. Penny savings banks are found in nearly all the schools and the habit of gum chewing and candy-eating is almost unknown.

A trader passing a converted cannibal in Africa, asked him what he was doing. "Oh, I am reading the Bible," was the reply. "That Book is out of date in my country," said the foreigner. "If it had been out of date here," said the African to the European, "you'd have been eaten long ago."

Books formerly forbidden to Russians will now be admitted and delivered through the post office with no other examination than such as is necessary to determine the customs duties required by Russian law. For many years the government has exercised strict censorship over printed matter especially books of a political character.

The Regent of China, Prince Chun, who, since the dismissal of Yuan Shi Kai, has been collecting lists of officials who were dismissed previous to his taking office, has now issued an edict rehabilitating the reputations and remunerating the families of five officials of the late Dowager Empress who were beheaded for opposing the Boxers.

Presbyterians of New York City are vigorously pressing a movement for the extension of their work in the metropolis. At a remarkable meeting held on a very stormy evening in the Fifth Ave. Church, \$115,773 was pledged for this purpose. The money is for immediate use in establishing new congregations and aiding others to reach independence.

There will be a great cosmopolitan gathering in Geneva during the early part of July in honor of the Quater-Centenary of Calvin and the 350th anniversary of the foundation of the University and the Public Schools, of both of which he was the originator. On July 6, the foundation-stone of the International Monument of the Reformation will be laid and the ecclesiastical, university and municipal celebrations will extend over a period of about eight days. The Protestant Churches of every country, and especially the Reformed Churches, are sending official delegates, and the series of brilliant functions will focus the attention of the whole world upon the figure of the great Reformer.

It is reported that Mrs. Carrie Nation, who some years ago acquired notoriety by the use of a hatchet, has now realized enough from her lectures, with the accompanying sale of souvenir paper hatchets, to purchase a poultry and fruit farm, and is to retire from the arena.

Those who attack the Bible, the churches, and the Christian faith are undermining the very foundations of society. No true friend of mankind will countenance such attacks. The religion of Christ is the only barrier against the rising evils which threaten our age. Self-defence, if no other motive, would urge business men, educators, and scholars to defend and strengthen religion, the churches, and their agencies.

Any one desiring a copy of the report of the recent Laymen's Missionary Congress, which is to be published in book form, and who has not already sent in his order, should do so at his earliest convenience. The report will be in full, and the volume will be one of the most significant and inspiring in missionary literature. Mr. H. K. Oakley, Confederation Life Building, Toronto, will be pleased to receive your dollar.

The Pioneer very correctly says:—It is a libel on the sense and character of the travelling public to say that it is on their account the bar is kept up. Men and women do not sleep, eat, or sit in the bar-rooms unless they are badly under its influence. The vast majority of the travelling public would prefer a stopping-place without such a noisy, disreputable, dangerous, obtrusive, and foul smelling attachment.

The new Sultan is a younger brother of the deposed Sultan. He is a man of 65, and for the past 25 years has been with his wives and children, practically a prisoner in his palace at Constantinople, where he was confined after having been adjudged an imbecile. Whether he is really such or not is not known. The Sultans for the past three hundred years have had the habit of disposing of their younger brothers to prevent them from heading revolutions, and it is not improbable that the new Sultan was imprisoned (instead of murdered) on this account, and not because of any unusual mental weakness. But from articles from his pen and interviews with him, which have been published, it is evident that he is not a man of any strength, mentally or morally. It is probable that throughout his reign he will be simply the tool of those who put him in power.

Regent Square church, London, has for the first time issued the annual report of its Sunday schools in a separate brochure. There are four Sunday schools in connection with the congregation, containing about 1,500 children, and a staff of one hundred teachers. The largest of these are the Aldenham street afternoon and evening schools, which had 1,084 scholars on their rolls at the end of the year. Each school has its own set of special agencies, and its own methods of work, adapted intelligently to its own circumstances and needs. In a preface to the report, the minister says, "The future, for these children, and for Regent Square, depends largely on our success or failure in bringing the boys and girls into permanent Christian life and service; and on our success or failure in getting the families to which they belong to serve God, as families in the congregation and fellowship of His people."

No one has a right to have an easy time and no one, with a spirit above that of the slave, wants ease. Even if we cannot do anything very heroic we show that we have the indestructible passion for difficulty by the homage we involuntarily render those who can do and dare.

Says the Presbyterian Witness: Sir Oliver Lodge claims that industrial occupation cannot suffice for the whole population of Britain; that some additional facilities must be given to the cultivation of the land; that the immense amounts now paid away to foreign countries for wheat, for timber, for dairy produce, and other products of the soil—a sum which in the aggregate is of incredible magnitude—should be diminished, and the country made more nearly self-sustaining by improved conditions of land tenure and the restoration of labor to the soil. In short, easier access to the land is imperative in Britain.

Prejudice dies hard, remarks the Canadian Churchman, especially when its links have been welded by centuries of fanatical conviction. The Jew travels and trades, and his synagogues are found in quiet places in the various parts of the world, where he lives and thrives. But the Turk, less adaptable and more conservative, still looks to Mecca and Medina for religious inspiration, and moulds his life on the precepts of the Koran. Civilization does not prompt men to journey to the shrines of the prophet or to seek the tenets of their faith within the covers of the Koran. But civilization has become the dominant force in human progress, and the thin end of its mighty wedge has at last found lodgement within the curve of the Golden Horn. We may not live to see the day. But the day will surely come when the stately spire will tower above the neighboring mosque, and the Cross of Calvary will speak better things to the awakening Moslem than he has ever heard beneath the crescent of Mahomet.

Men are of various kinds, national or ecclesiastical or race or color. On this continent an article with the title, "White Women and Colored Men" mean men who are of negro blood, but in England it means Orientals. The writer appeals to missionaries with their experience and knowledge to come forward boldly and state what sort of life a white woman who married an Eastern husband would be likely to lead in an Eastern country. A gentleman who has lived many years in the East writes to say in reply to this appeal that he has come across during those years several mixed marriages. "I have seen, alas, he says, 'something of the price paid by the white woman for her misplaced faith in the colored man. I do not believe that any woman who has lived in the East and knows the low moral standard of the Oriental would ever venture to marry one. It is the English girl or woman who has never been east of Suez who is carried away by the suave silky manner, the dark eyes and soft voice of the colored man who comes over to our country (England) to get all he can in the way of knowledge, but who never learns the meaning of the words loyalty and honor. People in Europe will never quite understand the East, for the East is ruled by things which are impossible in a temperate climate.'" The writer goes on to give instances in proof of his assertion.