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NOTE AND COMMENT

The fact that the National Service League, of which Lord Roberts is president, has propounded a scheme by which 40,000 trained men can be added to Britain's home defence in four years, makes it look as if the time is yet distant when men will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

A curious codicil was found in the will of a man named John Sims, a trustee of a Baptist church at Cheltenham, England, who died recently. By it he left £100 to the church for every deacon present at the funeral. As there are nine deacons, this meant a possible legacy of £900. But his fellow deacons do not seem to have held his memory in much regard, for not one attended the funeral, and therefore the church gets nothing.

Lt.-Governor Fraser, of Nova Scotia, who is on a visit to the mother land with the Canadian curiers, is a distinguished mason, and on having honorary membership in Kiltwinning Lodge conferred on him, he made happy reference to the high estimate placed on Masonry in Canada. Membership in the order extended all over Canada; in every town, village and hamlet they would find brethren practising the principles of the order in deed as well as in word.

In twenty years the mineral production of Canada has gone up from \$10,000,000 to \$86,000,000. The increase is steady, widespread, and includes permanent development in the production of a wide range of minerals between coal and gold. The development of the Cobalt region has brought Canada up to the fourth place in the world's list of silver-producing countries. Germany has been passed in the race, and now this country is moving up rapidly upon Australia, which holds the third place. The second place is held by Mexico, and the first by the United States.

A singular case of straining over non-essentials is reported from Berlin. It was, is playing on an organ as a part of a religious service an infraction of the Sabbath law? The Jewish congregations of that city have considered organ playing as work and have always employed non-Jews for that purpose. When it was proposed to allow Jews to do the "work" the discussion arose, with the result that the question was laid for decision before a board of nine rabbis, of whom four voted for and four against the innovation and one leaned both ways. A compromise resulted, favorable, it is said, to the liberals.

The Philadelphia Westminster says:-- The anniversaries of Burns and Poe occurring so near together naturally suggest a comparison between their lives and genius. But the resemblance is largely fanciful. It is true that they were both poor and each died in his early manhood, and there it ends. As poets, they belong to different worlds. Burns was a harp of a thousand strings, Poe a harp of but one. Burns leads a chorus; Poe sings alone. One is to be recited, the other to be sung. As prose writers, the contrast is still wider. Burns left nothing save a few letters, while Poe inspired almost every successful brief story author who has written since. The two will live, and each in his own sphere.

The Hon. J. P. Mabee, and his conferees of the Railway Commission, are making good in their office; and if they continue as they are doing, the prospect is that Canadians will be delivered from some of the tyranny that the Railways have been wont to exercise over the comforts and even lives of the general public. One of the latest and most humane moves of the Commission, on advice from The Minister of Railways, is the decision to send out inspectors to examine and report on all crossings reported to be dangerous. The Commissioners, as soon as full information is received, will take action to remove, just as far as possible, the danger from these crossings.

Steps were taken at a recent Lord's Day convention at Pittsburg, Pa., to organize a Lord's Day Alliance for the United States, with auxiliaries in every state. An appeal was made to all citizens to refuse to subscribe for, advertise in or furnish church notices or other items for the Sunday newspaper. We in Canada have progressed further. We have no Sunday newspapers, except in British Columbia; but there is one in Toronto which gets as near the border line as the law will allow, by publishing late on Saturday night and filling its columns with sporting news and all kinds of gossip which is often read on Sunday morning. The request to refuse to advertise in or furnish news might well apply to it, yet it contains church notices which are no doubt paid for.

In its February issue, Current Literature discusses the Italian earthquake from both the journalistic and scientific points of view. It registers the tone of the press all over the country in regard to the tempestuous political whirl that is marking the close of President Roosevelt's administration. It celebrates the anniversaries of Darwin, Milton and Poe by printing really informing articles gleaned from American and British periodicals; and the new religious movements now springing up on this continent—Christian Science, New Thought, Emmanuelism, etc.—receive striking interpretation. The quotations made under the heading "Recent Poetry" more than sustain the editor's statement that, despite the large amount of mediocre poetry published, no month passes without there appearing at least half a dozen poems worth preserving.

Says Professor Goldwin Smith: The form of the coronation oath was settled at the Revolution of 1688, when English Protestantism had just narrowly escaped with its life, which was attacked by a Roman Catholic King in concert with his French patron and ally. Safeguards which at that crisis were needful are now needless, and, being offensive to Catholics ought now unquestionably to be discarded. It is to be hoped that the Catholics will act in the same spirit, and that when next a lady of the Royal family of England is to be married to a Catholic King she will not be compelled by the Papacy publicly and offensively to renounce her Protestant religion. At the same time it is not to be forgotten that the twenty-fourth article of the Papal Syllabus still claims for the Papacy temporal power and liberty to make use of force, both, apparently, without discrimination of country or religion; so that the claim would apply to England as well as to any territory under the religious supremacy of the Pope. This is not Catholicism, it is Papalism, and political usurpation.

A novel competition is to be decided by Hailey's comet, which is expected soon to come in sight for a few months of its 75-year circuit around the sun. A wealthy European amateur astronomer offered a prize for the best computation of this comet's orbit submitted before the close of 1908, and a competing ephemeris for this year and next indicates a very different route from that expected, showing the perihelion passing in the middle of June, instead of the middle of April, 1910.

Those who believe that the Chinese are savages, pure and simple, should note the action taken by the Chinese merchants and the Chinese Reform Association in Australia in regard to opium. The Chinese merchants, who are the chief distributors of the drug, are displaying the greatest earnestness in endeavoring to secure legislation in the Federal Parliament to prevent its introduction for smoking. They have not hesitated to ask and to secure the aid of the Labor party, though that party is zealous to exclude them from Australia. They have obtained help from the Protestant Churches and also from Cardinal Moran, the head of the Roman Catholic Church in Australia. Not only are they willing to forego the profit they have been making by the sale of opium, but also to bear the expense of medical treatment for the victims of the opium habit. When will Christian Churches see a deputation from brewers and distillers begging them to prevent the consumption of alcohol, solely on the ground of its injury to the best interests of the community?

We clip the following from the Michigan Presbyterian of a recent date; Catholics seem to deprecate the existence of any antipathy toward their church, and yet what could do more to create such a feeling than the following from the Michigan Catholic of Jan. 7: "It is a grievous sin for any Catholic to take part in Protestant services" or even "to stand as a witness at weddings or baptisms, etc., under Protestant auspices." The lengthy article closes with the words, "any one blessed with common sense and an ordinary amount of intelligence cannot help seeing how inconsistent, scandalous and sinful it is for Catholics to attend Protestant services." This is the kind of advice and caution, even prohibition, that is constantly rung into the ears of Catholics, young and old. The people cannot be trusted to decide for themselves, but like little children under tutelage must be hedged about by rules and mandates, especially those forbidding all contact with Protestants. To forbid the frequenting of the theater, the saloon, the dance hall or the gambling room would not excite surprise as that would evince a concern for the moral safety of the people, but to make it a sin to attend a Protestant service where God's word is preached, His praises sung and prayer offered, marks the limit of bigotry and intolerance. If it is a sin for a Catholic to attend a Protestant service, then it is a sin for any one to attend and such services should be suppressed by law. That is the logic of Rome and it has been enforced with cruel severity wherever she has had the power. Fortunately only the most ignorant and superstitious have ever heeded such an absurd and unreasonable restriction upon the rights of the individual conscience. The more intelligent and enlightened Catholics have too much sense to be bound by such a rule.