

# Dominion Presbyterian

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## NOTE AND COMMENT.

The reformed people of Germany are discussing how they shall honor John Calvin on the four hundredth anniversary of his birth in 1509.

Great Britain is rushing troops to Egypt in view of Turkey's action in holding the Sinai peninsula contrary to her protest.

The unveiling of an heroic statue of John Nicholson before the Cashmere Gate of Delhi is a worthy, though belated, tribute to one of the world's most gallant soldiers, and to one of the greatest figures of the Mutiny.

Opposition is growing in Germany against the present system of education, which gives so much time to the learning of dead languages. It is argued that the game it not worth the candle, except for those who intend to teach languages.

A Catholic priest, a Jewish Rabbi and representatives of six Protestant denominations united at a meeting last week in New York to plead for a more thorough religious education of children. The movement had its inception at the inter-church conference last fall.

The gold output of the Transvaal for March amounted to 543,723 ozs., of a total value of 1,884,815, pounds sterling, being an increase of 36,055 ozs. in weight and 153,151 pounds sterling, in value as compared with February, and constituting a record.

The distribution of active volcanoes, of which there are between three and four hundred now in existence, deserves study. They are found in greatest number on the shores of the Pacific ocean, where more than half of the now active volcanoes are situated. As a rule they are situated in the neighborhood of the sea, or of some considerable sheet of water.

The municipal authorities at St. Gall, Switzerland, have passed a by-law prohibiting smoking by minors. The penalty is five francs for the smokers and for any person furnishing boys tobacco in any form. Informers are also to receive a reward of five francs. The object of the law is to stamp out smoking among school-boys, which has recently increased to an alarming extent.

Prof. W. J. Pike, Professor of Latin at Queen's University for five years, is to retire owing to ill-health. He has been confined to his house since last fall. Queen's trustees paid the past year's salary and will give a retiring allowance for five years if he is unable to fulfil other duties. Prof. Pike is from Cambridge, Eng. The Latin chair will be filled for the opening of next session.

Dr. Alex. Robertson, the Scottish minister who so ably represents the Established Church of Scotland at Venice, and who recently received as a special mark of honor from the King of Italy the rank of Cavaliere, has been the recipient of a further flattering mark of his Italian Majesty's favor in the shape of an autograph portrait of King Victor Emmanuel III.

An Indian agent at Norway House reports that the region around the upper waters of Lake Winnipeg is very rich in mineral and will one day become the centre of a great mining industry. Canada, apparently, is in the very embarrassing condition of not being able to form any idea of how much she is worth. Every day brings discovery of unexpected resources.

The Presbyterian Church, along with other churches, has suffered great losses in San Francisco and vicinity. The Christian work of 56 years has been, in many instances, destroyed. It will take some time for Presbyterian interests to recover from the devastation.

Pope Pius is said to be greatly distressed because he cannot visit the scene of the Vesuvius eruption and console with the sufferers therefrom. This most human of all recent Popes is finding it somewhat difficult not to break away from that ancient and worn-out "prisoner of the Vatican" fiction and act as the ordinary common-sense individual would. If he is tempted overmuch he may do it yet.

The union movement among the three smaller Methodist bodies in England, the New Connexion, the Bible Christians, and the United Methodists, is progressing without a hitch. At a meeting of the Joint Committee, just held in London, there was not a divided vote on any one of the numerous questions that came up for settlement in connection with the working out of the details of the plan. It is thought now, says the Christian Guardian, that union will be consummated in 1907.

The Catholic Record, of London, proposes to await with great eagerness our reply to the question as to why so many Protestant parents send their boys and girls to the convent schools. The Christian Guardian's answer is given in just two words—"They don't." We have known of a very few instances of this being done, but we do not suppose that the reason once was that the parents had the idea that such schools were better for the moral and spiritual development of the child. It is on this ground that our Roman Catholic friends claim that their schools are superior, but the claim has lacked substantiation up to the present.

Booker Washington tells a story of being called upon to settle a dispute between a colored preacher and his congregation. They had refused to pay their pastor, and Mr. Washington had been brought in to try and argue them into a more liberal frame of mind. As he talked an aged brother in the back of the church kept repeating, "We ain't gwine to pay, we ain't gwine to pay 'im." After being interrupted several times, Mr. Washington asked the old man why he objected to paying the preacher. "Because we paid 'im foah dem same sermons las' year," was the reply. We do not say that this story has any application outside a negro community, but it might have.

The statistical returns of the German universities, just published, contain some rather startling facts in regard to the decline of the number of Protestant students in theology. Twenty years ago there were 2,610 students studying theology in the different universities of the empire; today there are only 993. The decline has been a steady one throughout these years, and it appears in a still worse light when we remember that the increase in the number of all other classes of students has more than kept pace with the increase in population. The number of Roman Catholic students in theology also shows a healthy increase. Is it the rationalism of the German school that is chilling the ardor of the young men for the work of the Christian ministry? There does not seem to be any more likely reason to hand.

Popular education and Bible study in India have broken down the adoration formerly paid to the priests, and many of them are taking to secular callings.

A London despatch says: In exposing a spiritualistic pretender during a 'seance' at Bay-water, Dr. Wallace discovered a secret recess in which were stored these articles used in imposing upon the credulous: A collapsible dummy head, made of pink stockinet, with flesh-colored mask; teeth pieces of stockinet gummed over the eye-holes; the loose stockinet probably was used to represent the shrunken skin at the neck; six pieces of fine white China silk, containing in all thirteen cards; two pieces of fine black cloth (doubtless used in the so-called demonizations); three beards of various shades, two wigs, one white and one grey; an extendible metal coat-hanger for suspending drapery to represent the second form, with an iron hook on which to hang the form; a small flash electric lamp with four cards of wire with switch, which could be used when the medium was away from the cabinet to produce so-called lights within and a bottle of scent.

The correspondent of a contemporary recalls a remarkable prophecy by Robert Louis Stevenson. In an account on San Francisco the novelist wrote as follows:—"Thus in the course of a generation only this city and its suburbs have arisen. Men are alive by the score who have hunted all over the foundations in a dreary waste, but I wonder what enchantment of the Arabian Nights can have called this evocation of a roaring city in a few years of a man's life from the marshes and the blowing sand. Such swiftness of increase, as with an overgrown youth, suggests a corresponding swiftness of destruction. We are in early geological epochs changeable and insecure, and we feel, as with a sculptor's model, that the author may yet grow weary of and shatter the rough sketch."

By way of unwelcome and most unpleasant contrast with the heavy run of statistics showing to the advantage of Manitoba, this Province, says the Manitoba Free Press, heads the list for convictions for drunkenness in the annual book of criminal statistics which has just been issued at Ottawa covering the year 1904. This is the most belated of the blue books. In Manitoba the number of convictions for drunkenness in 1904 was 8,19 per 1,000 of the population, as against 5.07 the year before; in British Columbia, 5.93 as against 6.63; in Nova Scotia, 5.06; as against 5.9; New Brunswick, 5.01 as against 4.37; in the Territories, 4.99 as against 5.06; in Prince Edward Island, 2.84 as against 2.68; in Ontario, 2.47, as against 2.30; in Quebec, 2.34 as against 1.80. Manitoba not only heads the list, but shows a marked increase over the record of the year before.

Lutheran Observer: How insignificant the calming of a few yards of troubled water by pouring oil on the sea, when we think of the Master's "peace be still!" and the winds and the waves obeyed him. How slight the triumphs of medical skill compared to the word and the touch that gave healing and sight! How trivial the wireless telegraph, the telephone, the microscope, the telescope, as over against the power of him who hears the whispered prayer, who sees the inmost thought. When we think of these things the Psalmist's cry, "What is man that thou art mindful of him," comes to mind, and our vain-glory and self-sufficiency fall away.