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NOTE AND COMMENT

Tolstoy's eightieth birthday will come on August 28, in Russia, which is September 10, in Canada. It is likely to be celebrated throughout the world.

The bravest action brought to the notice of the Royal Humane Society during the year is that of William H. Parr, a young sailor from Enfield, who has been awarded the Stanhope Gold Medal. He rescued a comrade from the shark-infested sea off East Africa, remaining in the water half an hour.

The only places of which we know where at the polls two whiskey voters are equal to three temperance voters are New Zealand and Ontario, i.e., out of about 3,000,000 English-speaking people about 3,000,000 count the bar-room loafer's vote worth fifty per cent. more than the preachers. How long will this last? Asks the Christian Guardian.

Says the British Weekly: The Rev. Thomas Barclay, M. A., who is a well-known missionary of the Church labouring in the island of Formosa, has just come to England on furlough with his wife. He accomplished the journey from Japan in eighteen days, via the Trans-Siberian Railway. Two days were spent in Moscow and one in Berlin.

Union prospects are not particularly cheering in India. The committee appointed two years ago to work for one consolidated Protestant church in India reported that the idea is not feasible owing to the attitude of the Episcopalians and Baptists, and it was instructed to substitute federation for organic union as an objective in its programme.

One of Haydn's friends asked how it happened that his Church music was almost always of an animating, cheerful, and even festive quality. The great composer replied: "I can not make it otherwise. I write according to the thoughts I feel. When I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be easily forgiven me that I serve him with a cheerful spirit."

In England the Presbyterian church offers the true asylum for Evangelical Episcopalians who are aggrieved by the antics of the Romanisers. It now appears that it is becoming the refuge of Evangelical Congregationalists, who are offended and alienated by the Unitarian teaching of the New Theology. Presbyterianism, with its historic dignity, its democratic polity, its Evangelical faith and worship, its educated Ministry, is just what England needs in the present crisis of religious affairs.

The Rev. Dr. Sage Mackay, of the Collegiate Church of New York, of which President Roosevelt, Mrs. Russell Sage and Miss Helen M. Gould are all members, has had a nervous breakdown, and has been granted a year's leave of absence, the congregation supplying the pulpit during this time. As a token of their esteem the congregation have also presented Dr. Mackay with a cheque for £4,000. Dr. Mackay is at present in Arizona, but it is expected he will spend part of the summer in Scotland, where his brother, Rev. W. Mackintosh Mackay, is minister of Sherbrooke U. F. Church, Glasgow.

The mortal remains of Emanuel Swedenborg, after resting in the vault at the Swedish Church, Prince's-square, St. George's-in-the-East, for 136 years, are, according to the Morning Light, a Swedish journal, shortly to be removed to Sweden and reinterred there, next to those of the eminent chemist, Berzelius. The application was made a few years ago, but it was refused by the British Government. Now that the application has come from the Swedish Government itself, the request has been acceded to.

Harper's Weekly sometime ago contained the following note of more than local interest: "The Ottawa river, on which the city stands, is one of the most beautiful rivers in the world. Finer scenery than that which adorns its banks cannot be found anywhere. Whether it derives its name from the old tribe of Ottawas, who are now dying out on Manitoulin island, on Lake Huron, or whether they borrowed their name from it, can never be known. The word signifies, strangely enough, 'the human ear.'"

A wicked woman working in one of the great paper mills of Glasgow was converted through the efforts of a city missionary, and became a person of great devoutness of character. She described the process of her salvation in these terms: "I was like the rags that go into the paper mill. They are torn and filthy, but they come out clear, white paper. That is like what Jesus is doing for me." That is, indeed, the work which the great Redeemer is doing for millions of our race. That is the method by which the kingdom of God is being made triumphant in the earth.

For two years now, the Orange Association of Ontario has given of its funds to assist in the cause of French evangelization by the different religious denominations. "Last year six hundred dollars in all was contributed to the funds of the churches which maintain missions in the neighboring Province." This year the amount has been increased to eight hundred dollars, the two Grand Lodges of Ontario contributing to the donation. We believe, says the Canadian Baptist, that the editor of our esteemed contemporary, The Sentinel, Mr. H. C. Hocken, is largely responsible for this practical expression of the desire of Orangemen to do more for their Roman Catholic fellow-citizens than to condemn them and their religious and political methods.

Strangely enough the first settlers in America, the Spaniards, are the most stay-at-home of all the Southern European races. Emigration has been opposed on account of the loss to the nation, but the poverty is now so great, wages so low and the change from an agricultural to an industrial country going on, that some solution is imperative, and emigration seems the only way. At present about 55,000 leave the country each year, principally for South America. This is the natural destination of the Spanish emigrant. There in the country settled by his forefathers, he finds his own language spoken, his books read, habits and laws the same, varied only by the needs of a new, rich and progressive continent. Aggressive missionary work is carried on by several Protestant churches, at widely separated points from Venezuela to Argentine.

The French Senate, by an overwhelming majority has concurred in a bill recently passed by the Chamber of Deputies to automatically convert a decree of separation into a divorce at the end of three years, when either party to the separation requested it. M. Bourget, while reaffirming his irreconcilable opposition to the principle of divorce, says he is not surprised either at the Senate's action or the expression of public opinion. "As a student of moral public opinion," said he, "I long ago foresaw what France was coming to. We are hurrying toward 'free union.' As a Frenchman, I am profoundly grieved to witness this further step into the abyss."

Protestant missions have long vainly sought admission to Tibet and Abyssinia. Tibet is yet practically inaccessible, but Abyssinia has now opened its doors. The present king, who boasts his descent from the Queen of Sheba, has awakened to the superior value of modern knowledge, and the Swedish missionaries who have been laboring on the borders of this closed land have been allowed an entrance. The priestly opposers carried promptly to the king the printed gospels which the missionaries distributed, but the king, instead of exiling the missionaries, said: "I have read these books. They are good. Let the people read them, too." He issued an order that all children above seven years old should go to school, promising to pay the salaries of any competent teachers the missionaries might supply.

The Presbyterians of Philadelphia are greatly troubled over the announcement by Dr. Robert E. Thompson that he is not only opposed to local option, but is in favor of permitting the Lord's Day to be used for the traffic in intoxicants. And worse still, he has used his position as instructor to instill in the minds of young men views that he knew would be abhorrent to the great majority of their parents. The Presbyterian ministers at their weekly meeting considered his case and referred it to a committee to report upon it at their next meeting. An exchange says that Dr. Thompson has enjoyed the confidence of Presbyterians of Philadelphia and has been a welcome supply in many pulpits, but that it is doubtful if he will be permitted this privilege while holding the views he is credited with.

A veteran pastor, and one for whose judgment we have the greatest respect, writes this about the repeating of sermons: "Every minister owes it to his people as well as to himself to write in his lifetime a dozen or a score of sermons in which he would be willing to go to posterity. Such sermons must be on topics or truths of perennial interest. The repetition of sermons of that character will often be asked for by those who have heard them. This gives the minister the opportunity for revision—something he will find he needs as he looks over a manuscript cold. I have used one sermon forty-one times (many times in the same place by request), and it has had forty one revisions. I have never preached when my sermons did not at the time, represent my thought and conviction. I have never preached an old sermon. A strong reason for preaching sermons is that a new generation of thinkers will appear every three, five or seven years."