

# Dominion Presbyterian

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## Note and Comment.

A Scotchman has published a letter, in which he contends that the best memorial to John Knox would be a union of the sundered Presbyterianism of Scotland.

Hitherto Iceland has enjoyed the distinction of being the only country without a railroad, but it is now to have a short one, for the purpose of working some sulphur mines at Theiststarky, about seventeen miles from Huavik, the nearest harbour.

In the Maritime Provinces there are between 30 and 40 ordained missionaries laboring in our varied Presbyteries supplying 100 preaching stations. One result of their labors is that over 200 are yearly led to profession of faith in Christ—in the mission fields thus cultivated.

Rev. J. A. McKean, the present moderator of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, commenced his labors as a catechist at Quoddy and Moser river, Halifax county, 28 year ago. He is a native of Tatamagouche, N.S.

In Germany when a person breaks down with consumption, he is sent to a Government sanatorium, where he is kept until he recovers or dies. In the meantime his family receive a weekly pension from a fund to which the patient himself contributed when he was in good health. By this means the risk of spreading the disease is avoided.

War on the liquor traffic has broken out in Newfoundland, the government having appointed a commission to investigate and report upon the liquor laws now in force in the province, no doubt with a view to making them more stringent in a good part of Newfoundland, under local option provisions in the liquor laws, the people have succeeded in suppressing the traffic.

A year ago Sir Ernest Cassel placed at the disposal of the Egyptian government \$40,000 to be used for the benefit of sufferers from disease of the eye. A travelling hospital has been accordingly established under the direction of Mr. A. F. MacCallan, formerly of the London Ophthalmic Hospital. The hospital consists of several tents, and is moved from place to place, to obviate the necessity of patients making long journeys to obtain treatment.

Another Presbyterian minister in Nova Scotia has just celebrated his ministerial jubilee—Rev. James McLean a native of Pictou county which has given so many ministers to the Presbyterian church of Canada. He is now 76 years of age, and retired from active congregational work in September, 1900 though he still does good service in the home mission field. He ministered one year in Mabou, C.B., twenty-one years in Shubenacadie, N.S., and twenty-four years in Great Village, N.S. He was licensed to preach the gospel in 1854.

One of the most remarkable railroads in the world is the Oroyo, in Peru, which runs from Callao to the gold fields of Cerro de Pasco. Commencing in Callao, it ascends the narrow valley of the Rimac, rising nearly 5,000 feet in the first fifty-six miles. Thence it goes through the intricate gorges of the Sierras till it tunnels the Andes at an altitude of 15,645 feet the highest point in the world where a piston rod is moved by steam. The wonder is doubled on remembering that this elevation is reached in seventy eight miles.

Speaking of the proposed union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches of Canada, the Belfast Witness says: "This most desirable consolidation of Christian forces seems in a fair way of being realised in Canada; and if in Canada, why not also in our countries? What overlapping waste of effort and of money, competition and sheep stealing, petty irritation and paltry rivalry will be averted, and made to cease by this piece of truly Christian policy."

Mr. Archibald McTaggart, a farmer of Elgin county, Ont., celebrated his hundredth birthday two weeks ago. In a great gathering, at which there were present no fewer than eighty-two of the McTaggart family, including children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. One of the principal speakers on the occasion was Dr. Colin McTaggart, who had come 250 miles to attend the celebration, and who declared that his venerable uncle's long life and present health were directly attributable to the temperance habits which he had practiced so long.

When the volcanic eruptions in Guatemala last year covered the coffee plantations, it was believed that the industry was ruined and that Guatemala had received a blow from which recovery would be slow. Many planters abandoned their ash covered plantations and believed themselves ruined. But the activity of the volcanoes was followed by heavy and long continued rains, which washed away a great deal of the ashes and incorporated more of them with the soil. The result is a crop nearly as large again as last year's. Hereafter, when the volcanoes of Guatemala erupt and spout ashes, the only unfortunate coffee planters will be those whose fields are outside of the showers.

Shop-keepers who do a business by mail some times are the recipients of curious letters. Here is one that was recently received by a London firm from a gold miner in Alaska. "Gentlemen,—Enclosed you will find an envelope which you will tear up in small pieces and place in a glass of water; let it soak for an hour or so, then stir and drain off slowly; add more water and drain and you will find thirty grains of gold for which you will send me a stylographic pen wrapped up in a late newspaper." These instructions were duly carried out, and the gold valued at 5s. obtained, in exchange for which the ingenious miner was sent a stylographic pen wrapped up in two newspapers.

The tendency of French priests to leave the Roman communion continues strong

and steady. One of these, the Abbe Bois-seau, says the Belfast Witness, in renouncing that church, writes to his bishop—"As a child I had a naive belief in the Catholic religion. As a youth the object of my studies was to become a priest. As a Levite, burning with zeal, kneeling at the foot of the cross, in the solitude of my cell, I have often wished to die as a martyr to my faith. The martyrdom has come, but under another form. It came in the day when study, reflection, and experience, turning my ideas towards that free examination which has been excommunicated by infallible dogma, proved to me that the church of Rome has withdrawn itself from the spirit of Christ, and has become by its varyings and human doctrines an institution which enslaves rather than delivers the conscience." It is said that many priests in the mental recoil and revolt have given up all religion.

A Welsh Episcopalian minister prints in his parish magazine some pointed remarks on the stinginess of his congregation. He says—"The average Churchman, who contributes his 5s or 10s a year towards his church, thinks that he has accomplished a feat of marvellous generosity, while his fellow-Nonconformist, no better circumstanced than he in life, contributes as many pounds as he does shillings in the year." This complaint leads the Belfast Witness to say: "This seems to us to be a strong argument for Church Disestablishment and Disendowment in Wales, but we do not discover that Mr. Jones draws his moral. The example here in Ireland points definitely in that direction. Since Disestablishment Irish Episcopals have immensely improved in their givings to Church objects. And look at the tremendous outburst of liberality in Scotland when the Free Church was formed in 1843, and ever since."

A Presbyterian missionary writing from Liaoyang, Manchuria, to friends in Scotland gives the following respecting Sabbath observance: "I find the people more susceptible to spiritual impression just now, probably on account of the crisis through which their country is passing. For example, a very interesting incident occurred at the close of the usual Bible class, at which 350 would be present in the city here last Sabbath. The subject happened to be Sabbath observance. As you are aware, we have experienced great difficulty all over Manchuria in impressing the native Christians with the duty of keeping the Sabbath by not trading or pursuing their ordinary occupations. After studying the subject, with special reference to the passage in the last chapter of Nehemiah. I invited those who had been making a first stand in a year just closed to state their experiences; whereupon two merchants, a joiner, a teacher, a farmer, and a petty officer rose and warmly affirmed that, apart from spiritual gain altogether, they had never known a year so materially prosperous to them. They had not only no hesitation in continuing the practice of strict Sabbath observance, but strongly advised all hearers to cast in their lot with them in this matter." Very remarkable testimony from such a service.