

Dominion Presbyterian

\$1.50 PER ANNUM.

OTTAWA, MONTREAL, TORONTO AND WINNIPEG

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Note and Comment.

Nova Scotia is to have another Presbyterian centennial celebration—that of Rev. Matthew Dripps, who came out from Scotland in 1798. After laboring for some years as an evangelist he was settled in Shelburne in 1805, and where he labored for twenty-three years until his death in 1828. While laboring as an evangelist he visited P. E. Island, Bay of Chaleurs and even Quebec and Montreal. It is a good thing to keep alive the memories of the grand old heroes who did so much to lay solid the foundations of our common Presbyterianism in this Canada of ours.

Austria is going ahead pretty rapidly just at present in the matter of temperance legislation. There is a Bill before Parliament this session which, if passed into law, will have a very drastic way of dealing with habitual drunkards. The Bill provides that a person convicted ten times for drunkenness in a given period shall not be allowed off by paying a fine or putting in so many days or weeks in prison, but shall be sent to a State Reformatory, where they will be imprisoned until they receive a medical certificate that their craving for strong drink is gone. It will be interesting to watch if this law is passed, and if passed, will it become what so many of our own temperance measures have become, simply dead letters.

The Presbyterians of the Maritime Provinces have stated in to wipe out a debt of \$25,000 in their foreign mission fund. Already over \$900 have been sent into the treasury in sums varying from \$5 to \$100 with one of \$250. They never do anything by halves in the provinces down by the sea. It was in Picton, N. S. that the foreign missionary enterprise of the Presbyterians of Canada had its birth in 1844. The synod which launched the undertaking consisted of 24 ministers and 15 elders, representing a membership of 5000 members. The first foreign mission fund amounted to \$1000. It was the day of small things, but look at the enterprise now. The synod of the Maritime Provinces now has eight missionaries to the heathen, with 34 ordained preachers, 78 unordained preachers and 94 catechists, and this year calls for a fund of \$40,000. The first foreign missionary was Rev. John Geddie who landed in Aneityum, New Hebrides in 1848, returning from work in 1862.

Our duty to the stranger. Here is an illustration which we find in the Presbyterian Standard: A man was going away to work for the summer in a neighboring town. He was commended to the pastor of the church in the town. The stranger went to the church for several Sundays and was received coldly. No one spoke to him or seemed to care anything about him. Naturally he began to drift and soon stopped his attendance upon the services altogether. The next summer the same man went to another town to work. This pastor wrote to the pastor in the second town. This pastor took an interest in him, going to the place where he was laboring and speaking to him. The

natural fruit of this was that the man attended the services of the church regularly and when he returned to his home town, it was with a spiritual uplift as the result of his summer's experience. And it is just as important that the people of the congregation take notice of strangers as that the pastor should.

Some months ago an employee of the government printing office at Washington was expelled from the Bookbinders' Union. This brought on a direct conflict between the government and organized labor. The Union demanded that he be discharged and he was. Later he was re-instated by the President's order. The men at first threatened to strike and then they decided to wait until their charges against Miller could be examined. Miller says that he was expelled from the Union because of his having saved expenses for the Government instead of making more work for the members of the Union. That labor organization evidently did not know or think of the Golden Rule, or of the particular clause of that rule known as the Eighth Commandment.

A correspondent of the Belfast Witness, who has been travelling in Eastern countries, writes as follows to that paper: "I have recently returned from an interesting tour in France, Italy, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Greece, and I have no doubt you would like to hear how temperance and Gospel work progresses in these countries. I noticed that though in none of the above countries was the degrading spectacle of open drunkenness so often seen as in our own land, still the twin curses, alcohol and nicotine were everywhere visible and making their presence and their power felt. Especially was this power noticeable in the effect these agents had on the general health and wellbeing of the people. But still signs of genuine progress are not wanting. As, for example, in the American College at Assiout I was pleased to find that the entire students, 500 in number, were teetotallers and non-smokers, and that the evil effects of such poisons as alcohol, nicotine, opium, &c., on the human body was regularly taught in connection with the study of physiology and hygiene. I found the same satisfactory state of affairs in existence at the magnificent Syrian Protestant College at Beyrout, and in many other mission schools all over the country.

During the past summer the London Daily News made an enumeration of the attendance at all the places of worship in London. The enumeration or "church census," as it was sometimes called, awakened a good deal of interest among the Christian people and the final results are being freely discussed. The figures published by the Daily News indicate that only one in four of the whole population of London attend public worship on Sunday. The aggregate attendance on the given day was 1,002,940 of these 430,153 were found in the Church of England, 416,225 were found in the different Nonconformist churches, 93,572 were found in Roman Catholic chapels, and 62,990 were found at other services. Among Nonconformists the proportion of men was greater

than among the Anglicans. There had been a marked decrease during the past seventeen years in the attendance upon the Church of England services—a decrease of about 150,000 at the very time that the population of London has increased nearly half a million. Naturally earnest enquiries are being made by the churches and by religious papers as to the causes of this declension. One Anglican paper traces the trouble, among other things to "the spread of Sunday amusements," and strange to say, "to the over-elaboration of musical services." A paper which is spoken of as a "high authority" endorses this view by deploring "the bad influence of over-ornamental services." The "embellishment of plain Scriptural services," it confesses, instead of attracting the bulk of the non-church going population or even retaining those who were in the church, "had the opposite effect." There is a lesson in this for those people in Presbyterian churches in this country who have persuaded themselves that non-church goers are to be attracted to and retained in the churches by tacking on to the old-time effective prayer, praise and preaching services, elaborate musical services by the choir—something like a sacred concert, quite appropriate for a week day, but not quite in keeping with the solemnity of well-ordered public worship. It will be safe and wise to guard against the "embellishment of plain Scriptural services" by such adventitious aids as have so signally failed in London.

Attention is drawn in another paragraph to the discussion which has been evoked among the ministers and religious journals of Great Britain over the revelations of decline in the church attendance in London made by the Daily News of that city. Embellishment of plain Scriptural services by "over-elaboration of musical services" has signally failed to arrest the decline, but there are other serious views of the situation deserving of note. A Dublin man lamenting to the Belfast Witness the spread of Sunday amusements in the Irish capital, even among Protestants, "greatly feared the Church was being swamped by the worldliness and secularisation of the Sabbath on the part of many of its members." A non-conformist Minister of London said that latterly there had been too great a tendency to sugar over the demands of Christ and of His Gospel; to take far too low ground instead of commanding, as did Christ and His Apostles, all men everywhere to repent and believe the Gospel that all men should be called upon, not with bated breath or whispering humbleness, to worship God, to believe in Christ, to obey His word in everything. He deplored the present tendency among many Churches to flatter the rich, to coax and coddle the poor. This is very plain speaking, but no plainer than is needed. Reviewing the situation thus depicted the Belfast Witness says: "And so the end of the whole matter is, let the church and all its ministers and members get back again to the simple and plain Gospel with all authority; for it is still the power of God unto salvation."

Christ always speaks to the best there is in us. His call is ever to the highest and noblest. That which is base and untrue is never excited by the Seer of Nazareth.