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Note and Comment.

The State of California has by a considerable majority resolved to exempt Church property from taxation.

The Old First Church, New York, of which Dr. Duffield is pastor, is the first Presbyterian church to open daily for prayer and meditation.

It is said that the Sultan of Turkey is becoming scared at the return of so many Jews to Palestine. He fears the establishment of a new Israel.

Signor Marconi has invented a means of ensuring the privacy of wireless telegrams by a system of "tuning" the transmitting and receiving instruments together.

The telegraph from the African Coast to Lake Victoria Nyanza has been completed, and according to the Electric Engineer, London, it will be of great advantage to inhabitants of Lower Egypt.

Australia offered a prize of £25,000 to any one who would rid the country of rabbits, but after several people had tried their hands, no more satisfactory solution was found than that of eating them.

According to Mr. Douglas Story, the most dignified of all the Boer generals is General Delary, who has the appearance of a Hebrew patriarch and the manners of an old-time French seigneur.

The senseless custom of docking horses' tails is doomed in England at least, as the Queen has sent out an order that none of her horses shall be docked, and the Prince of Wales, it is announced, shall follow her example.

It is proposed to bring a number of selected Filipino young men and women to the United States to be educated as teachers. They would be sent back after a short course to teach in the public schools of the island.

A demonstration was given in London of shorthand typewriting by the blind. A machine recently invented is automatic in its working and the operator can maintain a speed of seventy words a minute from dictation.

The flags to be hoisted at one time in signaling at sea never exceed four. It is an interesting arithmetical fact that, with eighteen various colored flags, and never more than four at a time, no fewer than 78,642 signals can be given.

Ontario, says the Globe, made the record of a mineral output valued at eight and three-quarter million dollars last year. This gave employment to 10,000 men, who earned close on three million dollars in wages. The value of the output was 21-1/2 per cent, greater than for the previous year.

A Detroit paper publishes a list of 68 of the most prominent business houses in Detroit which forbids employees under the age of 21 from smoking cigarettes either in or out of the store with the knowledge of the management, under penalty of dismissal. It will be a good day for our youth when Canadian business men take similar action.

War brings grief to some, dividends to others. The South African transport service was a fruitful source of profit to the P. and O. Company last year. In spite of a falling-off of the actual freight earned and passenger receipts, the company's revenue amounted to £1,915,841—a large increase beyond the returns of the previous year, which is exclusively due to transport work.

The poor in New South Wales are to be given pensions. The Legislature has agreed upon an old age pension bill. The bill provides that every man who has resided continuously in the colony for twenty-five years and has reached the age of sixty-five years will be entitled to a pension of £65 pounds a year. Should husband and wife be eligible each will receive £19 10s. extra. It will be interesting to watch the working of the plan.

Dr. Paton has given notice in Glasgow, Presbytery of an overture calling upon the General Assembly to take preliminary steps towards a federal union of the churches in Scotland, in view of the fact that "it had been clearly shown by the terms on which several branches of the Reformed Churches in Scotland have become united that there is no insuperable barrier to a federation union of a comprehensive and national character."

The Russian bear, after all, seems likely to be the first to climb the North Pole. The Czar's famous ice-breaking steamer, built in England, by the bye, is to go over and through the ice until the coveted goal is reached. Perry, Nansen, and the other explorers now on the trail, will have to hurry up if they want to beat this remarkable ship, for she was constructed by the Armstrongs, at enormous expense, for the purpose of keeping open Russian ports on the Gulf of Finland.

Who can deny that the hand of Providence is stretched out to the starving people of India, for on the trees of the bamboo forests has appeared a palatable gum that is being consumed as a food. The story is like the Bible story of the manna in the wilderness. This is said to be the first time in history that these trees have been known to exude this gummy substance which is sweet and is also nourishing, and is abundant in the several provinces, where the scarcity of food is extreme.

According to a statement in the "Daily Chronicle," a curious funeral took place a few days ago at Goeschenen, in Switzerland, when a coffin was interred containing a portion of a leg, a boot, some fragments of garments, and some francs. It is now 18 years since a mayor of the Commune and two citizens of Berne perished in a glacier. The remains of these latter were caught in a crevasse, and only a portion could be recovered. The glacier has now (as is usually the case eventually) rendered up all, even the coins.

The Waldeck-Rousseau ministry in France has done much to redeem the reputation of France abroad, although it evidently does not represent France, and has continued because there is nothing to take its place. It may save France by bringing the people to its way of thinking. There are indications of popularity in the provinces. At a great banquet to M. Waldeck at Toulouse, the Premier was enthusiastically received. In his speech he announced that the government had emphatically resolved to oppose the influence of clericalism in politics, and to maintain the liberty of religion and of conscience.

The rumour that with the burning of the famous Hanlin library at Peking the priceless treasures stored there had been irretrievably lost is not altogether correct. For two days before the disaster scores of carts were seen carrying off books. The annals of the present dynasty would of course be saved. It is surprising that the annals of the Ming dynasty were not also taken away; but, instead, they were afterwards thrown carelessly about, many of them into the muddy water close by. These annals were large pamphlets bound in Imperial yellow silk. They were most carefully and beautifully copied like the Hebrew Bible in the olden time. A large pile of these were saved and taken into Sir Claude MacDonald's house, to be returned when the proper time shall come. Many of them were, however, ruined.

Reports from Japan are that Russia is invading Korea, and has already captured Koojo and the entire of Anglong Ken. Naturally this rouses Japan and the center of Asiatic interest may soon be transferred from Peking to Seoul. There is also said to be an anti-foreign movement in Korea for which Russia is responsible, and which has for its object the creation of hostility to Japan. A conflict between Japan and Russia is by no means improbable.

Rev. Murdo Macaskill, of Dingwall, has issued a pastoral letter declaring that after a ministry of seventeen years in his Dingwall charge he has not deviated from the first message he delivered, which was of Christ in his threefold offices—as Prophet, Priest and King. He says that he is pained beyond expression to see the present state of things in the Highlands, but he leaves it all with God. The only remedy is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to turn men's minds from thoughtless controversy to the higher interests of their souls' salvation, and the winning of the world for Christ.

There are many who would not be surprised says "Marmaduke" in the "Graphic," were the Cabinet to undergo several important changes shortly before Parliament reassembles next year. It is not altogether improbable that Lord Salisbury may be only in office for a while—that is, until the war in South Africa is ended, and he has guided Lord Lansdowne sufficiently at the Foreign Office. Many believe that Lord Salisbury might resign the Premiership before Parliament reassembles in the New Year, should circumstances enable him to do so, whilst others are convinced that the session 1900-01 will be the last he will attend in an official capacity.

Glauco Lord Rectors used to have the right to nominate eight or ten men for the degree of LL.D. Mr. Gladstone and others made use of the right, but it was some years ago taken away. "It's not fair at all," Lord Rosebery is credited by "M. A. P." with saying, "to take away these little pickings. Why," said he, "the Lord Rector has now no prerogatives at all." "No," replied one of his student hearers, "he has no prerogative left except the right of demanding a holiday for the students." And Lord Rosebery's r'acid face, goes the story, broke into an amused smile, which seemed to say clearly that he would not allow the sole remaining right to lapse through want of exercise.

The fact that the Boers are all mounted is the reason that they had the temerity to declare war against us; the fact that they remain mounted enables them to prolong the war, and if they are allowed to remain mounted, to renew it as often as they like. Horses, indeed, writes a correspondent to the Pall Mall Gazette, are the cause of the continuance of the war. Sweep the horses out of any district and no Boer in that district will venture to lift a finger against us. To arrest the war it is only necessary to sweep all horses, ponies, and mules out of the country, and to make the possession of such animals by a Boer a criminal offence. Guns and ammunition can be easily smuggled into the country and concealed, but animals cannot.

For a story of the Duchess of York and China "The Gem" is responsible. It says that the Duchess in speaking to certain Girls' Society, said: "When I was a school girl I disliked geography with all my heart, and am afraid that I was very ignorant on the subject. Once I was set a map of the world to do from memory—the outline only. When showing it to my governess when completed, she said in quite an alarmed manner, "Why, you have left out China! Don't you know where it is?" "Yes," I replied, very stubbornly, but very loyally, "I know where it should be, but I am not going to put it in my map. The Queen is angry with China now, so it has no right to have a place in the world at all."