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Note and Comment.

Russia has only 779 periodicals printed in eight languages. Russian absolutism does not thrive where freedom of the press is allowed.

A missionary conference in New York has reported against abandoning work in China, and moderate indemnity demands were favored.

In Scotland what promised to be one of the most fruitful harvests experienced for years, has been turned into a disappointing failure by bad weather.

It is reported from Chinese sources that the Dowager Empress has issued a secret edict commanding Li Hung Chang to raise an army and recapture Peking.

The new King of Italy is virtually a teetotaler. At State banquets he is said to have been served with a drink manufactured on purpose for him. It looked like champagne but contained no alcohol.

"Just home from London, eh?" "Yes," replied the Western man. "I took in everything worth seeing in the town." "How did St. Paul's Cathedral impress you?" "Didn't go near it. I'm a Minneapolis man myself."

Mr. Kruger has succeeded too long in his game of bluff, and now that recognition of the inevitable can no longer be avoided, he callously abandons his dupes to their fate, and with his millions in his pockets betakes himself to safety and luxury.

Formosa produces by far the greatest quantity of camphor. The annual output amounts to between six million and seven million pounds, while the Japanese annual production is about three hundred thousand, and that of China two hundred and twenty thousand pounds.

It is reported that Great Britain has sent a note to the Dutch government which contains a warning that if Mr. Kruger is allowed to carry bullock or state archives on board the Dutch warship, which is to bring him to Europe, it will be regarded as a breach of neutrality on the part of the Netherlands.

A letter has been published in Moscow from Sven Anders Hedin, a traveler, in which he mentions an excursion into Tibet in a direction never before attempted by Europeans. He succeeded in reaching Lake Lobnor, on the shores of which he discovered the remains of an ancient city. The ruins were magnificent and were intersected by broad roads.

The voting for a successor to the Rev. Principal Marshall Lang in the Barony Parish, Glasgow, took place last week in the presence of a deputation from the Presbytery, Dr. M'Adam Muir presiding. The only name proposed was that of Rev. Thomas E. Martin, St. Mary's Church, Edinburgh. The vote was—for Mr. Martin 787, against 11.

"Make Toronto a convention city," says one of the local papers. "It can't be done," remarks the Free Press. "Cities cannot make themselves convention cities. The conventions do the making, and they have already made Ottawa the Convention City of the Dominion." But after all, Toronto will come in for a share of the great meetings that take place every year.

By a slip of the pen we credited the Toronto Star instead of the Toronto Weekly Sun, with the article on Dr. Gray and pioneer Presbyterianism about Lake Simcoe. In directing our attention to the error the Ontario Picket very properly says: "As the work in question involves much labor and expense and is most creditably done, it is important that the honor should be given where it belongs."

Dr. Alexander McLaren, who has been 42 years pastor in Manchester, England, has been given two months' leave of absence, with a purse of £500, so that he can again visit Egypt, where he desires to examine much that escaped his observation fifteen year ago.

Matters are progressing in the Holy Land. The pious tourist who has been accustomed to see the Dead Sea dead to all but skiff navigation will shortly behold the startling question of motor boats, plying between Jerusalem and Kervak, the capital of ancient Moab. The Greek Monastery at Jerusalem has commissioned a Hamburg firm to construct several boats. The first one is to be called "Prodomos," or the Pioneer.

Like most women of taste, Her Majesty is a lover of beautiful lace. Our Sovereign has never permitted cotton articles to be used in the Royal palaces, even in the kitchen cloths being of flax. All the Queen's bedding is marked with a small "Q" in red cotton over a crown, under which comes the "V. R." Needless to say, no sewing machine is allowed to play a part in making any of these articles, and the stitching is of itself a work of art.

An examination in the evidence of the recent outbreak against the colored people proves that the New York police acted up to their traditions of unredeemed brutality. A negro went down Eighth Avenue on a bicycle. He knew nothing of the disturbance and was guiltless of any disorder, but the police dragged him down, clubbed him severely, and demoralized his machine, as a warning, I presume, to persons of African blood who dared to ride bicycles.

There is one good thing we cheerfully award to Orillia, the pretty town on Lake Couchiching. In it is published probably the best local paper in Canada. The Packet contains from week to week, a full record of local happenings, its columns are always clean; and good morals, temperance and prohibition, ever find in its columns earnest and intelligent advocacy. Such a paper is a standing advertisement of inestimable value for the locality in which it is published.

The English Wesleyan statistics show an alarming decrease under almost every head. There is a decrease in the number of teachers and officers, in the number of scholars, and in the average attendance of teachers. The average morning attendance of scholars shows a decline of 8,460, and the average afternoon attendance a decline of 7,042. The United Methodist Free Church has to face statistics of a similar kind. It is said that the more notable decreases are amongst the teachers and elder scholars.

Although the population of Great Britain is increasing at the rate of 300,000 a year, the number of Sunday school teachers everywhere declines. In the church of England they have fallen off by 7,000. The Baptists report a decrease of 7,000; the Calvinistic Methodists of 4,200, the Presbyterians of 1,200, the United Methodist Free Church of 3,000, the Free Church of Scotland of 4,300, and other denominations complain of similar losses. These figures show a decrease of 32,000 in one year, and it is no wonder that the leaders of the churches are alarmed.

M. Pietro Pellegrini, an Italian scientist, has lately published the results of his researches upon mushrooms of the poisonous variety, of which the following resume may be given: The poison of mushrooms dissolves easily in water and the aqueous extract keeps its toxic properties for a long time, these having been strongly marked at the end of eleven months. The poisonous action is not diminished by the drying of the mushrooms by heat. Mammals and birds show a great sensibility to the poison, even in feeble doses, but on the contrary it is without effect upon cold-blooded animals. The action is shown very clearly when it is injected under the skin; animals, when subjected to frequent injections of this kind, acquire a certain immunity, and the serum of these animals may be used as a remedy in cases of poisoning.

The statue of Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, Canada's honored statesman, which will at an early day be erected on Parliament Square, Ottawa, represents the Liberal statesman in the attitude of addressing the House, his right hand slightly raised, his features betokening the grave earnestness which was his chief characteristic in debate. Two allegorical figures grace the pedestal, representing industry and integrity—a youth, compass in hand, poring diligently over a chart, and a heraldic feminine figure holding a shield which bears the legend "Duty was his law, and conscience his ruler."

The Canadian Baptist says—Dr. Lorimer has refused to accept one thousand dollars addition to his salary voted him by the Executive Committee of his church. We doubt whether there are many, even of those who are most disposed to charge the ministry with being mercenary, who would reject a similar offer. For several years the late Rev. D. J. Macdonell, of St. Andrew's, Toronto, declined to accept an increase in stipend; and the same can be said of several in the ministry of the Presbyterian church in Canada. The Gospel minister, it will be found, is, as a general rule, more unselfish and self-denying than the average man in any other walk of life.

"Nervelessness" is, according to a German professor, the peculiar characteristic virtue of which the Chinese may ultimately beat Europe in the struggle for existence. The Chinaman, he says, can write all day, stand in one position all day, weave, beat gold, carve ivory, do infinitely tedious jobs for ever and ever and discover no more weariness or irritation than if he were a machine. This quality appears in early life. There are no restless, naughty boys in China. They are all appallingly good, and will plod at school without holidays or recreation of any kind. Sport or play—if we except cards and kite-flying—seems to John Chinaman waste labor.

The most hopeful phase of the temperance reform to-day is not the pledge or legislation, but the enforcement of it as a business rule. Employers are more and more exacting total abstinence of their employees. Railway managers, in recognition of their responsibility for life and property, look carefully into the habits of their men as to the use of intoxicants; and all who are charged with the care of valuable machinery, and costly investments, demand of those they employ, and on whom often depends the lives of others as well as a satisfactory business profit, total abstinence. Make liquor drinking and liquor selling unprofitable and a long step will have been taken toward what has been sought by moral suasion and legislation.

We learn from the "Quarterly Register" of the Presbyterian Alliance (edited by Rev. Dr. Matthews) that the address to the young Queen of Holland on her accession to the throne, which was agreed upon last year by the Alliance, has been presented through the ministerial representatives of the Belgian churches, who were graciously received by the Queen and the Queen-Mother. Her Majesty, it is said, showed much surprise and interest as she examined the beautiful album and examined the signatures of the Moderators of some sixty Presbyterian churches in all parts of the world. The Queen of Holland, who is the last survivor of the House of Orange, is said to be the only monarch in the world who is "altogether and at all times" a Presbyterian.

It is said that already Japanese Christians are discussing the carrying of the Gospel into China. It would not be surprising soon to hear of an organizing of Japanese churches for that purpose. It is likely that they could work with much greater success among a people so near akin to them than European or American Christians. It may before long be found that the opening of missions in Japan had a significance then hardly thought of for the regeneration of the neighbor empire. Who knows but that Japanese evangelists are destined to play the greatest part in this gigantic undertaking? There are already Japanese Christian missionaries in Formosa. So says the Missionary Review of the World.