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Note and Comment

All our cradle songs are sweeter
For the songs the angels raised,
When the mountain caught the echo,
And the dreaming valleys praise'd.

Christ is born! Exultant nations,
Send the tidings wide and far,
Christ is born! The world is throbbing
To the pulse-beat of the star.

That brilliant but skeptical French scholar, the late Ernest Renan, described the Psalms as "the eternal poems of devout souls."

An article in the Presbyterian Banner states that Richard Harding Davis is in receipt of more than \$25,000 a year, as the fruit of his literary labors.

Most people who are now reading literature at all are reading novels. Beyond all controversy the leading form of present day literature is prose fiction.

Sir Thomas Lipton, in view of the fact that his steam yacht Erin cannot be utilized by the Government as a hospital ship, has sent \$5,000 to the Princess of Wales, to be used at her discretion, for the benefit of the soldiers and sailors.

Is the world growing better or worse? An old question, says the Michigan Presbyterian, and a fruitless one. The world is growing better in spots, and worse in other spots. There is a more practical question: "What am I doing to make the world better—or worse?"

There is a total enrollment of about 3,000 students in Cornell University, consequently the class rooms, lecture rooms, and laboratories are overcrowded. Extensive additions are contemplated. There are now 25,000 volumes and 36,000 pamphlets in the library of the university.

The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, are contemplating giving a call to Professor T. Purves, D.C., of the Princeton Theological Seminary. He has already been asked to consider a call to the vacant pulpit, which action is generally approved by the leading men in the church.

A man in Brooklyn recently advertised that he would pay ten per cent. a week (five hundred and twenty per cent. a year) for the loan of money. Thousands of people, eager to be rich in haste, sent him their money. Then he disappeared. And their money disappeared with him. A due reward of haste to be rich.

The Montreal Witness gives the following characteristic account of the way in which history is taught in Italy: "Who was Maxine?" asked a professor of history when inspecting a clerical school in Italy. "A godless wretch, an enemy of God and of our Holy Mother the Church." Who was Garibaldi? "A monster, an adventurer, a godless man, a great enemy of the papacy and of the Holy Catholic Church." Who was Victor Emmanuel? What did he do for the country? "King Victor Emmanuel was a man excommunicated by the Church. He was a tyrant, for he deprived the head of the Church of his temporal power and made him a perpetual prisoner." That is how Roman Catholics teach history.

The death is announced at Chemulpo, Korea, of the Rev. John Chalmers, L.L.D., Hong Kong, the distinguished missionary, who has labored in China for nearly half a century. Dr. Chalmers, who attained great eminence as a Chinese scholar, was born at Oldwail, in the parish of New Deer, Aberdeenshire, where his father was a farmer. He was educated at Aberdeen University.

The climate of Egypt is magnificent, and there are few winter resorts that are preferable, meteorologically speaking. The air is fine and dry and the sunshine is perfect, while with equal temperature, wholesome food and water, and gentle breezes, there is little to be desired. Unfortunately, the sanitary arrangements in Egypt are very bad, and most of the hotels, even in Cairo, are built on contaminated sites.

At a recent meeting of the General Committee of the Gladstone Memorial in Liverpool, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool presiding, photographs were on view of a design submitted by Mr. Thomas Brock, on which members of the committee, who had inspected it at the studio, reported very favorably. The statue would be ten feet high, and the total height of the monument twenty-eight feet. It was resolved to offer £5,000 for the execution of the work.

Although the Germans are largely addicted to their national beverages of beer and wine, they treat drunkards in a practical way. It is stated that they are arrested every Saturday after their week's work is over, and kept in durance until Monday. This is done regularly every week until their sentence has expired, the object, of course, being that the delinquents may during the week earn money for the support of their families. The same method might be used for reforming them in this country.

Thackeray told an amusing story of Carlyle, how that he had spent a day in the reading-room of the British Museum and had given a great deal of trouble to one of the officials, sending him up and down ladders in search of books to satisfy his literary tastes, and how, on leaving the room he had gone up to the man and told him that it might be some satisfaction to know that he had obliged Thomas Carlyle, and that the official had answered him, with a bland smile and the usual washing of hands in the air, that the gentleman had the advantage of him, but probably they might have met at some mutual friend's house. He had never heard of Thomas Carlyle.

That Roman Catholicism has greatly increased in the United States, largely, of course, through immigration, all well informed people know. From 1880 to 1897 it went up from 6,317,380 to 9,856,622, an increase of 54 per cent. But to conclude as some do, that Protestantism is being outstripped is premature. During the same period the number of communicants in Protestant churches increased from 9,463,244 to 16,083,089, a gain of 73 per cent. The preponderance of the Protestant over the Catholic population that appears in the above figures appears still greater, if one bears in mind that the Catholic figures include the whole Catholic population, while the Protestant figures include only communicants, about 80 per cent. of all. The outlying rural districts of New England have been represented as retrograding towards irreligion. But recent observers declare that through the efforts of home missionary societies there has been a turn of the tide, and revival in town after town.

Each car of the armored trains which are now being employed in British operations against the Boers is painted khaki color. Both the engineer and the firemen are completely protected, and the orders are conveyed by bell signals. One of the engines is fitted with a steam pump. Hose is provided of sufficient length to enable water to be taken in from rivers or other sources of supply on the journey. The engine is placed in the middle of the train to allow for the use of Maxim and other guns.

Canadians have no conception of the determination with which the Roman Catholic priests oppose the entrance of the bible into Brazil. The Bible Society Record says: "It is war to the knife against the bible. Nothing stirs the priest up so. Spiritualistic works are often met with, atheistic papers and books may find a rest under the very shadow of the church, and even Protestant journals are tolerated; but the bible, the hated bible, is hunted out, denounced, and destroyed as if it were the essence of all that is evil."

Since the new treaties have gone into effect in Japan, says the Missionary, foreign missionaries, in common with all others who receive salaries, have become subject to the Japanese law of an income tax, which amounts to some three or four per cent of salaries received. Thus our missionaries there who receive as much as \$1,000 a year will henceforth have to pay a tax of \$30 or \$40 annually into the government treasury. Added to the largely increased cost of living in Japan, this will indeed be no light "tax" upon our representatives in that country.

Rev. Dr. Joseph Parker, says the Congregationalist, is out with a trumpet call upon English Dissenters to make disestablishment of the Anglican Church a live issue in Parliament and out of it. He denies that the Anglican Church is Protestant, scoffs at the idea of Dissenters and Evangelicals uniting to purge the Church of its sacerdotalism, and calls for a stirring fight for a "free Protestant country." The significant fact of the situation is that many a ritualist within the Church will say, "Amen, Dr. Parker," as a matter of policy, if not as a matter of principle.

According to Technische Notizen, the celebrated Parisian oculist Dr. Emil Berger has constructed a binocular microscope which admits of seeing objects plastically (i. e., in relief). As is well known, the stereoscopic effect is lost by the use of only one eye, and consequently of our monocular microscope, not to speak of the harmful suppression of the vision on one eye at the expense of the other. This new microscope places the object in a normal distance (about 38 centimeters) from the eye. If the news is creditable, Dr. Berger's invention will prove a great boon to the hundreds of thousands whose profession forces them to use a microscope.

Dispatches in the secular papers from China, says the Missionary, indicate that the colporteurs of the American Bible Society have recently suffered persecution in the extreme northwestern province of Kansu, on the border of Tibet. In a certain town they were invited to circulate Bibles from a Chinese temple. As soon as they were inside of the temple the gates were closed and the colporteurs were set upon and terribly beaten with long, thick sticks of firewood. Four were severely beaten; two others were attacked, but not so severely punished as the other four. Some of the elders of the town took part in the beating. The men were tied, hands and feet, to the pillars of the temple, and spat upon.