

Dominion Presbyterian

Devoted to the Interests of the Family and the Church

\$1.50 per Annum

MONTREAL, TORONTO, WINNIPEG

Single Copies, 5 Cents

Note and Comment

The eight principal causes of insanity have been tabulated, and the results presented to a London scientific society. Drink stands at the top, and accounts for about a third of all the cases.

The Czar has issued an edict in which he orders a thorough investigation of the whole question of using Siberia as a penal colony. It is among the possibilities of the near future that the Siberian horrors may cease, and Russia gain one step towards righteous administration.

A New York clergyman recently preached a sermon before a class of medical students on "Faith and Poulitice." He cited the instance of Hezekiah and the prophet. The prophet prayed and then put on the poulitice. Did the poulitice help the prayer or did the prayer help the poulitice; or was it miraculous and never intended as a formulary for a doctor's prescription? The liberties that some people take with the Bible suggests great familiarity with the Author.

It is a pity that a bad thing wears a good name. This is the trouble with so-called "Christian Science." It is not what its name signifies. People are deceived by its seemly title and pretentious claims. Persons of intelligence and sound sense will turn from it as soon as they realize its deceptive character. It is a thing for dupes and those who love to make a plaything or a gain of others. It will have its day, and sensible people will wonder that it originated and held its sway in the nineteenth century.

The missionaries of India are quoting with justifiable pleasure a parting letter addressed by Principal Fairbairn to the Hon. Cali-Charan Banurji, of Calcutta. Dr. Fairbairn wrote: "Of the missionaries and their work, of their noble service to India, of the remarkable variety of their activities, and the astonishing efficiency of most of their agencies, I will not trust myself to speak lest I be suspected of falling into extravagance. But I may simply state that the sight of their achievements sends me home a happier and more hopeful man than I was when I came." Nobody will suspect Dr. Fairbairn of taking a narrow or a one-sided view of the matter.

The United States has 123,697 Sunday schools, with a total membership of 12,288,153. Canada has 8,986 Sunday schools, with a membership of 657,134. Great Britain has 53,590 Sunday schools, with a membership of 8,575,703. The total number of Sunday schools in the world is 24,583, with a total membership of 24,919,813.

Germany, the land of beer and "personal liberty" in beer drinking, is about to try legislation as a remedy for drunkenness. On the first day of January, 1900, the sixth paragraph of a new code will go into operation in Germany. This new law places every habitual drunkard under an interdict involving complete submission to the will of a duly appointed "curator." This person will be empowered to put the person whom he regards as a dipsomaniac anywhere he pleases, there to undergo treatment for the malady as long as the "curator" pleases. And the new code formulates a broad definition in declaring just what an habitual drunkard is. It says that the term includes everybody who, "in consequence of inebriety, cannot provide for his affairs, or endangers the safety of others."

The drafting committee of the third session of the Peace Conference has taken up the proposal for arbitration. It is learned that the American proposal does not seem to have met with great favor or obtained the support of many of the delegates. The Russian members have voluntarily withdrawn all claims to priority, and the British scheme is under discussion. This provides for the creation of an international board of arbitration, but makes the submission of controversies in any case entirely voluntary on the part of the nations concerned. In what respect this arrangement would be a long step in advance of present conditions it is not easy to see. Two nations having agreed to settle a dispute by arbitration would usually prefer to create their own tribunal, choosing its members, and especially its umpire, from a disinterested nation. The British proposal is to be the basis of discussion, and it is probable that the Russian and American plans will furnish amendments to that basis. If nothing practical comes at once, the mere discussion of the question is wholesome.

A Scotch newspaper has just taken a plebiscite of its readers in order to find out the length of sermons preached north of the border on a particular Sunday lately. It appears that the average Established Church sermon is twenty-six minutes in length; Free Church, thirty-two minutes; United Presbyterian Church, thirty; Congregational, twenty-nine; Scottish Episcopal, twenty; Baptist, thirty-three; English Presbyterian, thirty; Original Secession, thirty-eight. In all denominations the longest sermon was sixty-eight minutes, and the shortest nine minutes.

The vest-pocket edition of Omar Khayyam, issued by Thomas B. Mosher, Portland, Me., has been reviewed, and is a little marvel in the art of book-making. The preface of this exquisite volume is written by Mr. Nathan Haskell Dole, the recognized authority in America on Omar, containing a pronouncing vocabulary of all Persian names in the translation—something never before given in any edition. Fitzgerald's final version, including his notes, is the text of this edition, while the paper, printing and decorations are of the best, the former being Van Gelder's, hand-made to order for this work. Price, twenty-five cents net. For sale in Montreal by Eben Picken, Beaver Hall Hill.

Here is something that might be left to tell its own story; it certainly has interest for many: A Roman Catholic priest in New York, as we learn, having put in a denial that any Catholics had ever become Baptists, an investigation was set on foot to discover the facts. Twenty-nine Baptist churches in various cities, east and west, reported a total of 313 members who had come out of Roman Catholic churches. In many cases these converts were among the leading people. Forty-seven pastors of this city, of five different denominations, report ex-Catholics in their membership in numbers varying from one to seventy. Fully one-fourth of the 25,000 German Baptists are stated as converts from Romanism. Other denominations could probably present similar figures. The atmosphere of free institutions and efficient schools is proving too much for some whose minds and hearts are open to the light of day.