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OVER LAND AND SEA.

The first Sunday law enacted on this continent was passed in Virginia in 1817. It provided that the man who did not attend church on Sunday should be fined two pounds of tobacco.

The first known coin is Chinese. It is copper, and specimens weighing from one to five pounds, and supposed to date from a period at least 2,000 years before Christ, are still in existence.

During the reigns of Queen Ranavendra III. and her predecessor in Madagascar one thousand schools have been established, also twelve hundred churches, Catholic and Protestant. The utmost toleration prevails.

Some one has estimated that the U. S. have spent nearly \$470,000,000 in building churches in this land and \$500,000,000 in building jails; and that it cost \$50,000,000 a year to run the churches and \$400,000,000 to run the jails.

There has been a decline in the consumption of beer in England during the past half year. In Scotland and Ireland there has, on the other hand, been an increase. The net result, however, is a loss to the Exchequer of £38,761.

This is the season of the year when many pastors will be reminded of Beecher's remark about a horse; on one occasion. Being about to take a ride he said to the stable-keeper, "That is a fine looking animal; is he as good as he looks?" The man replied, "Mr. Beecher, that is the best horse in our stable. He will work in any place you put him, and he can do anything than any horse can." The preacher gazed at the horse with admiration, and then replied, "I wish to goodness he was a member of our church."

It is very much to the credit of the directors of the Atlanta Exposition that they disposed so promptly of the question of Sunday opening of the gates of the fair. In Chicago there was a long, hard fight on the question but in the South, the old American ideas of the reverence and sacredness pertaining to the Sabbath still exist in their original force. The South is genuinely American in this respect, and irrespective of the question of gain or loss the doors of the Atlanta Exposition will remain closed on the Sabbath.

A number of valuable observations about the Gulf Stream have recently been made by the United States Coast Survey steamer Blake. On some disputed points its judgments are: "That the winds and the Mississippi River have nothing whatever to do with the formation of the Gulf Stream: that a point 11½ miles east of Foway Rocks lighthouse, Florida, in the Caribbean Sea, is the true axis or source; that the velocity of the current is controlled by the declination of the moon. The great Atlantic river measures 3000

miles in length, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Azores and is 120 miles broad at its greatest width. The winter fogs off Newfoundland, so much dreaded by mariners, are caused by the heat of the Gulf Stream, its waters being 25 to 30 degrees warmer here than the ordinary sea water. The difference is so marked between this great river and the water on either side of it through which it flows that if a ship floats half in and half out the line of demarcation is distinctly visible. Buckets lowered on either side disclose the difference in color and heat of the two waters. To its influence Great Britain owes its beautiful verdure. Its speed does not exceed more than four miles an hour at any place.

One school of higher critics has maintained that Moses did not write the Pentateuch or Hexateuch because the art of writing was unknown in those days,—says *North and West*. But another historical school has gone into archæology thoroughly, and maintains that the Mosaic age was the Elizabethan age of that epoch. Prof. Sayce, from whom we have occasional articles, is said by some of the advanced men to have a good imagination. But his general position has very solid backing. It seems to be quite certainly demonstrated that Moses could have written the books usually ascribed to him, if it be allowed that they were edited at a later day by inspired scribes. That is the outcome which we predicted some years ago.

Hitherto the diameters of the largest and first discovered of the asteroids, or minor planets, between Mars and Jupiter, have been estimated by their brightness. During the past two years Prof. E. E. Barnard of the Lick Observatory has directed his attention to measuring the disks of the four largest ones with the thirty-six-inch telescope. The following are the diameters from the two years' work with the thirty-six-inch: Ceres, 485 miles; Pallas, 304 miles; Juno, 118 miles; Vesta, 243 miles. Astronomers have always considered Vesta as the largest of the asteroids, because it was the brightest. The surface of Vesta is highly reflective.

In his lately published book, "The Use of Life," Sir John Lubbock tells us that since 1887, the number of persons in prison has decreased nearly a third. In juvenile crime the decrease is even more satisfactory. In 1856 the number of young persons committed was 14,000; last year, in spite of the enormous increase of the population, the number was only 5,100. The yearly average of persons sentenced to penal servitude in the nine years ending in 1864 was 2,800, and that number has steadily fallen, being for last year only 729, or but one-quarter, notwithstanding the increase of population. In fact, eight of our convict prisons have become unnecessary, and have been applied to other purposes. Surely much of this happy state of things is owing to the unselfish, and in many cases enlightened, zeal of Christian workers.