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Note and Comment.

The earlier closing of public-houses in Edinburgh has led to a steady decline in the number of arrests for drunkenness. The effect is the same wherever tried.

The Presbyterian Church of England has asked all its congregations for a special collection in aid of the United Free Church in her present difficulties.

Fifty young unmarried women, belonging to a Roman Catholic church in Bermondsey, have avowed to be total abstainers for life, as an act of self-denial and reparation for the prevalence of the drinking habit amongst their sex at the present time.

Mr. K. J. L. McPherson, M.A., graduate of the University of Toronto, 1901, and secretary of the University Y.M.C.A., sails for Hong Kong, next month to take the leadership of the Y.M.C.A. work among the European young men in that city.

It appears that our brethren in the Western Section of the Church, says the Presbyterian Witness, will have to put forth unusual efforts to meet the estimates for the year ending with the last day of February. The West is wide and is becoming rich, and undoubtedly, too, it is becoming liberal.

Announcement is made that Sir William Macdonald has given an additional \$10,000 to the Students' Union Building of McGill University, Montreal, which is now in course of erection. He had previously given the sum of \$125,000 and the site for the building, and his additional gift is intended to defray the expenses of equipping the building in the most modern way.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson, the English M.P., the other day told a little story in the course of a vigorous address on the licensing question. A little girl had a brother who set a trap for a bird in the garden. She did not like this at all, so when she said her prayer that night she prayed to God to protect the little birds being caught in the trap. Her mother said, "Do you think, my dear, your prayer will be answered?" "Yes," she said, "I know it will, because I went into the garden and kicked the trap to pieces." There is here an obvious moral for all who are interested in the fight against the drink traffic.

By a rescript of the Prussian Minister of Religion and Education the various Protestant Synods throughout Prussia are now forbidden to collect funds for the support of their co-religionists in other countries.

One of the official interpreters attached to the British expedition in Lhasa, Mr. J. R. Macdonald, has informed the Bible Society that many of their Thibetan Gospels have been distributed both to monks and laymen in Lhasa. Three copies were given to the present ruler of Thibet, who was very anxious to know about "the white man's religion."

The Interior says: The Methodist Bishops have recommended that no man be elected to office in any Methodist congregation unless he takes a Church paper. There's logic in that. A Church member who is not a reader of some journal that tells weekly of the worldwide work of Christ's people, sees "only what is near." * * * * The ideal Church officer takes a Church paper and reads it; there can't be any question about that proposition.

Dr. Guinness Rogers has entered on his eighty-third year. The veteran Congregationalist retains much of his physical vigor and all his mental alertness. During the last year—his eighty-second—he has spent very few Sundays out of the pulpit, and though his platform appearances are now necessarily few and far between, his interest in political and social affairs is as keen and vigilant as ever. He is still to be met on even moderately fine days enjoying a brisk walk alone on Clapham Common.

In regard to the revival of Gaelic teaching in Highland schools an inspector in a recent Blue book said: Gaelic is good for scolding in, but as a matter of fact there are comparatively few curses and imprecations in Gaelic, though the few that are, are expressive enough. Thus "The Raven's death to you," arises from the belief in the north that old ravens were "killed by their own young." "Death without priest to you" is emphatic enough, much more so than "A blister on your lying tongue." "A bad meeting to you" conveys the wish that a person or animal whom one first meets when setting out on any enterprise may be such as is considered unlucky. Much more numerous are the blessings, of which one of the richest is, "Peace to your soul and a stone to your cairn."

The pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina during the past year has exceeded, in the number of Mohammedans, the record of the preceding forty years. No fewer than 92,500 risked the toil and the expense of journeying from all parts of the world of Islam and reached their destination. Adding to these the ordinary population of the holy cities of Mecca, Medina, Jeddah and Taif, as well as the Turkish soldiers, camel-drivers, and Bedouins, no fewer than 160,000 were crowded together in these most pestilential centres.

Dr. Rainy sends through the columns of the Highland "Witness," a New Year message to the members of the United Free Church in the North. The troubles of the Church are to move its members to a deep consciousness of sin lest the lessons of the great crisis be lost. But the reverend Principal finds cause for praise, and chiefly in the Royal Commission, from the deliberations of which he evidently expects much, though not everything. A note of warning is sounded towards the close—"In any case we must not disguise from ourselves that we shall have serious losses, and that if our work is not to be crippled it must be a fresh undertaking with more of self-sacrifice, and with more of consecration." Then, with words of sympathy for the Highland ministers, and words of conciliation to all, the message closes.

The Year-Book of the Church of Scotland shows a continuation of the alarming decrease in the number of probationers. From the point of view of the licentiates themselves there is, naturally enough, no ground for complaint, but if the religious needs of the parishes are regarded it is a different matter. Last year the Scottish Church licensed twenty-seven men, and admitted three licentiates from other Churches, making a total of thirty. But no less than fifty-one men were ordained to charges in Scotland or abroad, leaving twenty-one assistantships or mission charges vacant, without a hope of getting men at present to supply them. Every available man is employed, and some ministers have to struggle on without assistance in parishes where the work is far beyond the strength or time of one man. Unquestionably the Church, upon which rests the obligation, and which has faced the task so nobly, is becoming crippled for lack of men. And things may be worse before they are better.

The movement for political freedom in Russia has had its baptism of blood. Hundreds of men and women have been shot down in St. Petersburg, and it is feared the trouble may extend to other places.