

# Dominion Presbyterian

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## Note and Comment

Dr. Fairbairn, the Oxford Nonconformist leader has a contempt for short sermons. He preaches for an hour, at least. The good doctor has an acquired taste, as Oxford men well know.

The number of students attending the University of Edinburgh has decreased by 1000 in the last ten years. At the same time there is a decrease in the number of students for the ministry in Scotland and England.

"What is to be the end of it all?" asked one of the pessimists lugubriously, of the most distinguished soldier of the Queen. "End!" cried Lord Wolseley, "There can only be one end—a triumphant entry into Pretoria, with colours flying, and the bands playing 'God Save the Queen.'"

Commandant Cronje, of the Transvaal army, is said to be a fatalist. In the raid combat at Doornkop when the bullets were whistling rather too loudly around the spot where he was seated, a field court suggested his retiring to a more sheltered position. "No," said Cronje, "I am in the hand God, and if I am to be shot, I shall be hit just as soon in one place as in another."

Negroes in Boston and Chicago, who met recently to discuss the South African war, formally indorsed the British cause because of the contemptible treatment of the blacks in South Africa by the Boers. The missionaries sent out to South Africa from the United States by the negroes are most bitter in their denunciation of the treatment they have had from the Transvaal officials as contrasted with that received at the hands of the British in Natal and Cape Colony.

The waters of the Great Salt Lake in Utah have receded a mile within the past year, and it is conjectured that during the coming century this wonderful body of water may be completely dried up. The cause of the lowering of the water is said to be the rapid extension of irrigation ditches, which draw their supply from streams emptying into the lake. There is now a "salt desert" not far from the lake, which was once covered with water. The salt deposit on the floor of the lake itself is believed to be of great thickness.

An English paper gives what it terms "the fourteen mistakes of life." While there are undoubtedly other mistakes than those mentioned, the list is fairly a comprehensive one: It is a great mistake to set up our own standard of right and wrong, and judge people accordingly; to measure the enjoyment of others by our own; to expect uniformity of opinion in this world; to look for judgement and experience in youth; to endeavor to mold all dispositions alike; to look for perfection in our own actions to worry ourselves and others with what can not be remedied; not to yield in immaterial matters; not to alleviate all that needs alleviation as far as lies in our power; not to make allowances for the infirmities of others; to consider everything impossible that we cannot perform; to believe only what our finite minds can grasp; to expect to be able to understand everything. And the greatest mistake of all is to live for time alone, when any moment may launch us into eternity.

The German Rai way through Asia Minor to the Euphrates valley is to be completed in eight years. Ur of the Chaldees will by and by be traversed by the iron horse! Palestine already has its Railway. Damascus will ere long have a station at one of its gates.

It comes out that both in Britain and America there now fewer students in the theological schools preparing for the ministry than for several years past. Many reasons are assigned. Perhaps one reason is the low tone of spiritual life in the churches, from which happily there now seem to be signs of revival.

The statue which the Parliament of Canada is erecting to Hon. Alexander Mackenzie at Ottawa is now cast and will soon be set in place. The late statesman is represented in the attitude of a speaker with the right arm extended and the left by his side with an open book in the hand rolled like a scroll. The figure is erect and denotes well the fearlessness and unbending firmness of the man in debate. Allegorical figures of Honesty and Labor will adorn the pedestal.

It is a great pity that in our large cities many children are compelled to find their play ground on the street. The tendency of this is to make all the children as bad as the worst. Many a child in early years gets its first lesson in profanity in this way. It is not easy to see how this evil can be avoided as our cities continue to grow, and become more and more crowded. If the families of our artisans could always have a yard about their homes where the children could play and have their playmates in some measure selected for them, much would be gained. In many cities the effort is made to have parks provided for this purpose. This is better than nothing, but even here paternal oversight cannot be made effective.

A minister referred not long ago to his church paper as his associate pastor. That is not a bad name says The Presbyterian Standard. All that the minister is to his people in the more effective method of the human voice and the personal influence, the church paper is by the influence of the printed page. It preaches to the sinner and to the saint; it comforts the mourning soul; it brings messages of cheer to the sick room; it pats the little ones on the head and asks after their games and their pets; it expounds the doctrines of God's word; it advocates the causes of the church; it takes an interest in the affairs of the household and the farm; it occasionally cracks a mild joke, and displays considerable knowledge of what is going on in the world.

The best view which can be taken of our own Sunday newspapers must admit that they are a nuisance says the New York Evening Post. They are twice cursed; they curse him that prints and him that reads them. They add new terrors to Sunday. On purely humanitarian grounds and not allowing theological reasons to have any weight whatever, we could wish them all away. They cause unnecessary labor to those who must produce them, and carry intellectual and moral corruption throughout the community, making a rational, to say nothing of a religious, use of Sunday harder, if not impossible, for thousands of its victims. If there is any sadder sight in nature than a man deliberately sitting down to wade through a "sextuple" Sunday newspaper, we do not know what it is. The Puritans devised no such tortures for their Sabbath.

Of the 470 ministers who left the Established Church of Scotland in 1843 only five now survive.

The Cleveland Leader says: "What Kentucky needs is an industrial regeneration. If her distilleries could be turned into factories, there would be less murder in the hearts of the people."

After the conversion of Mr. D. L. Moody, and his acceptance as a member of the Church, his Sunday School teacher declared that he was very "unlikely ever to become a Christian of clear and decided views of Gospel truth, still less to fill any extended sphere of public usefulness?" And when the young convert wanted to take part in prayer meetings, the suggestion was given that he could best serve the Lord by silence. Notwithstanding these discouragements, Moody at once went to work for his new-found Master. He rented four pews in the church, and kept them filled with men and boys. Then he asked if he might become a Sunday-school teacher, and was told that he might if he would bring his own scholars. Next Sunday he marched in at the head of eighteen ragged boys, whom he had collected during the week.

The annual statements of the North American Life Assurance Company which will be found in another column must be gratifying to all policy holders and others interested in this progressive institution. During 1899 \$4,929,140 worth of new policies were written, exceeding the previous years by almost one million. The insurance in force at the close of the year was \$28,045,408, and the net surplus was over \$500,000. While great credit is due Mr. Wm. McCabe the manager and Mr. L. Goldman the secretary for their able administration of affairs, not a little praise is due the president, Mr. John L. Blaikie, who is a gentleman of very high standing and recognized skill as a financier. In Montreal the affairs of the company are looked after by Dr. Ault and Thos. G. McConkey, 180 St. James St. The business for Quebec shows a considerable increase, largely due to the energy shown by these representatives.

Chicago club-women recently tackled the "servant-girl question" in a way altogether unique. Having sent out one thousand invitations to mistresses for a "home science reception" at the largest down-town club, they offered prizes to maids—prizes for the longest service, and the finest exhibit of cooking, laundering or mending. The result was twenty-five tables were covered with most attractive samples of household skill from several hundred maids, while the prize taker for long service was a woman who had worked continuously in one family for fifty-four years. These interested mistresses and their maids—each maid was entitled to five tickets of admission, and so invited her friends—rubbed shoulders socially one whole day, each gaining new ideas from her respective point of view, and each being encouraged by the other's presence. The whole affair carried with it an all-around recognition which served to elevate household work where it belongs—as an occupation of skill worthy to rank with the arts and crafts. Though a sympathetic relationship between mistress and maid was strengthened at this domestic science display, it is doubtful if it will ever be quite the same as in the old family-servant era; but the spirit of appreciation once shown by Queen Victoria is worthy of application. "I am one of those," declared Her Majesty, "who think the loss of a faithful servant the loss of a friend, and one who can never be replaced."