

# Dominion Presbyterian

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## Note and Comment

Rev. Samuel Houston, M. A., late of Kingston, has been appointed lecturer on emigration to the Dominion by the Canadian Government.

At Emperor William's desire the Ministry of Culture has issued an order directing all Prussian universities and common schools to celebrate the new century.

Emperor William is confident that the proposal to increase the strength of the navy is popular with the electorate, and he believes that the new Reichstag will provide for a great fleet for Germany.

The official organ of the Russian Department of Trade and Manufactures announces that the Moscow Insurance Company has received permission to operate abroad, and intend to conduct business in the United States.

Said the keeper of Canterbury jail: "I have had twenty thousand prisoners pass through my hands since I have been keeper of the jail; but, though I have inquired, I have not discovered one tectotaler among them."

Captain Dreyfus has taken a villa in Cairo and will spend the winter there with his family. He is reported to be growing stronger continually and his physicians say that a winter of rest in a mild climate will make him a well man.

Always bright, the January number of Foreign Missionary Tidings is of unusual interest. Mrs. J. MacGillivray, B.A., discharges her duties as editor with good judgment and ability. This issue contains a touching account of the famine in India from the pen of Dr. Margaret McKellar.

An amusing story comes from the Cape and is told by The Engineer. The station master at a junction on the way to De Aar was notified of a "goods train" arriving. It came and disgorged, not goods, but armed marines. Later on steamed up an armored train with blue-jackets and having guns covered with a tarpaulin and ironically labelled "Fruit."

Following is a list of W.F.S. life members for December: Miss Jean Main, Hamilton; Mrs. Walter Beatty, Pembroke; Mrs. Agnes Alquire, Lunenburg; Mrs. Ford, Toronto; Miss Skinner, London; Miss Thornton, Whitby; Miss Login, Guelph; Mrs. Jones Lister, Toronto; Mrs. Duncan McIntosh, Almonte; Miss Fraser, Portage La Prairie.

If, as some think, Mr. Rudyard Kipling has been the subject of too much laudation, a wholesome corrective is afforded in the keen and biting treatment which he receives at the hands of Mr. Robert Buchanan, in the paper called "The Voice of 'The Hooligan'" which The Living Age for Jan. 6 reprints from the Contemporary Review. The true estimate of Kipling lies somewhere between the extreme of laudation and such unsparing criticism as this.

Excavations carried on at Beneventum under the direction of Prof. Baccelli, have revealed in perfect preservation a theatre as large as that of Pompey or Marcellus at Rome. This is, says The British Architect, quite the most important discovery of the official searches in recent years, though at Rome and at Pompeii something noteworthy is unearthed almost every day. The theatre is built of great blocks of travertine.

The coming performance of the "Passion Play," which should begin on May 3, 1900, is now beginning to attract public attention. Those who had the great pleasure of attending the play in 1880 or 1890 were surprised by the artless simplicity of the native inhabitants of this little Bavarian village. If they should visit the town to-day, however, they would find that all is changed. The old stage is all that remains of the theatre. A gigantic steel framework is now being erected to shelter the audience. It reminds one of the camping tabernacles and convention halls in America. Instead of billeting strangers upon the inhabitants, as was formerly the custom, extensive preparations are being made to entertain them, and the talk of the town is how many foreigners will be induced to visit Oberammergau during the period of the play. The names of the actors have not been announced as yet.

The century, says Christian Work, bids fair to go out as the century came in, with the countries of Central and South American in a state of upheaval and chronic rebellion. The people of these countries and especially those of Spanish origin, have apparently made very little progress in the art of self-government since they set up their so-called republics. Their popular elections are a farce, their presidents being usually selected by the arbitrament of arms rather than by a majority of votes. It is really wearisome trying to keep up with their variegated and turbulent history. During the past twelve months rebellions and insurrections of various degrees of bloodiness and savagery have occurred in Columbia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Salvador, and some of them are still in progress. The probabilities are that Cuba would have a similar experience if the United States would withdraw her forces and give the island that independence which some Cuban politicians are insisting she should now have. Far better a strong government from the outside than no government at all from the inside.

A pretty little ceremony took place lately in Westminster Abbey. It had been noticed by Mr. Tom Bryan that lovers of Tennyson and other poets pilgrimed to the Poet's Corner on birthdays and death-days and placed there their willing tribute. Yet not "the meed of one melodious tear" fell to the lot of Robert Browning's tomb. What should happen, then, on Tuesday but that a little deputation went in devoted procession to the Abbey, when two little girls, distinguished in the Browning essay and recital competition at Browning Hall laid reverently a wreath of laurels and lay upon Robert Browning's tomb, the day being the tenth anniversary of Browning's death. In the afternoon a large gathering of women took place at Browning Hall, and in the evening some members of the Kyrle Society rendered with much taste and ability a well-chosen programme of 'Browning' music, vocal and instrumental, most of the songs being poems either of Robert Browning or Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The pity of it was that so meagre an audience assembled to listen.

The Presbyterian Quarterly, representing the Presbyterian Church (South) does not hesitate to express its admiration for other churches, as the following shows. The reference is to the address of Rev. Dr. Johnston, of London, at the Pan-Presbyterian Council at Washington: "The pulpit of the New York Avenue Church is spread eagle... but the spread eagle met his match at last. Dr. Thompson, home mission secretary of the Northern Church, spoke on Tuesday night of the great work the Northern assembly is doing. It is a magnificent work, and the temptation was a great one to make as fine a display as possible before the visitors from abroad, as well, as those from the South. But Canada's turn came next, and Canada was represented by a tall black-bearded, clear-voiced speaker, full of native eloquence, and loyal to his church. Somehow as he proceeded, the home mission work just before mentioned grew smaller and smaller until it became insignificant. It was the most complete triumph of the council, and when Dr. Johnston sat down the Canadian church had taken the position as the model home mission church, and the spread eagle above alluded to, as it heard the closing periods of the address, quietly and despairingly folded its wings."

A new experiment, says Christian Work, is to be tried by Belgium, the outcome of which will be awaited with considerable interest. The Belgian Chamber of Deputies has passed a new Electoral bill which involves a new departure, in that it gives proportional representation, and is the outcome of the bitter struggle between Liberals and Clericals. Oppositions to the latter had become so strong that this bill was framed in part to prevent a revolution. The effect will be, of course, to give any party minority political representation. But it is claimed on behalf of the bill that it will destroy the party system in Belgium by doing away with its majorities, so that selection of the ministry from all shades of political opinion make the Government more truly national than it could otherwise be. This claim at best seems chimerical. If we want to see how this dispersion of responsibility works, we have only to turn to France and Italy, and even to Germany. In these countries there is not minority representation but the line of political cleavage is a zigzag one, running between different groups and sects, the leaders of which are always ready for intrigue and bargain on the basis of spoils. Government by majority, as in this country and in England, whatever its shortcomings, is far preferable.

The Independent of New York records the fact that by the incoming of the New Year all the workers in the cotton factories of the North will be enjoying an increase of wages amounting to more than \$5,000,000 in a year. This general advance is due chiefly to the action of Matthew C. D. Borden, of New York, the owner of the largest cotton mill in Fall River. Nearly all of the companies in that city had sought to end a controversy with their employes by offering them an increase of 5 per cent. to take effect on January 1. While the workers were considering this offer Mr. Borden gave notice the day before Thanksgiving that his 4,000 employes were to receive an increase of 10 per cent. on the 1st. Thirty-six corporations in Fall River were obliged to follow his example and during the past ten days the movement has spread from the 28,000 mill hands of that city through all the cotton factories of New England until now 140,000 employes already have received the additional 10 per cent. The American Woolen Company has also ordered a similar increase for the 20,000 employes in its twenty-six mills and from Augusta, Ga., comes the news that the wages of 8,000 workers in the cotton mills there will be increased on January 1. The window glass workmen 10,000 of whom have been idle for several months, will take hold again on the 30th inst. with an advance of 6 per cent in their pay.