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NOTE AND COMMENT

Vital statistics in France for 1907 show that the decrease in births reached 33,000, compared with an average reduction of 12,000 for the last seven years; the deaths were 19,000 more than the births.

There is no accounting for tastes, says the New York Observer, and those Episcopalians whose hearts break with longing for Rome would better take the first train or boat thither.

Gambling in the poolroom, drawing room, stock exchange, race track, or any form of gambling remarks the United Presbyterian, is the most insidious, strong and subtle of all human passions, becoming more intense, more consumed with free indulgence, consuming not only the body, but the conscience and the heart and soul.

The Belfast Witness, representative of the Irish Presbyterian Church, in a leading editorial, strongly pleads for the introduction of the "Men's Brotherhood" into the work of its Church. The idea underlying the separate organization of men in the congregations for Christian work has made rapid progress in Great Britain as elsewhere.

When Prince Arthur of Connaught was visiting Canada (says the "Pall Mall Gazette") the thoroughness of his military knowledge came out by means of a picturesque little incident. While he was on board a steamer on one of the rivers a man on the bank waved a handkerchief on a walking-stick. The Prince took out his own handkerchief and waved back. Then, turning to his attendants, he said: "The man signalled 'Welcome to Canada,' and I answered 'Thank you.'"

One of the Humorists, in replying to a compliment concerning the graduation essay of his daughter, says: "Yes, but I cannot help wondering whether it is not like a great many other able literary efforts. It sounded fine, but can she sit down and explain what it means?" Such a test as that, says the Christian Advocate, might throw doubt on many a public speech and not a few sermons. No one understands a subject until he can tell to others what he knows about it.

It is possible for a minister to build up a charge around his own personality and make his members loyal to himself rather than to the church and the church's Lord. It is possible for an evangelist to conduct a meeting in the same way. But in both cases the work done will be woefully lacking in permanency. The temptation is strong, however, to work along this line, but it is one to be stoutly resisted, for it is not in this way that enduring work is done.

The International Union of Medical Abstinents, organized last summer at Stockholm, Sweden, is growing in numbers and influence. Its object is to unite medical practitioners throughout the world in an effort to rid the nations of the use of alcoholic drinks. The council of the union has issued an appeal to all rulers, educators, ministers and others declaring that alcoholic beverages are unnecessary and harmful; that the evils arising from their use should be eradicated, and that children should be taught to abstain.

The Roman Catholic Church is singing the praises of certain Episcopal preachers that have left their Church and have taken up their lot with Rome. On this the Herald and Presbyterian remarks: The Episcopal Church is immeasurably better off with such men out of its ranks. Any man who is capable of such a step is a positive detriment to a Protestant Church until he is out of it. The average of spirituality, of good sense and of good character is vastly raised by the departure of these men. They were simply Romanists in disguise, and now they have simply gone unto their own.

Mr. Rider Haggard in a recent address on the treatment of consumption, said that the practice of taking fresh air for cases of this sort recalled to us habits of our savage ancestors, who lived in summer in woods and in winter in caves open to air. It always seemed to him that that was the right way to preserve health. Perhaps we were coming to the time when we should live in buildings with no roofs, no windows, and no doors. Perhaps the necessity for buildings would be done away with altogether, and we should live in tents in fields just like ancient Britons, and for clothing stain our bodies blue.

Rev. Wm. Wye Smith, the veteran Congregational minister of St. Catharines, writing about the recent terrible tragedy at Owen Sound, says: "A man savagely murdering his wife and her two grown-up daughters! And fifty years ago, I was superintendent of a Sunday school in Owen Sound, and this man Creighton was one of the junior scholars, a sweet, little boy! For a good many years past, getting more and more into the drink." Had local option come to the town twenty years ago it might have saved him. And his dear old mother, working hard for temperance and godliness all her life—and now!"

Some idea of the activity prevailing among temperance people in Great Britain may be gathered from the following taken from an editorial in the Scottish Reformer: "The Winter's work has been arduous and incessant. Beginning with the successful annual meetings of the Scottish Permissive Bill and Temperance Association in the beginning of October, followed by the Licensing Courts and Municipal Elections, it has closed with a remarkable series of by-elections, and with the combined agitations in favor of the English Licensing and Scottish Local Option Bills being continued with unabated vigor and enthusiasm into the summer season."

The Saturday Evening Post thinks the country preacher is chiefly responsible for the present sweeping temperance sentiment abroad in the country. Whether this is true or not, we are prepared to assert that the country preacher is directly responsible for a good many good things that have contributed to our welfare. As a class, these men are fearless, faithful, loyal to God, and committed by a noble type of manhood to the things that promote righteousness. They are a foe to liquor and all other evils. In "that day"—when the rewards of human toil are justly given, the country preacher, poor in this world's goods, having lived an obscure life, and been often unobserved and unknown, will be rich with a crown of fadeless glory, and the approval of God; rich beyond estimate.

Every day brings fresh proof, writes a correspondent of the "Christian World," that the ecclesiastical woman has arrived in Scotland. Not only has a lady been appointed upon an ecclesiastical committee under Congregationalism, but one has been appointed under Presbyterianism to accompany the elders, who, in a particular instance, were to prosecute a call. In addition to this it is interesting to learn that ladies are now enrolling themselves as members of the Divinity classes in the theological colleges. In Glasgow, for example, at the U.F. College, there are three lady Divinity students. Two hail from America, but the third, Miss Jean Reith, belongs to a family highly esteemed in the city and in the denomination.

The "Record of Christian Work" gives a most encouraging report of missionary progress in Persia. Fifteen years ago the city of Isfahan, with its 100,000 Mohammedan people, was frantically hostile to everything that had the Christian taint. All missionary effort was met with superstitious dread, intolerance and persecution. Today within 300 yards of one of the dispensaries forcibly closed by the authorities, stand two large hospitals containing 160 beds. When these hospitals were being built, about three years ago, Mohammedans came forward, some of whom had once opposed the work, and subscribed nearly £200 toward the cost of erection, and some of them subscribe annually for their maintenance. The native doctors who previously did all the harm they could to the work of the medical missionaries, now ask them to see cases in consultation. Many of the Mohammedan religious leaders have attended the Christian services and listened quietly to the message. While it cannot be said that they are in any sense reaching out for the Gospel is a cause for great rejoicing that prejudice is being so rapidly broken down and bigotry expelled.

Africa is the latest field of the archaeologist, and according to Dr. David Randall-MacIver, curator of the Egyptian section of the Department of Archaeology in the University of Pennsylvania, who has passed the last eighteen months in a new district of the Dark Continent, a language and civilization hitherto unknown, have been discovered. Speaking of his work, the doctor said: "Until these excavations were made, there were but a dozen documents written in this language in existence. Now there are about 150, and I am busy deciphering this tongue, which is now unknown. It marks a distinct step in the progress toward mastering the language and history of Ethiopia. From the section of Africa extending from the first cataract down to Khartoum there was a great and important kingdom, which began about the eighth century before Christ. All of the materials which I excavated belong to a later period and lie within the time after Christ. I dug at the northern extremity of Ethiopia, between the first and second cataracts, near the town of Anebe. This town and country must have belonged to powerful local monarchs holding an almost independent position between Egypt and Ethiopia proper. There existed in the country an extraordinary, developed civilization."