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NOTE AND COMMENT

It is just fifty years (1857), says the Philadelphia Westminister, since the phenomenal time of financial crash, loss and disaster. Men were driven to despair and death. And then began the revival of religion which is still the wonder of living men. Will the crisis of 1907 bring another?

Mr. T. P. O'Connor, the brilliant Irish politician and writer, gives good advice to young men when he says: "And let me whisper this word finally in your ear. It won't do you the least harm if you are a teetotaler. You may lose something, but you gain tenfold. I believe in half a century from now no man will rise to the height of any profession, in the field, in the forum, or at the desk, who is not a teetotaler."

Dr. J. Schubert, of the Prussian Forestry School at Eberswalde, as the result of five years' study of forest influence on rainfall, says that of seventeen gage stations in the forest, at the forest's edge, and in the open, the forest stations show the greatest, and the open stations the least precipitation. Corrections for snowfall and for difference in the exposure of the gages as regards wind, amount to 5.5 per cent.; the observed difference in catch being 5.2 per cent.

San Francisco is suffering from a plague of rats, and is offering a bonus for their destruction. Apart from the general destructiveness of rats, they carry and transmit the bubonic plague, and have often aided in spreading pestilence through Asiatic cities. They are so prolific that any temporary upsetting of the "balance of nature" may result in an enormous increase in their numbers. The earthquake in San Francisco doubtless provided them with innumerable safe hiding places, and in other ways favored their increase.

The oldest Presbyterian church in England is known as Ramsbottom. In 1651, the Rev. Henry Pendlebury, of Oxford, was inducted to a chapelry there. He "came out" under the Act of Uniformity, and lived in the valley of Irwell until 1695, when he died. His successor, Mr. Henry Rothwell, built the Dundee or Ramsbottom church in the beginning of the eighteenth century. In Puritan literature the place was referred to as Holcombs, and in the earlier part of the eighteenth century as Dundee. The town was not known as Ramsbottom until 1783.

The increase of prohibition territory in the Southern States is something phenomenal, and has already attracted national attention. William E. Curtis, of the Chicago Record-Herald, has been touring in the South, and two weeks ago writing from Charlotte, N.C., he said: "Prohibition is the only political issue in the South. The entire population is now lined up on one side or the other. There is no distinct prohibition party, but both of the old parties have put planks in their platforms advocating the abolition of the liquor traffic, and at local elections the members of both are found voting for and against local option and prohibition." Mr. Curtis says the Southern political leaders have dropped railway regulation as an issue, and adds: "They have a new issue in the prohibition of the liquor traffic, which is sweeping the South like a prairie fire."

John Bright once said: "I believe that there is no field of labor, no field of Christian benevolence, which has yielded a greater harvest to our national character than the great institutions of Sunday schools."

In a recent issue of Science, Prof. Gilman A. Drew, who has been conducting experiments in connection with the egg-laying possibilities of hens at the Maine Experiment Station, quotes instances of hens which have laid two eggs within twenty-four hours. The most interesting case is that of a pullet, which apparently laid two eggs in one day early in March, 1906. During March and April there are records of five days on each of which this hen laid two eggs. There are eight other instances recorded where hens laid two eggs in a day, but in all of these cases on either the day previous or succeeding the day on which two eggs were laid no egg was laid.

The Belfast Witness regards it as "inspiring" to read in a Presbyterian paper an article on the layman coming to his own again. The writer points out that even in churches where the priest obtains that the clergy are a priesthood, the lay are receiving more recognition, and taking more part in Church life and work. In the Presbyterian Communion, he says, masterful ministers have taken on them to manage everything, and "doilest lay men have refused to do their share of church work. There are welcomed signs that all this is being changed. The laymen are coming to their place again, and the Church is giving them their opportunity. No Church can thrive nowadays without lay sympathy, lay support, and lay effort."

A night school was recently started for Poles in the city of Detroit. Very good. But the board of school inspectors appointed a saloon-keeper principal of the school. Explanation: The saloon-keeper has a brother on the board of school inspectors. Additional explanation: the saloon-keeper wields effective influence on civic election days. The incident has aroused a lively agitation among self-respecting people, but the saloonist school principal holds the fort. The school will bring grist to the saloon-keeper's den who can earn double pay; first by teaching or pretending to teach; and second, by drafting the Poles into the army of his patrons. The Michigan Presbyterian ejaculates: "And this in the twentieth century, and in Detroit, and true of an educational system."

The Presbyterian Synod for Manitoba, at its session two weeks ago, passed a rather remarkable resolution—a resolution which has set men talking and men thinking in the west. It was fathered by Principal Patrick, and advocated public ownership of all bars instead of private. Principal Patrick gave one of his stirring and fighting speeches on the subject, and the resolution was carried unanimously. Like most temperance resolutions carried annually by Synods and Conferences, it will probably not go further, yet, through its uniqueness, it has started a great deal of discussion. In passing the resolution the Synod took particular care to reiterate its belief in prohibition as the ultimate aim in Manitoba, and in favoring public ownership of bars only did so as an initial stage to the ideal.

A writer in the Contemporary Review contributes an excellent article on "Roman and Anglican," dealing mainly with the present crisis in the Roman Catholic Church. Speaking of M. Loisy, Father Tyrrell, and the Pope's Encyclical against "Modernism," the writer shows that the Church of Rome is honeycombed with schools and parties quite as much as the Church of England. He quotes the statements of leading Modernists, which are quite at variance with Medieval Romanism, both in belief and sentiment. The Belfast Witness remarks: "That is true. But the Anglican Church need not have any Medieval superstition to contend against, neither has she the absurd claim of Infallibility to maintain in face of facts. The Church of England consists of practically three distinct systems of religious opinion, and has no excuse for such a state of things."

Roman Catholics the world over, whether prelates, priests, or laymen, have had a definite instruction from their Supreme Pontiff as to their conduct with regard to the State and the Church as follows. We quote from the Canadian Churchman: "The State must, therefore, be separated from the Church, and the Catholic from the citizen. Every Catholic, from the fact that he is also a citizen, has the right and the duty to work for the common good in the way he thinks best, without troubling himself about the authority of the Church, without paying any heed to its wishes, its counsel, its orders—nay, even in spite of its reprimands. To trace out and prescribe for the citizen any line of conduct, on any pretext whatsoever, is to be guilty of an abuse of ecclesiastical authority, against which one is bound to act with all one's might." Canadians will look with interest upon the manner in which the Pope's Encyclical is obeyed by his adherents in this country. The separation of Church and State in France promises to be fruitful of far-reaching consequences.

Rev. W. J. Dawson, English congregationalist, who has for some time been devoting himself to evangelistic work in the United States, in a recent address said, "that as a result of the evangelistic movement, the Congregational ministers of America are now more evangelistic in spirit, but he lamented that the churches have not responded to the evangelistic note. He observed that an arrest of Christianity in America now would, if not overcome, make America a pagan nation in twenty years. 'Much of our Christianity, he said, 'is only a dry and sterile intellectualism, which so little affects the springs of conduct that the man orthodox in his creed may be pagan in his ethics.'" This is neither flattering nor encouraging, and elicits the following comment from the Belfast Witness: "Place along with this statement the fraudulent Trusts, the scandalous packing dodges exposed by Mr. Upton Sinclair, the political corruption which seems too strong for the political reformers, the reckless speculation which has caused the monetary panic of last fortnight, the Thaw trial, and other disclosures—the American Christians are confronted with a problem such as we never experience on this side. We can only hope they will be found equal to the extraordinary demand."