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Note and Comment

The white population of South Africa is 820,000, of whom 431,600 are "Dutch," and 388,400 "English."

Lady Aberdeen, who arrived in Montreal on Sunday evening by the Dominion, attended service at St. Paul's Church where Dr. Barclay preached an excellent sermon on the subject of "The dead who yet speak."

Africa is the most elevated of all the continents. It is the "continent of plateaus." The great tableland in the south has a mean altitude of over 3,500 feet; the wide tableland on the north has an average elevation of about 1,300 feet.

Who is the most intensely Scottish among all Sir Walter Scott's characters? Mr. Boucher, in an article in Notes and Queries, says Edie Ochiltree is. Next to Edie he places draw Fairservice.

The Daily Telegraph announces the death, quite suddenly, at Brightlingsea, of Mr. Horatio Tennyson, youngest and last of the brothers of the late Poet Laureate. He was himself a versifier of considerable power, but his name was eclipsed by the fame of other members of the family.

In accordance with the wishes of the college authorities and several members of the Presbytery, the Moderator has revoked the summons for a meeting of the Presbytery in Queen's College on November 1 for the introduction of Prof. Jordan, that his installation may be made, as in the case of Prof. Ross, an academical function.

Dr. H. M. Aml, who, with Mr. Hugh Fletcher, of the Geological Survey, has been engaged in mapping out the coal fields of Nova Scotia, has returned to Ottawa. Dr. Aml says that much valuable work has been done this summer, the areas of known seams having been ascertained to be of greater extent than heretofore supposed, while many new and extensive areas have been discovered.

Our new Moderator, says the Occident, U.S.A., has a keen streak of humor. It was years ago, when, in a clerical gathering in New York, a quaint remark of his went further than some labored and learned arguments. A good brother had been advocating a very literal interpretation of the Book of Revelation, and when it came to be Dr. Sample's turn to express his thoughts, he brought down the house (figuratively) by saying, "Brethren, I am afraid of this literal theory when applied strictly. For instance, take the woman who sat upon seven hills; taken literally, this statement calls for a sitting capacity beyond all precedent." There was no attempt at reply.

The Rev. J. Gordon Watts has been appointed editorial superintendent of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Since 1896 Mr. Watts has been one of the secretaries of the society.

It is expected that Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal will be in Montreal about Christmas and that His Lordship at that time will formally hand over the Royal Victoria College to McGill University, and will assist in the unveiling of the statue of Her Majesty, which stands at the main entrance to the college.

At the great Ecumenical missionary meeting to be held in New York, and which is to commence its sittings on April 21, 1900 three thousand delegates are expected. This will be by far the largest missionary gathering that modern times will have witnessed. The Conference held in London in 1888, large as it was, counted 1,500 delegates.

The late Zionist Congress at Basel, the third that has been held, has no doubt resulted in gaining fresh adherents for this remarkable movement. There were 300 delegates present, and the object of the movement was to obtain a charter from the Sultan authorizing Jewish settlements in Palestine. It is stated that between sixty and seventy thousand dollars have been raised in America in aid of the movement.

In one of our daily papers there lately appeared a plea for the discontinuance of Thanksgiving Day in Canada on the ground that no such holiday is observed in Great Britain. Surely there are few amongst us who would be willing to give up this day when all give thanks to the Lord of the Harvest for His goodness during the past year, and surely in a country so essentially agricultural as our fair Dominion this autumn festival is most appropriate. With all our hearts we sing:

Thou, Lord, art our life and the length of our days,

Our voices to thee in thanksgiving we raise;
Our shield and our buckler our refuge and tower,

We trust in Thy faithfulness, mercy, and power.

An Italian paper reports an instructive incident which happened in Florence not very long ago. A poor woman who was ill of the influenza was visited at her home by a Catholic lady of high rank, who did her utmost to bring the strayed sheep back to the fold of the Roman Church. For two hours the struggle lasted, but the faith of the Protestant remained unshaken. At last the lady drew a purse full of money from her pocket and shook it in the invalid's face. "See," she said, "I came to do you a kindness. This was meant for you. . . . You have only to confess and take the communion (and you can do both in my chapel), and it shall be yours." Even this weighty argument, however, proved too light. "Thy money perish with thee," was the sick woman's spirited retort. So the great lady (for she was a princess) had to go away and tell her confessor that she had been foiled by a humble Protestant.

The Friends have 90 colleges in the United States, with an attendance of 20,000 students.

We have been looking over the files of the mission, says the editor of China's Millions, to ascertain the equipment in medical service, as related to our body of missionary laborers in China, and to the heathen. We find that we have 18 duly accredited physicians and 69 qualified trained nurses, and that there are 7 hospitals, 21 dispensaries and 47 opium refuges. This is a sadly inadequate ministry for the needs of the workers in our mission and for the many millions of the Chinese which our missionaries touch. Will not friends ask that the hearts of some of the Christian medical men and women on this continent may be influenced by the Spirit, and that we may receive many offers of service from this class of workers.

The Earl of Aberdeen, whose son and heir came of age a week or two ago, has (says "M.A.P.") maintained his youthful appearance wonderfully, so much so, indeed, that the note of preparations for the rejoicings took many people by surprise. His jet-black hair and beard show no sign of advancing age, and the Earl looks more like 36 than 52. He is very enthusiastic in all his schemes, and supports his energetic Countess in all her hobbies—save one. Lady Aberdeen has advanced opinions as well as original ideas, and one of the latter is that she conceives it her duty to dine with her servants once a week—a custom once in vogue throughout Scotland. And although, it is said, the Earl does not countenance this laudable attempt to elevate the domestics, yet it was a custom which, curiously enough, obtained for generations in his family.

Sir Claude MacDonald, at a dinner in his honor, told his hosts that shortly before he left Peking the President and members of the Board consulted him with regard to the best means of definitely putting an end to the scenes of lawlessness and cruelty that periodically occur, the cruelties being chiefly perpetrated upon unoffending women and children and devoted ministers of the Christian religion. The reply to the Tsung-li-Yamen was characteristic of the man. Sir Claude MacDonald said simply, "Hang an official, the higher the better—I mean the higher the official the better—a Viceroy for choice; this is the best and only way." Sir Claude naively added that he had always received the greatest consideration and courtesy at the hands of the Tsung-li-Yamen. Referring to the cases of grievances by British subjects brought before him as our Minister in China, Sir Claude told an amusing anecdote illustrating some of such complaints. An Englishman, he said was in a "tight place," and was rescued by a Scot. Being duly grateful, the Englishman said, "My friend, you have done me a good turn, and whenever you are in trouble and in the right I will help you." "It's when I'm in the wrong that I'm wanting help," was the emphatic reply. Some of Sir Claude's friends were not unlike this worthy Scot.