NOTES AND COMMENTS

It is a disappointing showing which has been made by the committee appointed by the British government to inquire into the workings of the habitual drunkards acts of 1879 and 1898. Instead of showing many reformations secured under the law the committee finds that in the last ten years only one drunkard out of every 274 brought under the act has been reclaimed. The system established under the English law is complicated. After three convictions for ordinary drunkenness an offender can be taken before the assizes, where he may be tried on the charge of being an habitual drunkard. The definition of an habitual drunkard is, however, complex and in part badly worded, so that if a judge is at all unfriendly to that class of legislation he can easily find excuses for setting free almost any drunkard brought before him. In case of a verdict of guilty the penalty is the fixed term of three years' imprisonment, without any discretion on the part of the magistrate.

It is this latter provision which seems to the committee most objectionable. In some cases shorter terms of confinement are desirable, while in the case of drunkards who seem clearly hopeless the period is not long enough. Moreover terms of probation should, it is held, always succeed the end of the confinement. A number of other provisions making more summary trial possible, simplifying the definition of habitual drunkard and affecting the manner in which he shall be cared for if imprisoned are also suggested. Whether the difficulty in England lies with the character of the law or with its administration, the results that have been secured are certainly disappointing. The American system, which has been tried occasionally under authority of law and occasionally with some stretching of the law, offers much better hope—the system, namely, of using probationary measures when the offender first appears, and not confining reformatory efforts to the sudden types of confirmed drunkards.

EXAMPLE TO ALL DEBTORS.

Gave Creditors a Dinner and Paid Them all Off.

A remarkable dinner party was given at Copenhagen, Denmark, recently, the host being a young man named Verstroet, who was forced to leave Copenhagen ten years ago owing to many debts contracted in consequence of his luxurious tastes.

He was never heard from after his departure, and it was with considerable surprise that a number of tradesmen and others received an invitation to dine with their debtor at the Hotel Imperial.

They all came at the appointed hour, although suspicious that some one was playing a practical joke, and were met by Verstroet himself, who greeted them effusively, and apologized for his long absence.

The company, in which almost every branch of trade was represented, sat down to a sumptuous dinner. The host sat at the head of the table between two washerwomen. After dinner Verstroet informed the twenty-two guests that he had inherited a fortune, and he then paid all his outstanding bills, with interest.

MOTHERS OF INDIA.

Are Urged to Breed Rebels From the Cradle.

The District Magistrate of Lahore, India, has confirmed the confiscation of the press and plant of a revolutionary newspaper named Ingilab, for publishing articles inciting to rebellion. One of the articles in particular urged Indian mothers to breed rebels from the cradle.

Tension continues between the Mohammedans and Hindus in Bengal. Following the recent riot when a Moslem mob was fired upon by troops, some Hindus attacked a Mohammedan mosque and desecrated it by leaving within it the body of a pig, an unclean animal in Moslem eyes.

The relations between the votaries of the two religions are more than usually strained at the present time from political causes. The Mohammedans generally approve of the partition of Bengal, one reason for which was to be found in the desire to secure more consideration for the large Mohammedan element in the population of Eastern Bengal, whereas the Hindus have generally denounced it as a crime against India.

CROWNING GLORY OF MAN

The Greatest Man Is He Who Does the Greatest Good.

Who is the greatest?—Matthew xviii. 1.

Our Lord does not condemn ambition, but He defines its true object. True ambition, according to Christ, is distinguished by humility and service. The first quality demands that we be unconscious of self. The second demands that we be conscious of others.

Early in His ministry Jesus uttered the beatitude, "Blessed are the meek." Now to those ambitious disciples He said: "You must humble yourselves and become as little children." Meekness is thought by many to be the same as weakness. It is, on the contrary, the noblest kind of strength.

Men cling to the idea of personal importance. Flattery is the surest road to favor. We are never so happy as when people praise us and bow down before us. We have not learned the greatness of humility. Nor have we learned the further

GREATNESS OF SERVICE.

Our Lord and Master was servant of all. The poorest and the humblest could command Him. He went about looking for the people that needed Him. Worldly ambition makes us look at men in other lights. They are beggars to be ignored, they are tools to be used, they are rivals to be crushed. But the spirit of service puts them all in one class. They are brothers to be loved and helped.

Who, then, is greatest? The man who does the greatest amount of good. Helpfulness is the highest quality of human life. Service is the crowning glory of man. All honor to him who floods the world with a great affection, who stirs the world with great thoughts, who moves the world to deeds of heroism.

Service is the thing that lasts longest. It has an earthly immortality. When our names have perished and our memory is forgotten, the good deeds we have done will live on. "Charity never faileth." The beauty of the beneficial deed, the widow's two mites, the alabaster box of ointment, Sir Philip Sidney's cup of cold water, the passing shadow of Florence Nightingale, which the dying soldier strove to kiss; these are pictures which this world, bad as it is,

WILL NOT LET FADE.

The suns of centuries rise and set upon them.

The beauty of this ideal of service is that it is within the reach of all. Every city is full of poverty, suffering, ignorance, degradation. Everywhere our brothers lie before us as of old they lay before the eternal Christ, most miserable, but most noble. They need our help and they are worthy of it. Their hearts will thrill with new life at the touch of kindness and they will rise and stand upon their feet.

Jesus Christ offers the world a new road to greatness. He traveled it Himself and thousands praise Him in every land. His name is above every name. There is no other way. You cannot rise by cunning and deceit. You cannot gain a success worth having by selfishness. But if you follow Him you will reach the snowclad summit; you will win the favor of man and God and leave the world at last a little better than you found it.

Rev. Thomas Reed Bridges, D.D.

THE S. S. LESSON

INTERNATIONAL LESSON, MARCH 7.

Lesson X. Philip and the Ethiopian, Acts 8: 26-38. Golden Text, John 5: 39.

Verse 26.—And the (R. V., "But an") angel of the Lord.—Whether he appeared in some visible form, or by some inward communication, or by vision, is not revealed, and is a matter of small consequence. But in any case it was a real messenger bringing a real message from God. Go toward the south (from Samaria) unto the way that led southwest from Jerusalem unto Gaza. The Samaritan road crossed or joined into the road from Jerusalem, the great highway of commerce and travel to Egypt and thence to all parts of Africa. Which is desert. Uncultivated pasture lands. It is uncertain whether desert refers to the country, the desert road, or to the old city of Gaza (George Adam Smith) which had been deserted for the new city nearer the sea.

27. And he arose and went.—Apparently under sealed orders, as so often in life, not knowing the object of his journey. Government ships are often sent out with sealed orders not to be opened till out at sea, so that by no means could their destination or purpose be revealed to the enemy.

27, 28. A man of Ethiopia. — A general term for the lands south of Egypt. But from the name of Queen Candace it was probably Meroe, a country which lay on the right bank of the Nile from its junction with the Atbara, as far as Khartoum, and thence to the east of the blue Nile to the Abyssinian Mountains. Of great authority. A man of power, of wide influence, a prince. Under Candace. Not the name of an individual, but of a dynasty, as Pharaoh in Egypt and Cesar in Rome. Queen of the Ethiopians. The kingdom of Meroe was governed by queens in the time of Augustus, and, according to Eusebius, even to his time, three hundred years after Christ. Charge of all her treasure. Chancellor of the exchequer, secretary of the treasury.

28. Was returning.—Guided by Providence at exactly the right time. Read ("was reading") Esaias. Greek form of Isaiah. He was reading aloud as was the custom, so that Philip was able to hear it. It was a pleasant and profitable custom on long journeys.

29. Then the Spirit said.—The Spirit speaks not only to our feelings, but to our judgment and conscience. Whoever is perfectly willing to obey the voice of the Spirit will be guided aright. Prejudices, unwillingness to obey, past training or failure of training, in so far as we allow them to exert an influence, will lead us astray; as iron near the compass on a ship will deflect the guiding magnetic needle. Join thyself to this chariot.—An excellent illustration is found in Pilgrim's Progress, where Christian is wandering around in doubt, and meeting Evangelist is directed to the right way.

30. And Philip ran thither—Not only showing the eagerness of his obedience, but from necessity, if he would join the company of travelers. And while running beside the chariot he overheard him read the prophet Esaias (Isaiah). The citation which follows shows that he was reading from the Greek translation made in Egypt, and not from the Hebrew. Such a roll would be made by hand on parchment and was very expensive, "a pearl of great price." He had probably bought it in Jerusalem in order to study the question discussed there concerning the Messiah.

31. In response to Philip's question, the Ethiopian replied, How can I, except some man should guide me? The passage which he was reading was a peculiarly difficult one to understand till the facts revealed the meaning. And these facts were familiar to Philip.

32. The place of the Scripture was Isa. 53: 7, 8. The verses quoted are a portion of the prophet's vision of the suffering Messiah. The picture is true in some degree of those good men of the nation who gave up their lives in an evil world to the making of the world better; but it was complete and ideal and perfect only in Jesus Christ giving his life for his people, and his body and spirit as an atoning sacrifice for their sins. He was led as a sheep to the slaughter — He unresistingly went to his sacrificial death on the cross, as the lamb for the evening sacrifice to the altar. The very power of his death over men arose from the fact that he went voluntarily, out of love for man, to the cross, when at any time "twelve legions of angels were ready to deliver him from his enemies (Matt. 26: 53).

33. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away—The judgment (justice) due to him. A fair trial was not accorded to him, as is plainly seen in the account of the trial of Jesus. Who shall declare his generation?—This may mean "who can fitly declare the number of those who share his life," his spiritual prosperity, which came not only in spite of, but through his humiliation. For his life is taken from the earth.—How then could he be the everlasting king foretold by Isaiah?

34. Of whom speaketh the prophet this?—The two pictures of the Messiah in the book of Isaiah and the other prophets must have been a great puzzle to the Jews. No portraits or descriptions of the same person could be more irreconcilable or contradictory.

35. Then Philip . . . began at the same Scripture.—Which was fulfilled in Jesus, and has been fulfiled in no other. And preached, announced the glad tidings of Jesus—Philip showed the strange and marvelous correspondence between the many descriptions of the Messiah in the prophets and the then well-known life of Jesus of Nazareth. He placed Jesus in his life, death, and character beside the picture of the Messiah which the prophets had painted, and all could see that the picture was a portrait of Jesus. He could also explain how this humiliation and sacrifice were the means by which the glories of the Messiah and his kingdom were to be attained, and he could illustrate it by the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the character of the church, its deeds, and its influence as already shown in Jerusalem.

36. They came unto a certain water, probably Marubah, about a day's journey from Hebron toward Gaza. What doth hinder me to be baptized?—This was saying, "I believe in Jesus as the Messiah, I accept him as my Saviour, and now I wish to confess him by baptism," as all other Christians had been doing. Without doubt Philip had told him about baptism as the Christian way of acknowledging Christ.

37. If thou believest, etc.—This verse is wanting in the best manuscripts, and was probably inserted from some marginal note made to keep readers from error. But it is the true answer to the Ethiopian's question. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He believed with his mind and his heart. He believed in him as his Master and his Saviour.

38. He commanded the chariot—He ordered the chariot-driver to stop, and of course the whole retinue would see what took place, and they may certainly be regarded as the nucleus of a congregation to be established in Ethiopia. He baptized him—This was the rite through which he made a public profession of his faith in Jesus.

IN LIEU OF ICE-CREAM.

How War Correspondents Fare in Time of War.

However men may talk of rising superior to the pleasures of the palate, the desire of the individual on short commons for something good to eat will intrude itself in even the gravest situations. That in time of battle one's thoughts may be occupied, not so much with dread of the bullet as with wistful recollections of a generous and tempting bill of fare, is shown by Frederick Palmer's experience, told in "With Kuroki in Manchuria." Mr. Palmer and a fellow war correspondent had spent the night sleeping on the stalks of a corn-field.

When we awoke, the flashes of the Russian guns were playing. Drowsily we rolled out of our blankets with the comprehension that the artillery fire was going on, as it had yetserday, and that we were hungry and there was no breakfast in sight. Probably the artillery fire would go on forever; probably there were no soft beds and no square meals anywhere in the world.

As we dressed, Collins broke in with:

"What I should like would be, first some grapes, all dewy, off the ice, then—" but I would not allow him to go any further.

We had a little rice and some coffee. He boiled the rice and I made the coffee, and I assure you we did not overtax our stomachs.

"And after I had topped off with ice-cream," said Collins, reminiscently, "I think I'd go to sleep with orders not to wake me — ever."

We had something that tasted as good as ice-cream to the diner-out in town. A spring bubbled out of the plowed earth, bubbled ceaselessly, coolly, from a filter of sandy loam, laughing typhoid to scorn. When I looked at it I remember wondering how such cool water could come out of a corn-field on such a hot day.

If a linen cloth, and spotless napkins, and Collins's idea of a breakfast had been realized, I could not have felt much happier than I was to have my turn at this fountain of joy. You felt each swallow trickle down until you were full to the throat.

THE MARRIAGE AGE.

The marriage age in Austria is 14 years for both sexs; Germany the man at 18, the woman at 14; Belgium, the man at 18, the woman at 15; Spain, the man at 14, the woman at 12; Mexico, with parental consent, 16 and 18, otherwise 21 for both; France, the man at 18, the woman at 15; Greece, the man at 14, the woman at 12; Hungary, Catholics, the man at 14, the woman at 12; Protestants, the man at 18, the woman at 15; Portugal, the man at 14, the woman at 12; Russia, the man at 18, the woman at 15; Saxony, the man at 18, the woman at 16; Switzerland, the man at 14, the woman at 12.

NOT ALONE.

"Are you in business for yourself now?"

"Well, not exactly for myself. There's my wife and nine children, her mother and the nurse and hired girl."

Counsel (to witness)—"Did your father, when finally parting from you, give you no admonition. Witness—"He never gave much away at any time." Barrister—"I mean, what were his last words?" Witness—"They don't concern you." Barrister—"They not only concern me, sir, but they concern the whole court!" Witness—"Father said to me and Jim, 'Don't have no disputin' when I'm gone, lads, 'cos lawyers is the biggest rogues anywhere!'"

YOU CAN BUY AN ANNUITY

NEW INSURANCE FOR THE PEOPLE OF CANADA.

The Canadian Government Has Provided a Safe and Sure Investment.

The Canadian Government's Annuities Act is now in operation and booklets can be obtained from postmasters throughout Canada explaining the terms under which annuities can be purchased. Mr. S. F. Bastedo, the superintendent, has issued the information in booklet form.

All that it will be necessary for you to do to provide for such an emergency will be to deposit from time to time in the nearest post office savings bank or money order office, or, if you prefer, to remit direct to the Department at Ottawa, as may hereafter be arranged, any amounts that you may set aside for that purpose, which amounts will be placed to your credit with compound interest thereon at 4 per cent. per annum, and will be paid to you in the form of an annuity at a date thereafter to be fixed.

SAFE AND SOUND.

The Government will assist you—it will look after your instalments—it has advantages for investment which a private individual cannot enjoy—it will act as your banker—it will do all this for you absolutely free of charge, and you need have no fear that your savings will be lost by dishonest or extravagant mismanagement.

CANNOT BE TOUCHED.

It has been provided by statute that you cannot be deprived of your annuity in any manner, by any person or by any process of law; and you are protected against possible pressure and the many temptations to withdraw your contributions, in order that the intent of the act, which is solely to enable you to provide for a comfortable old age, may not be defeated, the annuity cannot be seized for debt of any kind; and it cannot be forfeited. It is inalienable.

You may provide for an annuity of $50 or $600 a year, but no less and no more.

You may contract for an annuity at age of five and any subsequent age, but, except for invalidity or disablement, no annuity shall be payable before the age of 65; and no matter how little you pay, or how much, your benefits will be relatively the same.

You may pay in only 25 cents a week if you are unable to make a larger contribution; or you may pay in ten, fifteen or twenty dollars at a time.

You may pay monthly, quarterly, half-yearly or yearly premiums if you prefer that plan, the total cost being the same whichever plan ou adopt.

PAY A LUMP SUM.

You may start with a lump sum; and continue by periodical payments; and you may deposit lump sums at any time, which will give a corresponding increase to your annuity.

You may start with a lump sum and complete the contract by periodical payments; that is to say, a man of 40 or other age, may by a single payment pay arrears of premium between the ages of 20 and 40, and complete the contract as if he had entered at age of twenty.

You may provide by single payments for annuities for yourself, your wife, and your children, the annuities to begin at some subsequent age.

You may provide for a joint annuity for yourself and wife, to be enjoyed so long as either of you live.

You may complete your payments at a certain age, and allow these to further accumulate, and take an increased annuity at a subsequent age.

IMMEDIATE ANNUITY.

You may purchase an immediate annuity, and receive the first instalment thereof three months after purchase.

Your annuity may, when it becomes payable, be guaranteed for a number of years, even should you die before the guaranteed period expires, but in any event it will be paid as long as you live.

You may, if you have money at your credit in the Post Office Savings Bank, have the same transferred to your account for the purchase of a deferred annuity, and compound interest thereon will thereafter be allowed at 4 per cent. per annum instead of at 3 per cent. as at present.

You will receive once a year a statement of the amount standing to your credit.

NO LAPSES.

There are no lapses.

If your contributions are interrupted by sickness, loss of employment, or other cause, you may resume payment at any time.

If your payments should be continued to the end of the contract, such proportion of the original annuity as these payments will purchase will be paid to you.

If your payments with accumulated interest should not in the aggregate be sufficient to earn an annuity of $50 all payments made with compound interest at 3 per cent. per annum will be returned to your heirs.

If you should die at any time before the annuity becomes payable, all payments made with compound interest at 3 per cent. per annum will be returned to your heirs.

INSURANCE TO FAMILY.

You may purchase a large annuity for same payments if return benefits are not desired, a plan which will no doubt appeal strongly to you if you are carying fraternal or straight life insurance, as should death occur before the annuity begins the insurance would go to your family; and after the annuity began the increased annuity would enable you to keep your insurance in force, which otherwise you might be compelled to cancel. This plan will also appeal to a person who has no heirs, or may desire to secure the maximum amount of annuity at the minimum cost.

No deductions will be made for amounts received, but all expenses will be borne by the Government wholly without charge, and every cent that your deposits earn will be placed to your credit for the purchase of the annuity.

Employers of labor may contract for annuities for their employes.

A society or an association of persons, being a body corporate for fraternal benevolent, religious or other lawful purposes, may contract for annuities for its members.

Annuities will be paid quarterly, unless otherwise expressly provided.

All forms of contract are approved by the Governor-General in Council.

NO EXAMINATION.

No medical examination is required.

Pass-books for the convenience of depositors of small amounts, as on the weekly plan, will be supplied by the postmaster.

Purchasers of annuities not using the pass-books may remit direct to the Minister or to the Superintendent by registered letter, or by money order, express order or postal note, made payable to the order of the Receiver-General, or payments may be made in person at the Department.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

The following illustrations will demonstrate to you the vastly greater advantages of an annuity contract over any other kind of investment as a means of making provision for old age.

A man beginning at 20 years of age, and paying 25 cents a week until he is 60, may provide an annuity (or income) for the remainder of his life of $129.91.

A man beginning at 25, and paying 25 cents a week until he is 60, will receive $99.34 at 60.

A man beginning at 30, and paying 25 cents a week until he is 60, will receive $74.73 at 60.

A man beginning at 35, and paying 25 cents a week until he is 60, will receive $54.90 at 60.

A man beginning at 20 with a cash payment of $10, paying 25 cents a week, and adding $10 every five years until he is 60 will receive an annuity of $151.96 at age of 60.

EARTH'S WORST WALK.

A Lady Will Tramp from the Congo State to Khartoum.

A woman explorer, Miss Charlotte Mansfield, poet and novelist, is about to undertake a journey on foot that has been alliteratively—and truthfully—described as the worst walk in the world.

This is that part of the overland journey from the Cape to Cairo which lies between the railheads, a distance of about 600 miles. It commences near the southern border of the Congo State, and continues until Khartoum is reached.

The walk is almost wholly within the tropics. In the forst belt rain falls well-nigh incessantly. The poisonous tsetse fly produces in domestic animals a disease which rapidly proves fatal to them and in human beings an allied malady, the dreaded sleeping sickness, for which likewise no cure is known.

The worst stage of the journey is the last, before Khartoum is reached, for here the traveller enters upon a land of swamps, formed by the headwaters of the Nile. The country is dead level, and covered with rank vegetation, through which may be discerned everywhere the fetid ooze whence arises the deadly malaria that attacks all white persons who venture to linger in the locality.

Here, to, are first encountered the giant Dinkas, the tallest men on earth. They are jetblack savages, 6 feet 4 inches to 6 feet 6 inches tall, and murderers and cannibals to a man.

Difficult as is the journey, however, Miss Mansfield is mistaken in supposing that it has never before been undertaken by a woman. Only last year a Mrs. Hellman, wife of a Johannesburg mine manager, made the trip in company with her husband. The first person of either sex to traverse the whole route was, of course, Mr. Ewart Scott Grogan, in 1898.

Large hopes from small foundations grow.