

objectionable as it is to the ordinary mind, proposes a far less radical change than Prof. Loudon's time division. This system, which is on the decimal plan, provides that the present day of twenty four hours be divided into ten divisions, so that each hour would correspond to two hours and twenty-four minutes, this hour would be again divided into a hundred divisions, called minutes if necessary, each minute on the new system thus corresponding to 1.44 minutes, again, this new minute division to be subdivided for accurate measurements into one hundred divisions, called seconds. The advantages arising from such a system, as enumerated, are, the abolition of the so-called A.M. and P.M., as has already been accomplished by the 24-hour system; all the advantages derivable from the adoption of any system based on the scale of 10—namely, the inconveniences arising from the continual use of vulgar fractions and the use of symbols for each unit in the ordinary affairs of life; and, finally, the fact that the time in hours and minutes, which for all practical purposes is sufficient, is indicated immediately by the clock—this latter being considered a specially important advantage.

But while these advantages are manifest, it is quite evident, that to change the duration of time denoted by a minute or a second, as well as that denoted by an hour would be more than the people would tolerate, as it would take more than a generation for them to accustom themselves to the substitution of three o'clock for 12 minutes past 7 a.m., 6 o'clock for 24 minutes past 2, and 9 o'clock for 24 minutes to 10. There is such a thing as carrying decimals too far, and this is one of the instances.

DELESSEPS' TRIUMPH.

It was Napoleon Bonaparte who first conceived the idea of connecting the waters of the Red Sea and the Mediterranean by a canal across the Isthmus of Suez; but owing to the unfavorable report of the engineers appointed to survey the route, in which it was stated that the waters of the Red Sea were 30 feet above those in the Mediterranean, the scheme was indefinitely postponed, and it was not until an English officer proved this statement to be erroneous, that any attempt was made to push forward the project. Although the British and Austrian Governments undertook, in conjunction with France, the construction of the canal, it is to the Government of the latter country that the credit of prosecuting the work is principally due. But this may be accounted for from the fact that M. De Lesseps, the chief engineer in charge, was himself a Frenchman, and when funds were required, found it more easy to raise them in France than in either of the other countries interested. The pessimists who predicted that the Suez Canal would prove a magnificent failure, have in this, as in many like undertakings, been obliged to bow before the logic of facts, but even the most optimistic of De Lesseps' admirers could scarce have believed that since the first opening of the canal, on the 17th of November, 1869, the traffic would have developed to its present proportions. According to the report recently read by M. De Lesseps the receipts of 1885 appear to have been 65,049,945 francs, and the expenses 31,021,178 francs, leaving a profit of 34,028,767 francs, which allowed a dividend of 60 francs 40 centimes. The return of traffic—3624 ships, of 6,335,753 tons—exceeded by 340 ships and 464,253 tons that of the previous year. The passengers numbered 205,951, against 151,916 in 1884, and 43,813 of them were English. The average time of transit was forty three hours, and though the twelve days' interruption caused by a dredger being run down led to an assemblage of 123 ships, all these got through in three days. Liberty of travelling by night with the electric light had been taken advantage of by several of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers, one of which thus made the transit in seventeen hours fifty minutes. Traffic has not suffered from the economic depression, because the reduced dues have allowed the creation of fresh enterprises or the extension of existing ones.

THE WORLD'S POPULATION—PRESS UPON SUBSISTENCE.

People as a rule may be classified under three heads, the Antiquarians—or those specially interested in the past—the Moderns—or those who display a lively interest in the affairs of their own day and generation—and the Futureans—or those who have a keen desire to throw aside the veil of nature and discover if possible that which is to transpire in the future. Of these classes the latter, though small, has, through the prognostications of its devotees created a wide spread interest in the future of the human race. There will come a time, says Malthus, when the increase in the world's population will be checked by the limit of subsistence. This writer claimed that while population increased geometrically, the increase in subsistence was arithmetical, and that sooner or later, the press of population upon subsistence would check a further growth in the world's population. This theory, however logical it may appear, should not be accepted without limitations. During the past century the increase in subsistence has proportionally been greater than that of population; while this may be due to the fact that immense areas of new country have been opened up to cultivation, the relative increase in population has failed to keep up to the Malthusean standard. At the present time the world's population of 1,400,000,000 people could stand comfortably within the confines of the district of Columbia, which is ten miles square, and this district is only one five hundred thousandth part of the land surface of the globe, so that at the present time we have an average of twenty-three acres for each man, woman, and child in the human race. Now it has been proved in many parts of Europe that a man and his family—say of five persons—can subsist comfortably upon the products of one and a half acres of land, and as with the introduction of improved machinery and the use of suitable fertilizers the products of the soil can be almost indefinitely multiplied; it appears to us that Malthus and his

Futurean disciples will have to make a very close calculation in order to discover at just what epoch in the world's history this press of population upon subsistence is likely to occur. Scarcely a month passes by without the announcement of some scientific discovery by which subsistence is increased in far greater proportion than the growth of population, and as thousands of years must even—according to Malthus—elapse before the critical period is reached, we have every reason to believe that the scientific discoveries will revolutionize agricultural methods. If this be true we may safely leave to posterity the solution of the question.

MISCONCEPTIONS REGARDING IRELAND.

It is painful to observe how much of the current writings about the affairs of Ireland is not only misleading, but grossly inaccurate. It is at best difficult, no doubt, for a Canadian to view fully, honestly, and justly, the various aspects of the great Irish Question, but we question whether there would be so many misconceptions respecting it if an honest attempt were made by every writer to get at the truth, and publish it. Even the *Toronto Week* has more than once referred to Ulster and the other Provinces of Ireland in such a way as might convey to some minds the idea that Ulster is essentially loyal, enlightened, wealthy, Protestant and opposed to Home Rule; and that Munster, Leinster and Connaught, are each and all, the very reverse. Other journals that we could name have repeatedly asserted, even during the past few months, that Ulster is entirely Protestant, when the fact is that Roman Catholics there are far more numerous than any other one denomination, and very nearly equal in number all the other denominations. We have been told that Ulster is altogether anti-National, when the fact is, that not only a handsome majority of the people of that Province, but 17 out of 33 representatives profess themselves in perfect accord with the Home Rule movement.

We have seen the statement made and made again *ad nauseam* that Ulster is the wealthy Province of Ireland. A fair test of wealth is the income tax—and to some extent it may be also a test of enlightenment. From the income tax, it appears that Leinster is nearly twice as wealthy as Ulster, according to population. Here are the figures.—

| | Population. | Income Tax Assessment | Income Tax per Head of Population. |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ulster | 1,789,542 | £ 9,952,289 | £ 5 14 5 |
| Leinster..... | 1,282,881 | 13,272,202 | 10 6 9 |
| Connaught | 813,506 | 2,995,438 | 3 13 7 |
| Munster | 1,323,910 | 7,980,278 | 6 0 0 |

Now, compare Belfast and Londonderry, two chief towns of Ulster, with Dublin in Leinster and Waterford in Munster:—

| | Population. | Income Tax Assessment | Income Tax per Head of Population. |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Belfast | 207,671 | £2,200,842 | £15 12 0 |
| Dublin | 273,064 | 5,368,758 | 19 13 3 |
| Londonderry | 28,947 | 223,775 | 7 14 8 |
| Waterford | 28,952 | 336,272 | 11 12 4 |

As to enlightenment, there is no good reason for believing that there is on that score any marked difference between Ulster, Leinster, and Munster, in Connaught, indeed, the people are educationally backward, owing to extreme poverty, from which that Province has been suffering ever since the great Irish famine. It may be said, however, that the most brilliant Irish Members of Parliament come from Leinster, and that the best sustained institutions of higher learning are there too.

THE TEUTONIC QUEEN OF A LATIN NATION.

The old Castilian spirit is dead in Spain, and while the country is frequently disturbed by petty, and sometimes even serious insurrections, the people appear to have settled down into a state of apathy, having little or no desire to improve their political institutions, or radically change their habits and customs. While King Alfonso lived, a comparatively strong government was insured, but his early demise has aroused the ambition of Don Carlos, and although it is not probable that the present Pretender will ever grasp the Spanish sceptre, it is quite possible that his opposition may cause the Queen Regent much trouble. The mother of the baby King of Spain, who is an Austrian by birth, and through whose veins the blood of the Teuton flows, has been called upon, at the age of 28 years, to discharge the sovereign powers of a Spanish Monarch during a long term of regency, and upon the wisdom and firmness of her government hangs the fate of her youngest child. From the Republicans, who strongly oppose the Absolutists and their leader, Don Carlos, the Queen Regent may expect some support, and although, as we have said, Don Carlos will endeavor to overthrow the ruling house, he cannot successfully cope with the Loyalists and Republicans combined. Don Carlos, although styled a Pretender, has good ground upon which to base his claim to the throne, to which he would have ascended, had it not been that his grandfather, Ferdinand 7th, revoked the Salic law, in order that his daughter Queen Isabella and, mother of King Alfonso, might succeed him. Carlos claimed that Ferdinand 7th had no right to abandon this law, and regards the present reigning house as usurpers. Don Carlos has recently fallen heir to immense estates, which, it is thought, will furnish him with means to support his claim, but during the past ten years he has lost touch with the people, and his cause to-day is weaker than it was at the close of the civil war in 1876. The spectacle of a Teutonic Queen Regent governing a Latin Kingdom, during the longest possible term of regency, will be watched with interest by the civilized world.