

Criminal Statistics.

LET us glance at the statistics of crime in our Dominion, as given by the most recent Parliamentary papers. In 1882 there were 31,305 convictions. In the following year the total reached was 33,388. In 1884 there was a happy decrease of nearly 4,000. In 1885 and 1886 the numbers were nearly the same, namely, for the latter 33,874, and for the former 33,869. It is certainly not right that our country should have its records darkened with so much lawlessness. Happily the totals we have given do not indicate an equal number of separate persons. Some persons, especially drunkards, are up three times, eight times, ten times, in the same year! In 1886, the total number of persons charged with indictable offences was 5,497. Of this number, 3,509 were convicted. Of separate persons thus convicted there were 2,820. The number of women convicted was but 8½ per cent.

We come now to the religious connections of convicted persons. According to the census of 1881 the Protestants of the Dominion numbered 2,439,188, and the Roman Catholics 1,791,982. The criminals belonging to each are nearly equal. That is, the minority produces as many criminals as the majority; and Roman Catholics take the lead in every crime except forgery. Roman Catholic convicts number 1,550; Episcopalians, 555; Methodists, 347; Presbyterians, 281; Baptists, 88. In 1884, of the convicts 49½ per cent. belonged to the R. C. Church, very nearly 17 per cent. to the Church of England, nearly 11 per cent. to the Methodists, and nearly 8 per cent. to the Presbyterians. The rate varied a little in 1886, the R. C. proportions coming down nearly to 44 per cent.

Compare the population adhering to the various churches, and you will note some facts of interest. The Roman Catholic body claims 1,799,245—not nearly half the population, and yet its share of criminals is nearly one-half. Presbyterians are more than 100,000 stronger than the Church of England, but the Church of England criminals are very nearly twice as numerous as the Presbyterian criminals. The Methodists are 150,000 in excess of the Church of England; yet in criminals the latter largely exceeds. It is a very great shame that any one of our churches should have to bear the stigma of a considerable criminal population being attached to it.

Taking the population of our Dominion, one out of every 4,206 is a criminal in a penitentiary. This proportion is not worse than is presented by other countries; but it is worse than it ought to be in a Christian country. It surely ought to be, and is, the earnest aim of

all the churches so to train their children that they shall duly reverence and observe all the commandments of the Lord.

Brieflet No. 10.

IN ROME—THE CATACOMBS AND THE
APPIAN WAY.

THE CATACOMBS OF ST. CALIXTUS are the largest and most interesting of the numerous sepulchral excavations found in this neighbourhood. They consist of a network of narrow lanes hewn out of the rock, from three to six feet wide, and from five and a half to ten feet high, intersecting each other in a manner that is bewildering. Being forty feet under ground, they are in total darkness, and you must carry a torch. The walls on either side are perforated with horizontal niches in tiers one above another, like berths in a ship, each designed to contain one or more bodies full length. These tombs had originally been closed with cement, but nearly all are now open, and empty. They were first used for burial about the beginning of the Christian era, and so continued for about four hundred years, during which time, vast numbers were buried in them. The entire length of the galleries in all the Roman Catacombs is estimated to be about 587 miles and the number of graves between seven and eight millions. For nearly a thousand years they were deserted, and their very existence was almost forgotten. About the middle of the sixteenth century they began to be re-opened and explored, and ever since have been the subject of much learned and interesting study. Thousands of monuments and inscriptions taken from them are preserved in the Vatican Museum and have thrown a flood of light on the simple faith and earnest piety of the primitive Christians.*

* The following inscription, about (A. D. 160) from the Vatican collection, illustrates very beautifully the assurance these persecuted Christians had of life and immortality beyond the grave.

ALEXANDER DEAD "IS NOT"; BUT HE LIVES ABOVE THE STARS, AND HIS BODY RESTS IN THIS TOMB. HE ENDED LIFE UNDER THE EMPEROR ANTONINE, WHO FORESKIRING THAT GREAT BENEFIT WOULD RESULT FROM HIS SERVICES, RETURNED EVIL FOR GOOD. FOR WHILE ON HIS KNEES AND ABOUT TO SACRIFICE TO THE TRUE GOD, HE WAS LED AWAY TO EXECUTION. OH, SAD TIMES!—IN WHICH, AMONG SACRED RITES AND PRAYERS, EVEN IN CAVERNS, WE ARE NOT SAFE. WHAT CAN BE MORE WRETCHED THAN SUCH A LIFE? AND WHAT THAN SUCH A DEATH? WHEN THEY CANNOT BE BURIED BY THEIR FRIENDS AND RELATIONS. AT LENGTH THEY SPARKLE IN HEAVEN.