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Religious Miscellany.

Christmas Hymn.

Earth softly wraps a slumb'rous night;
And stars, like fireflies sporting there,
With noiseless sparkle, scatter light,
Or drop, anon, i' the dreamy air.

Hark! strains, that scarcely break her spell,
Just o'er the verge of silence rise;
Whose waves of whispered music swell,
Like northern lights, along the skies!

In mute and meditative ears,
Dropping like dew, the shepherds caught
That morning song of many spheres,
Murmured, like melody of thought.

Peace, peace, good will to earth are given;
Whose kingdom keeps a calm above;
And softly stepping down from heaven,
The realm of happiness and love.

God's perfect image here behold,
The brightness of his glory, too!
By whom he fashioned us of old,
He comes to make us all anew!

Lo! through the air of melody,
That morning star auspicious scan:
It harbingers nativity,
To-day, of the divine in man!

Before the wise men's raptured view,
Like Israel's pillar, see it move!
Their pilgrim feet have followed, too—
It rests, the holy babe above!

By Him, of old, God made the land
And sea and sun and every star—
How feeble now his infant hand,
And frail the tiny fingers are!

—Will shouts of every human voice,
In chorus swell the heavenly song?
Does earth, receiving him, rejoice,
She's hoped and waited for, so long?

Does every palace ope its door,
With tumult of a glad acclaim,
And monarchs cast their crowns before
The feet, which come in heaven's name?

Alas! ye hosts of angel eyes,
Behold!—to help you are forbid!—
The Father's glory men despise;
In earth's eclipse the heaven is hid!

A stable only, men afford,
With beasts of labor, for his birth;
And Herod plots against the Lord,
To cut his name off from the earth!

—Blest Christmas Day! for He, who then
Came down—at last was lifted high,
To draw to Him redeemed of men,
And give us immortality!

God's Christmas Tree.

It was Christmas eve. In a dimly-lighted chamber of that large and now desolate house, three feeble women sat—from out that chamber but yesterday stranger hands had borne to his burial him upon whom, as upon a strong staff, they had rested and thought to rest all the days of this life. Drawn closely together, as if each would gain strength from the other, sat the three. One, aged and infirm; one, worn with weakness and pain, trying to still the throbbing temples by the tight pressure of the pale hands, one, younger and lighter-hearted, yet each lost in her own troubled thoughts, helpless in the present, mindful of the past, anxious for the future. Suddenly through the room stole a soft, sweet sound, like spirit-whispers from another world. Going to the window, the youngest threw up the sash, and clear and loud on the still, night air, rang out the Christmas chime to Luther's grand old hymn.

"From heaven I have come down"—

A pause, and then came—

"Watchman! tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.
Traveler! o'er you mountain height,
See the glory-beaming star
Watchman! will its beams alone
Gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveler! ages are its own;
See! it bursts on all the earth."

The cold air fanned the fevered cheek, and the sweet melody, like a mother's hush, quieted the aching head, resting there on the clasped hands; the eyes that for long, weary nights had kept their sleepless vigil, closed gently now, to open—the spirit eyes—on a Christmas night, in the old town of Spires. Earth was clothed in her pure covering of white as for a festive night. Orion was high in the heaven's, and the twin stars led the way to the hill church, from whose steeple the clear, joyous chimes sent out a glad refrain to the hollow, distant peal of the great cathedral bell.

In the houses the Christmas trees were lighted, their rainbow tints shifting and sparkling in the quickening frost. Through all the roads torches were moving, their thousand reflections met by the golden lamps hung out in heaven, that seemed nearer and more brilliant, as if to embrace the earth, on this the birth-night of her Christ-child. The joyous faces of children looked out from behind their tapers, as in long procession they moved up the high street to the church, singing in the lively melody of Luther.

"A child of bliss is born to all."

The pastor, in gown and bands, met by the solemn tones of the organ, passed up the aisle to the chancel. One rich voice sang the "Gloria in Excelsis Deo," and then the Hallelujah floated over the multitude as if in consecration. And now as the children sang that noble old hymn of the Reformation,

"At length Redemption's come,"

and the deep tones of the organ rolled through the arches, then died away, as it were, into the vaults, the great chandelier before the altar hung with garlands of evergreen, seemed, to rise and reach out its branches till it became a great tree, and filled the whole earth. Its jets of light seemed golden fruit, its pendants silver bells; its leaves were for healing and its wealth of blossoms—showered down in rich profusion—blown about, soiled and withered, sometimes seeming lost, yet everywhere they fell, on cultured soil or desert ground, with softening influence and gladdening into life.

Above the tree shone one single star of triple points, flooding all its laden boughs with so soft, and pure, and holy a light, that peace, and love, and joy awoke, almost unknowing how, within the heart that gazed upon it. The soft south wind, as it went by, stirred its fragrant branches and sweet, silver bells, and men paused to listen, and consciousness awoke and sinful passions lulled, and its healing leaves brought holy feelings and heaven-born place. It was the Tree of Life, like that John saw in vision, and it was given "the Spirit eyes" to look back the long night of years to that day of earth's jubilee, when first that tree was planted deep in the hills of Palestine, and that star gleamed out a "light in night," and down the years since passed away to see its branches reach far into pagan lands with saving influence and life-giving power, and its leaves go forth in healing to the nations.

It was the death-hour of the Son of God, the star was dimmed, and darkness wrapt the world in gloom. From the heart of Divine compassion was borne one fragrant blossom to the heart of the secret, trembling disciple, and amid the scoff and scorn of cruel Jews, he laid in his own new tomb, "the Crucified."

The leaf—"I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness will I draw thee"—was sent to the penitent disciple, and he who had denied his Master with oaths, now boldly charged upon His murderers their crime, and then for their troubled consciences gathered the leaves that bade them "look to Him they had pierced, that their sins might be blotted out."

It is noon-day, and the Jewish zealot goes on his way full of murderous thought and bigot hate. One star-lit ray fell on his startled sense, sweet music-tones awoke glad echoes in his fainting heart, and henceforth, over sea and land, in peril oft he bears the wondrous leaves. The dungeon's gloom they lighted, and in Cæsar's palace stout hearts trembled or bowed beneath their power. In distant isles he sowed the seed for other trees of life, and when his fight was fought, his armor laid aside, the joyful chimes rang on, and a mighty host went forth to echo the glad tidings. Then Christian England rose and sent her heralds forth, and farther India heard the sound, and "Ethiopia stretched out her hands to God."

They fell upon old Rome, those leaves of life, and the Gladiatorial games were banished; they fell upon the dungeons of the "man of sin," and the Inquisition died, and slavery's chain unlocked, and the Sabbath rose amid the ruins.

In that old church, where dreamed the sleeper, a man, in priestly garb, held high a torch of gathered leaves, lit by that star-bright radiance, then rung a chime that woke the nations. Full on the abomination that maketh desolate" he threw the searching light, and men drew back in loathing, and the mitered head upon the Tiber trembled, and the "scarlet women, drunk with the blood of martyrs," paled with fear; and evermore will ring those tones, till deep in darkest night old Babylon shall sink to rise no more.

And now the sleeper rose, heartened and strengthened for her life-work, and when they questioned of her brightened face and earnest acts, she told them of the Tree of Life and its wondrous leaves that gave to all who sought a wealth untold. The while the south wind breathed upon their hearts, and to the weary pilgrim whispered of the "rest beyond" and of quiet waiting "till the day-break, and the shadows flee away," and to the twain it told of work to do and of loving guidance all through their brightened way, and round them, evermore "the everlasting arms."—*Fam. Guardian.*

Celebration of Christmas.

We need not cease to do a becoming and good thing because somebody caricatures it. It is the best things that are the most vilely travestied. Only one divine Saviour has been born; he died but once, he rose but once from the dead; there has been but one pentecost. Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Whitsuntide, mark and celebrate the great events of Christ's life, and of the history of his religion. These events are so grand and commanding that they have been perpetual themes of pulpit discourse and unfailing grounds of trust in the most living portions of the Church in all its ages. And it was natural that these mighty and pregnant facts should claim a particular annual celebration, should avail themselves of the instinct for holidays to assert with special prominence and distinctness their vast importance. Such days can, of course, never be insisted on as matter of Christian duty, but they may be allowed as matter of happy privilege; and they have been observed as naturally and with as good reason as any in the history of mankind. As we must refrain from superstition every day and in everything, so we must avoid it in our holidays. Rightly observed, however, they are healthful.

Whitsuntide celebrates the descent of the Holy Ghost on the disciples at the opening of the new dispensation; Easter the resurrection of Jesus; Good Friday his world-redeeming death, and Christmas the Word becoming flesh.

We once heard a missionary relating his experience among the Indians. He had been with them a long time without the slightest opportunity of preaching to them. They were shy—persistently so. But when Christmas came they were anxious to know what it meant, and were invited to come to the mission house on the day in question and have it explained. When they came his mission was opened. He preached Christ in explaining Christmas. The Red men heard with gravity and interest, and at the close of the service retired for mutual counsel. On returning to the missionary the chief gave the verdict of the council thus: "The words you have spoken to us seem to be good. You say that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, to make bad men good, and take them to rest after death. This is good. We ourselves have been told by our fathers that beyond the setting sun there is a place of happiness for the good, and of punishment for the bad, but this is the first we have ever heard how a bad man might be made good." This, reader, is the meaning of Christmas; of its heavenly song: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men;" good will to sinful men.

Christmas in this view is a type of the good time coming, when nothing shall hurt or destroy in the whole earth; when mountains, and friths, and even oceans shall be friendly links instead of hostile divisions and defences between the nations. This peace did not come when the angelic symphony announced it, but the Peace-maker did, and began his war of speech and song, of sword legislation, to stop only when all enemies shall have been put under his feet.—*Methodist.*

* It is the custom in many of the northern towns of Germany to hold a midnight service in the churches, all the children being present, each with a lighted taper, in commemoration of the belief that our Saviour was born in the night.

Religious Intelligence.

Wesleyan Missions in Italy.

Italy is the latest country which has found place in our list of Mission stations; and considering the state of things only a few years ago, it appears more like fiction than fact that it should be there at all. It is only very recently that the door has been opened for evangelical labours in that land, and yet, while rejoicing in its long sought and recently gained civil freedom, its newly enfranchised sons need the better freedom which the Son alone can give. When we remember what Italy was politically four years ago, and how, under, Austrian and Bourbon rule, its prisons and cells were filled with men whose only crime in most instances were their hatred of those fearful despotisms which oppressed and bound them to the dust, we marvel at the civil and religious liberty which already exists. Popery is still there, and means to hold its own against every assailant. Yet, undoubtedly the great Ruler of the nations has opened, even in Italy, a great and effectual door for the truth to enter. From Rome itself the light of God's word is still, of course, excluded. In that city, where Peter and Paul are represented, and seeming honour paid to their sacred names, their epistles are not allowed to be circulated or read, nor the doctrines which the Apostolic martyrs sealed with their blood, permitted to be preached. In Papal Rome no book is so dreaded as the Bible, and no doctrines are so hated and opposed as those which it reveals. But it is not so in that Italy over which Victor Emmanuel reigns. And though himself excommunicated by the Pope, still Roman Catholicism is his religion and that of the State; but by the goodness of Divine Providence he has been led to grant to his subjects freedom to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience. This has opened the way for evangelical Missionary labourers through the length and breadth of Victor Emmanuel's kingdom, and the Gospel may be preached to all who are willing to hear it. And the worship of God is now daily celebrated in that Popish land in which no Roman priest takes a part.

There is no doubt that a religious Reformation has begun in Italy, which would have filled Luther with delight. What its future history will be no man can predict with certainty. Whether it will be long allowed to proceed without formidable opposition from Rome none can tell; or whether for political reasons even the Government may be led to suppress it, we do not pretend to know. But when truth and error meet there must be antagonism, and Popery must indeed be greatly changed if it surrender any of its captives without a struggle. We do not anticipate that this will be the case, and it will be well that both Missionary Societies and their agents should be prepared for conflict, trial and suffering.

As Wesleyan Methodists we rejoice that our Missionary Committee has entered this new and interesting field of spiritual toil, and that the doctrines of Methodism are happily taking root in what we trust will prove a fruitful soil. Our work there is only in its infancy, but it is full of promise. In the north of Italy especially were our Missionary began his labours, evangelical churches have already been formed, and in the simplest manner Christ's death is sacramentally commemorated by his followers. The Society's agent in Milan is engaged in laying the foundation of what we believe will be a goodly temple to the Lord, and though the living stones may not be collected so fast as we desire, yet is the work progressing.

It is something to be grateful for, that in three short years ten or twelve men of the Italian nation have been found who, under the direction of Mr. Piggott, are preaching the Word of God in as many towns and cities, in some instances to congregations of three or four hundred people, nearly all of whom were, until recently, members of the Romish Church, or who though at present hearing the truth, have had courage to throw off the yoke of Papal bondage. Some of these preachers are professors of languages and literature, while others have been Priests in that Church whose errors they have renounced. Among them there are gifted men, one of whom especially excels as a public speaker, and whose eloquence and oratory attract large audiences wherever he preaches. Another, formerly a Priest, and who had been for five years immured in an Austrian dungeon, because of his supposed liberal tendencies, is now rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Chaist doth make free, and delighting to proclaim it to others. And while these things are being done in connection with our Mission, there are also other evangelical agencies at work, whose object is to rescue the people from Papal bondage, and lead them to the only Saviour of sinners. We wish success to all Christ's servants in this good work, though our special interest is in the prosperity of that work which our own Missionary Society has so happily entered upon.

But it is well that the friends of Missions should know that this most interesting work in Italy is likely to be checked, not through opposition, but for want of funds. The Mission is necessarily an expensive one. High rents have to be paid for the rooms and halls in which the Evangelists preach, while the agents themselves require for their support larger stipends than are needed in many other countries, where living is less costly. The Missionary Society is already largely in debt, and fears to incur greater responsibility by increasing that debt even for Italy. And deep as our sympathies are for the Italians, we cannot blame the Committee for exercising a proper Christian prudence. Yet we shall think the Methodist Church guilty of a selfish penuriousness and indifference to the progress of Christ's kingdom, if it do not furnish the means for prosecuting this great enterprise. And unless special contributions are forthcoming we are informed that instead of enlarging our borders in Italy they must be contracted. What! are schools to be given up, agents dismissed, and promising stations to be abandoned? Is this grand opportunity for introducing the Gospel among the millions of Italy to be lost? Will not all classes of our people say it shall not be? Cannot our Church raise £1000 a year extra for a few years, for this particular Mission?—*Methodist Recorder.*

General Miscellany.

The Night After Christmas.

'Twas the night after Christmas, when all through the house
Every soul was in bed, and as still as a mouse.
Those stockings, so lately St. Nicholas's care,
Were emptied of all that was eatable there;
The darlings had duly been tucked in their beds—
With very full stomachs and pain in the heads.
I was dozing away in my new cotton cap,
And Nancy was rather far gone in a nap—
When out in the nursery arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my sleep, crying, "What is the matter?"
I flew to each bedside, still half in a doze,
Tore open the curtains and threw off the clothes,
While the light of the taper served clearly to show
The piteous plight of those objects below;
For what to the fond father's eyes should appear,
But the little pale face of each sick little dear,
For each pet that had crammed itself full as a tick,
I knew in a moment now felt like Old Nick.
Their pulses were rapid, their breathing the same,
What their stomachs rejected I'll mention by name:
Now turkey, now stuffing, plum pudding, *of course*,
And custards, and crullers, and cranberry sauce,
Before outraged nature all went to the wall—
Yes, lollypops, flapdoodle, dinner and all.
Like pellets that urchins from pop-guns let fly,
Went figs, nuts and raisins, jam, jelly and pie,
Till each error of diet was brought to my view,
To the shame of mamma and of Santa Claus, too.
I turned from the sight, to my bedroom stepped back,
And brought out a phial marked "Pulv. Ipecac,"
When my Nancy exclaimed—for their sufferings shocked her—
"Don't you think you had better, love, run for the doctor?"
I ran—and was scarcely back under my roof
When I heard the sharp clatter of old Jalap's hoof;
I might say that I hardly had turned myself round,
When the docter came into the room with a bound.
He was covered with mud from his head to his foot,
And the suit he had on was his very worst suit,
He had hardly had time to put *that* on his back,
And he looked like a Falstaff half fuddled with sack.
His eyes, how they twinkled! Had the doctor got merry?
His cheeks looked like port, and his breath smelt of sherry;
He hadn't been shaved for a fortnight or so,
And the beard on his chin wasn't white as the snow.
But inspecting their tongues, in despite of their teeth,
And drawing his watch from his waistcoat beneath,
He felt of each pulse, saying, "Each little belly
Must get rid," here he laughed, "of the rest of that jelly."
I gazed on each chubby, plump, sick little elf,
And groaned when he said so, in spite of myself;
But a wink of his eye when he physicked our Fred,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
He didn't prescribe, but went straightway to work
And dosed all the rest, gave his trousers a jerk,
And adding directions while blowing his nose,
He buttoned his coat; from his chair he arose,
Then jumped in his gig—gave old Jalap a whistle,
And Jalap-dashed off as if pricked by a thistle;
But the doctor exclaimed 'ere he drove out of sight,
"They'll be well by to-morrow. Good night, Jones, good night!"

Resources of the Proposed Confederation.

While the merits of Confederation are being so ably discussed by politicians and by the press, in every conceivable aspect, it may be interesting to glance at the aggregate internal resources upon which, if Confederation ever be an accomplished fact, this great northern empire is to be founded. A union in some form or other, will probably sooner or later take place, despite the difference of opinion as to the details of the scheme; and a combination of material and political forces, giving to the various Provinces the strength, symmetry and permanency of a vigorous and united government, seems to be a desirable consummation, if fairly and harmoniously, any plan can be devised that will commend itself to the confidence and acceptance of the majority of the people.

With every natural element that contributes to a nation's greatness, these Provinces have been most liberally endowed. Immense tracts of stately forest and virgin soil invite the sturdy enterprise of the lumberman and the farmer. We have 100,000'000 acres of land, much of it available for agricultural purposes; and in this vast, unbroken wilderness, comfortable, if not affluent homes may be created for all the surplus population of Europe. We are making some progress in the redemption of the wild lands, slowly though it be; for of the 55,000,000 acres in the hands of private individuals, there are about 14,000,000 under actual cultivation. The soil generally is very fertile. The red sandstone lands of Prince Edward Island, and of parts of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, and the alluvial islands of the Maratime Provinces, are especially adapted to agricultural pursuits. From reliable statistics we calculate the value of the farm products of the proposed Confederation at about $35,000,000; of the produce of the forests, exclusive of ships, at about $1,000,000. Besides a prolific soil, we have a pure, bracing atmosphere, and a healthy climate, and compared with the continent of Europe or the United States, our vital statistics show a large balance in favor of the Provinces.

Few countries are richer in mineral resources than the prospective empire. We have all the economic minerals in seemingly exhaustless and incalculable quantities, requiring only capital and enterprise to render them a source of great prosperity to the nation. In Canada, the valuable deposits of bog-iron ore on the St. Maurice and Bastican Rivers are well known. Magnetic iron ore is found in abudance at Marmora, though the distance from a shipping port is a serious obstacle to success. From Newborough, about 4000 tons were exported in 1859. A bed at Hull yielded 8000 tons in the first four years after it was opened. There are also important deposits at Madoc and South Sherbrooke. Galena is found in workable quantities at Gaspe, Upton, Ramsay, Lansdowne and Bedford. The copper-mines are among the most important in the country. On Lake Huron, in 1841, from the Bruce mines, about 500 tons were obtained; from the Wellington, 1175 tons; and from the Huron Copper-Bay, about 1300 tons. The yield at Acton, in the Eastern Township, has also been very prolific, with but little effort. There are very many other localities were sulphuret and native copper have been discovered. The oil-region of Canada includes an area of some 7000 square miles—the petroleum springs at Ennis-kilen being the most valuable. The gold diggings at the Chaudiere River are attracting considerable attention, though they have been officially pronounced of but little importance. To these resources may be added building stones and marbles, and mineral paints and manures. About one-third of the area of New Brunswick is covered by coal-fields, although a large portion of it cannot be worked with profit. The Albert County mines are the most successful and extensive. This region embraces the most valuable deposits of bitumen on the continent. The exports of coal and coal oil from the Albert mines amount to about $300,000 annually. In Carlton County an excellent iron-ore has been wrought for several years past. In 1861, over 18,000 tons of coal were raised, 14,000 tons of gypsum sent into the market, and 43,000 casks of line. A beautiful and durable freestone is also abundant. A valuable mine of antimony, lately discovered in York, the central county, is worked by an American company. Nova Scotia is particularly rich in coal, nearly half a million tons having been taken out last year. New deposits are continually opened, giving a fine impetus to the industrial energies of the people. The iron-ores supply eleven foundries throughout the Province. In 1861, 125,000 tons of gypsum were exported, and 47,000 grindstones were made. Limestone, marbles, building stones and mineral paints are also abundant. The gold "leads" of Nova Scotia are rapidly assuming a permanent importance, both from their actual value and their easy access. Mining operations are conducted in ten or a dozen different localities. The official returns report some $300,000 worth obtained in 1863—although that sum is said to be much within the actual value. A rich vein of copper—the Terra Nova mine—has been opened; and at Placentia Bay a deposit of galena has been discovered, which, in point of purity and extent, is said to equal the most valuable in the United States. The minerals of Prince Edward Island, being but few in number, and found only in small quantities, are of but little importance.

Our waters—both sea and inland—are the home of nearly all the finny tribes. Though the sterile soil of Labrador and part of Newfoundland bids defiance to the husbandman, their coasts afford the most profitable fishing grounds in the world. Cod, salmon, herring, mackerel, seal and shell-fish are all abundant, and are staple articles of commerce. Some $10,000,000 or $12,000,000 are realized from the products of the waters, giving employment to about 65,000 men—among them numbers of French and Americans.

The whole empire is unrivalled in its natural facilities for inland navigation. In Canada, the great lakes and St. Lawrence river, in one entire chain, give a coast line of nearly 3000 miles, navigable in its whole extent by the artificial aid of canals. Fifteen millions of dollars have been expended in opening up this vast water highway to vessels of 400 tons burthen; and up to 1st January, 1863, a total of about $11,000,000 had been invested in the Welland and St. Lawrence canals alone. Canada has done more to perfect her water communication than any European nation, instituting a fair comparison of the respective populations and revenue. Besides the Ottawa, St. Maurice, and Saguenay rivers, and their tributaries, there are innumerable streams, many of which are really rivers of considerable magnitude. New Brunswick has a coast line of 500 miles, and almost every square mile is watered by large and small streams, while the St. John river drains the whole centre of the Province. Nova Scotia is a land of lakes, and famous for its excellent harbours, indenting a thousand miles of sea coast.

The Canadian canals figure up to 234 miles in length, constructed at a cost of about $16,000,000. The railways of the three Provinces—Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia—may be reckoned at 2,200 miles, involving an outlay of some $110,000,000. In shipping, the aggregate tonnage of British North America in 1863 was rather more than three quarters of a million tons. In the 30 years ending 1862, the imports increased from $17,250,000 to nearly $70,000,000; the exports from $12,250,000 to nearly $50,000,000. Against 35,000 tons of shipping built in 1832, there were 160,000 tons built in 1862. These figures speak volumes on the magnitude of our commercial interests.

The population of the Confederation in 1862 was about 3,360,000. None of the colonies have accomplished what they might have done in inviting immigration to our shores. We have too long afforded but a mere highway of transit, while the United States have attracted the large proportion of the bone and sinew which we so much need to aid in developing our resources. But the Atlantic Provinces have doubled their population in the last eighteen years, while that of Canada West has been nearly trebled in the same time. This ratio of increase will be found to equal the most favored of the American States. In 1860 this population of but little more than 3,000,000 raised a revenue of over $42,000,000, and expended $38,000,000.

Our cities are becoming absorbent centres of population, and are exercising a reflex influence upon the country districts, by stimulating the cultivation of the fine arts, science, literature and architecture, as well as affording a sound basis for the operations of commerce. We may not boast of a numerous population, but it is largely composed of races that have made their names famous in every part of the habitable globe. The Anglo-Saxon has here a wide field for his indomitable energies and great business capacities; and why may we not hope to see the grandest results of self-government, of national prosperity, and of general intelligence and enlightenment, wrought out under his domination?

We enjoy freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of conscience; and upon these points we yield superiority to no nation in the world. Although we have to contend with the difficulties incident to every young country, arising from small numbers scattered over a large extent of territory, yet the school, the pulpit, and the press are gradually elevating the masses, and we need not fear comparison with many older countries in educational matters. In 1862 these five Provinces supported some 11,000 educational institutions of all classes, ranging from the log hut in the backwoods to M'Gill University, and sent about 650,000 students to school. Many other interesting facts might be given, had we space to devote to a longer article.

To recapitulate, we have a prolific soil, and a fine healthy climate; our mineral wealth is well nigh inexhaustible; our seas, lakes and rivers teem with fish, and our internal water communication is very perfect; we have an extensive and rapidly increasing commerce—our ships float on every sea—and our railroads are bringing into familiar intercourse the most distant points; our people are intelligent, comfortable and happy; we enjoy liberty of speech, of the press, and of conscience; and now, in this important crisis in our history, we need especially men, honest men, who will forego the miserable strife and bickerings of party factions, and who, in a pure spirit of patriotism, will devote their time, energies and intellects, to the consolidation of these fragments of empire into one grand, united and permanent nation; and if our politicians will work for this one object, without seeking a mere self-aggrandizement, the British North American Confederation will soon be respected for its influence, power and importance, and may claim to be classed among the great brotherhood of nations.—*Montreal Witness.*

The Slaveholders Arming their Slaves.

The following is from a recent letter in the New York Correspondence of the London *Times*:—

With all its wealth of men and money, and all the resources of immigration from Ireland and German, the North is unable to maintain and replenish its armies to anything like the extent necessary for the work it has undertaken. Neither Grant, nor Sheridan, nor Sherman, nor Rosecrans has an adequate force to subdue Lee, or Longstreet, or Beauregard, or Price. The Southern Generals are in the same predicament, and if they gain a victory are prevented, by want of men, from following it up promptly and turning it to ulterior account. Both sides will, therefore, make the greatest possible exertions during the ensuing winter and spring to place new armies in the field; and as the North claims that it has a hundred thousand negroes under arms—though the assertion must be received with the deduction rendered necessary by the national vice of exaggeration—and that they make under proper leadership as good soldiers as the whites, it has long been urged upon the Confederate Government that, in default of other troops, it would not only be expedient but wise and just to imitate, the example, and call out an army of a quarter of a million of able bodied slaves to fight for the independence of their masters, their own liberty to be guaranted to them hereafter as a reward for loyal service. The Southern people have shown a great disinclination to resort to such a measure, not because it would be necessary to emancipate so large a number of their most valuable slaves, but from a feeling of pride of race and blood, and a sentiment that it is derogatory to their dignity to owe the independence of their country, in any degree whatever, to the aid of the negroes. But as the slaves when engaged in the agricultural work which without their help would have fail to be performed by white labourers, were, in fact, doing as much to aid the cause of Southern independence as if they were fighting the battles in the field, and, moreover, as they were largely employed as teamsters and waggoners, and were as useful in all the spade work of the trenches as if they had been of the purest Caucasian blood—there were really no valid arguments against their employment as warriors except two. The first was that they might not make good soldiers, or might turn their arms against their masters; the second, that the elevation of any considerable number of negroes to the dignity of defending the country would be a virtual emancipation of the whole race—which the South has declared to be impossible.

It would appear that these objections have gradually lost weight—or a meeting of the Governors of no less than six of the Confederate States would not have officially recommended to President Davis and the Confederate Congress, as they have recently done, the immediate enrollment of the Confederate armies of every male person in the South, of suitable age, capable of bearing arms, *and irrespective of colour.* The South has hitherto clung to slavery—because it saw no way to abolish it, without cruelty to the unprepared negro, or ruin to the staple productions of the country; but, if the suggestion of the Governors be acted upon, as seems probable, will prove to the world in the most emphatic manner that it does not fight for the maintenance of slavery, as the North pretends, and as some in Europe still believe, but for independence. In conversation lately with two Southern gentlemen in Canada, high in the confidence of the Confederate Government, I was informed that the sentiment of the Southern people towards the negroes was so kindly that there was nothing in the world that could be done to ameliorate their condition that the South would not gladly undertake. "Under every provocation to revolt and to murder their masters and mistresses," said one of these gentlemen, "not a single negro has proved false to his protectors. There have been a considerable number of fugitives wherever the Northern armies have penetrated; but in no instance has a negro lifted his hand in violence against his master or his mistress. Plantations on which there are three or four hundred negroes, have been governed by one aged white man, too decrepit to go to battle, and others, equally large, have been left wholly to the management of women, in the absence of their husbands, fathers, or brothers in the field. Never in any case has there been a difficulty. The negroes have worked in their daily routine without a murmur, and as quietly and submissively as if the land were not convulsed with the fiercest struggle ever known. And if we Southerners hate the Yankees, and not without reason, our negroes hate them quite as cordially as we do. I see no objection to arm them. They will fight for their masters, if their masters lead them, and they will not only fight but fight well. They are a good, an affectionate, and a docile people. They deserve anything we can give them. They do not, however, deserve to be suddenly emancipated and thrown on their own resources, for their careless, joyous nature, left free to display itself without the judicious but firm control of a more provident race, would speedily convert them from slaves into paupers." "But," I inquired, "if you raised an army—say of a quarter of a million among them—would you not offer the reward of liberty to them and their wives and families?" "Certainly, but under conditions which would educate and prepare them for the enjoyment of a boon which they would otherwise be unable to appreciate."

If these indications of a change of policy on the part of the South towards the negroes should not prove fallacious, the ultimate emancipation of the race may be effected, not by a vindictive people for the purpose of more easily subjugating their white brethren, but by a grateful people, anxious to reward them for timely aid in the cause of national independence. The advantages to the negroes of the Southern arrangement over the Northern are so palpable and obvious as scarcely to require enumeration. The main advantage, however, is, that the South has the power to emancipate them, while the North has not.

A Bright Future for Africa.

The *Methodist Recorder*, refering to Earl Russell's Inaugural Address on his installation as Lord Rector of Aberdeen University, observes:—

In speculating on the probable destiny which awaits mankind in the future, the Lord Rector pointed to the advancement of knowledge, to the onward flow of Christian civilization, and to the diffusion of free representative institutions among the nations of Europe, as indications that brighter and happier days are in store for the world. So sanguine is the great Liberal Statesman with respect to the better times that are to come upon the earth, that he has a confident hope, in which we heartily participate, that Africa may yet be lifted from the vileness and darkness of her degradation, and play a conspicuous part in the history of the ages that have still to roll over the earth. The turn of Africa is assuredly yet to come in the history of the great continents. Asia, Europe, and America have all preceeded her in the race of human civilization; and even Australia, the last comer, has given her the go-by. But no one can doubt, glancing merely at its physical gifts, that a splendid destiny awaits this magnificent portion of the earth. It is not, indeed, to be forgotten that more than one of the greatest nations of antiquity have made their seat upon the shores of despised Africa. Carthage, though a Phœnician colony, was peopled by Africans, and the best of Hannibal's troops in the great contest for the supremacy of the world were the Numidians. It has been a hard time since then for Africa; and it is a hard time now. The best districts of her Mediterranean shore are French; her temperate latitudes towards the Cape are English; and Arab, Turkish, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese Powers hold the most favourable points of her ocean coasts. Yet no one can question that at some future day Africa will take her place in the records of high civilization. From her various climate, her teeming soil, her splendid and opulent gifts of forest, river, and mine, a great development must be in store for her. Nor are there wanting in the despised and rejected Africans the elementary signs of a race whose greatness is yet to come. Their courage, their patience, their physical strength, their indomitable cheerfulness, their love of home, their warm affections,—all these are qualities which some far off and future age must see perfected in a race no longer despised because dark-skinned. There are strange faculties in these dark tribes, rather womanly than manly—wonderful docility, great tenderness of affection, strong religious feeling—above all, a power of living beside the white hitherto shown by no other barbarous races—Magnificant and complete should be the civilization of Africa in the day of her destiny, if it answers to the length of her endurance, and the variety of her natural gifts.

Obituary.

Yarmouth Circuit.

Were it not for the teaching of the Word of God, that the whole family in heaven and earth has but one name, we would many times feel that the connection between the church militant and the church triumphant is very slight. Thanks be to God for the sure word of testimony, by which we know, that our friends who have been with us mourners here below, have not ceased to be connected with us, though they have crossed the flood.

"One family we dwell in Him,
One church above, beneath."

We are the more rejoiced to know this when we think of some one, who as a shook of corn fully ripe has been gathered home—one who has been with God's people when the walls of Zion were built in troublous times, who lingered till the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose, and then passed away to join the saints on high.

We have been called recently to sorrow, yet not without hope, because of the departure of several "old disciples" who gave pleasing evidence that for them to die was gain.

MR. SAMUEL GORVEN,

Passed away in May, 1863. About twenty-five years ago, during a gracious work under the ministry of the Rev. C. DeWolfe, D.D., brother G. gave his heart to God. From that time his