

The Presbyterian Review.

Vol. XII.—No. 15.

TORONTO, OCTOBER, 17, 1895

\$1.50 per Annum

OVER LAND AND SEA.

Those interested in prison reform have, for several years, set apart the fourth Sabbath in October for the presentation of the different topics connected with the need of prisoners and the methods of dealing with crime. The Massachusetts Prison Association sends out a request that the churches continue this practice as widely as possible this year.

A call has been issued for a conference in Chicago October 22nd, 23rd, for the organization of "a non-sectarian Christian alliance, federation or brotherhood." The call is in the interest of Prohibition churches. It is stated that there are several churches which have been formed by the Prohibitionists on a prohibition basis. They refuse to admit to membership not only those who are concerned in the saloon business, but those who vote for the license system. It is said that there are four churches of this kind, one in Newburg, N.Y., one in Cleveland, O., one in San Francisco, and one in Chicago.

In an admirable article in *The Outlook*, Prof. George P. Fisher speaks of the danger to Christian believers in Japan, who attempt to create a composite religion out of Christianity and Buddhism or some other faith or cult. The article appears to be addressed to the Church in Japan, and tells it that Christianity means redemption, and that Christ is the one deliverer, exalted above the rank of a mere teacher or prophet. Professor Fisher says that if his remarks should fall into the hands of ministers and teachers in Japan who have been his pupils, he is sure that they at least will acquit him of the ambition to take the role of a monitor. We see no reason why he should avoid that role. His experience and his wisdom give him the right to take it.

The Koran has been much extolled for its moral purity; but recent investigation has been laying bare its long hidden iniquities. Dr. H. M. Clark, who knows whereof he writes, declares "the safety of Islam hitherto has been that its holy book was shrouded in unapproachable Arabic, or in cumbrous, ambiguous translations. Now that a literal, faithful translation of the Koran, has appeared in the widely used Urdu language, there is consternation among the Moslem." A Moulvic, in view of its latest disclosures, said: "I am old and grey haired, but I never knew the iniquity of it as I do now." Let on the light. Islamism cannot stand exposure. Its sacred writings will not bear severe testing. Only God's Word can endure the strictest and fullest scrutiny. Its holiness abides the searchings of the ages among all peoples.

The Development of Sabbath School Work in India during the past year is shown, says the *U. P. Mission Record*, by the large number of 1775 new schools having been started, while 66,000 new scholars have received

teaching. A great loss to the workers in this field has been the death of Dr. James L. Phillips, the Secretary of the India Sabbath School Union. Born in India, the child of missionary parents, and educated in America, he was ordained at the early age of twenty-two, returning to India, labored for seventeen years at Midnapore. Then he became Secretary of the Union and travelled throughout all India, forwarding the founding of Sabbath schools with a rare union of judgment, skill, and enthusiasm. He was greatly loved, and his place it will be difficult to fill.

In the last annual report of the Basel German Evangelical Mission in South India we find two illustrations of one of the influences of the Chicago Parliament of Religions. One missionary says: "Scarcely had I begun to speak when a young man, a former pupil of our Mangalore High School, asked me if I had heard of the Religious Congress in Chicago and if I knew that Vivekaswami of India had proved the incomparable greatness and excellence of the Hindu religion, and had defeated the Christian religion and won all America over to Hinduism, that everybody had turned to him and turned their back on Christianity, Christianity was now done away with and dared not show its face." Another writes: "In a village a Padaga asked whether it had not been decided in the Parliament of Religions in Chicago that the Hindu religion was the first in rank of all the religions in the world."

One of the most striking features of the literature of the present day is the apparent ignorance of the Bible, and in the mad race for position in the literate world this evil is more apparent.

In the curriculum of our colleges of to-day every author who is supposed to form one of the supports of literature is studied with as much care as though the very existence of the literate world depended on this one support, while the Author of the great book of nature, the very Creator of this all-absorbing theme, the only Author whose works have stood the test of 1800 years of criticism, is not included in even the minor classics.

It is impossible to give a reason for this neglect of the Bible, for it is beyond dispute the masterpiece of literature, not of a national character, but rather international. As Scott has said: "Merely as a treasure house of style, of racy expression, of apt illustration, of piercing metaphor, of poetry that exhausts language and leaves it quivering, there is but one book, the Bible," and to borrow the advice of a famous professor of rhetoric, "young gentlemen, if you wish to be eloquent, all you need to know is your Bible and Shakespeare. In them are the winged words of English." and he might have added—of every other language of the world, for it can be said of the Bible and of no other book, that, in it, its lines have gone out into all the earth and its words to the end of the world.