

# The Canadian Independent.

"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHEREN."

Vol. 28.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, August 26, 1880.

New Series. No. 9.

## Topics of the Week.

DEAN STANLEY was not equal to his opportunities when he performed the marriage ceremony of Prof. Tyndall. The Dean should have asked the groom, "Do you take this authropoid to be your co-ordinate, to love with your nerve centres, to cherish with your whole cellular tissue, until a final molecular disturbance shall resolve its organism into its primitive atoms?"

FROM the report on statistics, presented at the late meeting of the Presbyterian Synod of Jamaica, in connection with the United Presbyterian Church, Scotland, it appears that there are now thirty-nine stations connected with that mission; that during the past year 754 persons had been admitted or restored to fellowship; that the members in full communion at the close of the year were 6,960, an increase of 267 over the previous year; that the number of candidates for Church fellowship was 1,425 and the attendance of young people at the Sabbath classes was 4,862. The money raised in the different congregations for religious purposes was £4,182, and the number of pupils at sixty week-day schools connected with, and supported by, the missions was 4,559. Yet some people are continually saying that missions of this kind are not successful and effect no good!

EDMUND YATES says that "London just now is presenting a *fac simile* of the social conditions and incidents which existed in Rome less than a score of centuries ago." The end in Rome was the complete corruption of society and the decay of the empire. Are we to pass through a similar process and reach a similar end in modern days? Unless Christianity prevent such a result there is no reason why any other should be expected. But, while a certain section of London "society" may be as bad as that of Rome in the first century, we more than doubt if the evil is so widespread or so all-pervading as it was then, even though morality is voted by many to be an old-fashioned fraud, and decency is too often turned out of doors. Fashionable harlots have not yet everything their own way in London's so-called "best society," though things tend pretty much in that direction.

MR. JOHN RUSKIN administered a test to Darwinism after his own fashion. He went to Mr. Darwin's work for the law which regulates the distribution of colour in the peacock's feather. He says that he was informed that peacocks have grown to be peacocks out of brown pheasants, because the young feminine brown pheasants like fine feathers—just as a maiden of the period considers a suit of white cricket flannel on a young man "perfectly lovely." Whereupon Mr. Ruskin argued, "Then either there was a distinct species of brown pheasants originally born with a fine taste for fine feathers, and therefore with remarkable eyes in their heads—which would be a much more wonderful distinction of species than being born with remarkable eyes in their tails—or else all pheasants would have been peacocks by this time." So Mr. Ruskin dismissed Mr. Darwin and evolution.

THE following is given by "Whittaker's Almanac" as the extent and population of the British Empire at the beginning of 1880: Great Britain and Ireland, area in square miles, 121,115; population, 35,590,000. Indian possessions, etc., area in square miles, 1,558,354; population, 251,000,000. Other eastern possessions, area in square miles, 30,000; population, 3,200,000. Australasia, area in square miles, 3,173,310; population, 2,500,000. North America, area in square miles, 3,620,500; population, 4,000,000. Guiana, etc.,

area in square miles, 100,000; population, 200,000. Africa, area in square miles, 12,707; population, 1,500,000. West Indies, etc., area in square miles, 12,107; population, 1,140,000. European possessions, area in square miles, 120; population, 160,000. Various settlements, area in square miles, 96,871; population, 200,000. Totals, area in square miles, 8,781,197; population, 279,400,000. The same authority says, "This table, short as it is, presents a result unparalleled in this world's history. The British Empire is grander than those of Greece or Rome, or any other country. And it may be safely asserted that its rule is more beneficial."

THE tiresome nonsense that is so often heard about murderers, and the idiotic sympathy often got up for them when they are awaiting trial or under sentence of death are well rebuked in the following sentences, from the New York "Evening Post": "Not long since two burglars, armed to the teeth, broke into a gentleman's house at Bay Ridge. An alarm was given; the men were invited to surrender, the house having been surrounded. They were fired upon as they attempted to fight their way out, and both of them were killed. This was an awful and summary retribution visited upon the law breakers. But the verdict of the community, without exception, was that they were served quite right. The owner defended his property and his personal safety by taking life, and he was thoroughly sustained by public opinion. If one of these burglars had been surprised in his midnight prowling, and had slain the owner of the property, and had been caught, tried, condemned, and reprieved, he might have been alive to-day, a prosperous gentleman. He would have been able to plead that he did not intend to kill anybody, merely to rob the house; and multitudes of well-meaning, weak people would persuade themselves that he was a poor unfortunate whose life should be saved, if possible, and who, in any event, should be petted and delicately tended if he must go to the gallows. The householder kills the murderous burglar, and his act is applauded. The law hangs the murderer, and silly people weep."

THE "Christian at Work" utters some sensible comments on the treatment which known murderers receive. It calls for a legislative investigation of the conditions which make it a fact that only four per cent. of that class suffer capital punishment. It requires, secondly, a revision of the laws of such a character as would be influential in preventing crime. Thirdly, it declares that "all capital cases of trial and appeal should take precedence of all pending cases." And fourthly, it exclaims, "An immediate stop should be put to the pampering and glorification of this criminal class; and the first step should be taken by the chief transgressors—the daily press, which almost daily from the hour of sentence report the murderer's conversations, compliments, jokes, prayers, letters, and even tell us what particular article he ate for dinner and how much coffee he drank all this, until the coroner holds his inquest." Wealth and political favour seem to be the most powerful shields of the offender, we would answer; but these are wonderfully reinforced by public indifference or a sentiment really opposed to the death penalty. Such a revision of the laws as is demanded would, of course, include legal prohibition. The fourth position assumed by our exchange is invulnerable; but the reform in the press must proceed from the managers and the reading public. Even the "Tribune" devoted nearly a column of fine type to an account of Balbo's last hours. The editor doubtless found it a repulsive thing to do; but the "Tribune" must be read, and New Yorkers take such trash.

## OUR COLLECTIONS.

Most readers will think this a very reasonable but a very prosaic heading. For there is no hour of night or day when our Church is not in need of money for some scheme or other. Few days pass without some epistle, printed or written, arriving at the manses of our ministers, all weighted with the same burden—money! more money! And we are far from joining in the vulgar outcry against these demands. Money must be had. If it does not pour in spontaneously, our amiable and energetic secretaries, conveners, etc., must do all they can to stimulate the flow of charity. Sure we are that they do their work ably and well. But we cannot avoid the impression that our title has a most prosaic sound. All of us have had the feeling after listening to an eloquent sermon—oh, that that horrid collection could be left out to-night! When pressing the careless and the worldly to go along with us, we have suddenly recollected the collections and pew rents, and our eloquence has somehow been less energetic in consequence.

And yet it was not always thus. When the tribes came pouring in with jewels and gold and silver, with oil and incense, with costly draperies and fine wood, for the service of the sanctuary, there was no touch of the prosaic to mar the beauty of the picture. When the offerings of the early Christians were brought solemnly into the church on the Lord's day, and deposited upon or beneath the Lord's table at the most impressive moment of the service, no one thought it prosaic. And we know how the charity of entire Christendom was inflamed during the crusades, and when the splendid cathedrals of Europe were being erected in the Middle Ages. We know how men burned with a sacred thirst, not for gold, but for parting with gold.

It might be worth while in a paper of a different kind from this to marshal some of the causes which have led people to look upon the collections with so much disfavour or indifference. We think the chief cause of it has been that the Lord's offering has ceased to be an important part of Christian service. It is taken at the door and then huddled away in the vestry or session house till after service. We hear and see no more of it. Hence our people have ceased to feel that it has a symbolical significance, symbolizing the sacrifice itself upon the altar—the consecration of ourselves and all that we have to the service of the Redeemer, of which consecration these offerings are a symbol, a far too inadequate one. Much good might be done if the offertory could be made a public and solemn act of worship.

In the meantime, we fear a large proportion of Christian people in all the churches look upon the collection box most unlovingly. They feel as if somehow people should not be taxed for religion. They would give largely to some case of severe poverty, would respond to an appeal for some splendid missionary enterprise, but nothing that can be said or done will awaken and keep alive an enthusiasm which shall be bright and responsive every Lord's day. And yet money is the sinews of war in religious as well as in political or military campaigns. Our Lord has left behind Him no mode of advancing His Gospel which shall dispense with hire for the labourer, passage money for missionaries, funds for building churches, colleges, hospitals, etc. It may seem a strange thing that His kingdom should rest on such a material substratum. Surely, some will say, Christian zeal and enterprise would find some way of doing their work, though not a penny flowed into the treasuries of the Church for a century. But mark, if the work were done, money would have to be spent and sacrifices incurred by some one. It would not flow into