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The Canadian Independent.

'ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN.'

Vol. 29.]

TORONTO, THURSDAY, FEB. 10, 1881.

[New Series. No. 32

Topics of the Week.

—The brewery of Mr. Bass at Burton, England, requires the product of 70,000 acres of land to furnish barley enough to run the works for one year. How much bread for the poor this grain would make!

—Two singular bequests have been made recently in the Old World. Mr. Isidor Kraft of Berlin has left 500,000 marks as the foundation of a fund for poor needle-women without regard to sect. Miss Lisetta Reist of London has left funds to be used perpetually in sprinkling Tower Street Hill with sand to keep horses from slipping.

—A letter in the *Missionary Herald* says: "There is evidence in China of the greatly increasing production and use of opium." The writer says: "I think there is four or five times as much as I have ever seen before. It is so extensively used by the official class, and even in the palace itself, that any government decree against its growth or use falls almost powerless to the ground."

—What is to be the effect of the disturbances in Ireland upon the hold of the Romish Church upon the Irish people? The fact is significant that the Pope has taken decided ground against the course of the Irish Land League and has issued an official letter bidding all Irish Catholics obey the laws and abstain from excesses, and the Romish priests in Ireland are said to be urging the same thing very generally. In view of the excitability of the Irish, and of the immense popular enthusiasm which the Land League has awakened, it is a problem whether the priests and their church will lose influence by opposing the popular current of opinion and conduct, or gain it by the good sense of their position.

—The *Alliance News* publishes the terms of a memorial forwarded to Mr. Gladstone by the Executive Committee of the United Kingdom Alliance expressing the trust of the memorialists that "nothing will be allowed to delay the introduction and enactment of a measure securing such protection from the evils of the liquor traffic as a direct popular veto would afford." A similar document was forwarded to the Home Secretary. Mr. Gladstone's reply, sent 31st December, promises to bring the memorial "under the attention of his colleagues." The apparent result is the decision of the Government to postpone the licensing question until Irish affairs are smoother. Sir Wilfrid Lawson announces his intention of proposing a resolution urging the immediate introduction of a Ministerial Bill giving effect to the now famous Local Option resolution.

—The Christians resident in the Urumiyah district of North-western Persia are in imminent danger of massacre at the hands of the Persian Mohammedans. Owing to the good offices of the English Consul and the American missionaries, the Kurdish Chief who invaded that district of Persia undertook to spare the lives of the Christians. This promise was for the most part observed, although twenty-five Nestorian villages were plundered and burnt. The Persians, who suffered unspeakable outrages at the hands of the Kurds, having repulsed the invaders, are now bent upon wreaking their vengeance upon the

native Christians, whose immunity they set down as the reward of treachery, and upon the English and American missionaries who befriend them. What was spared by the invaders is now being wrested from them by crushing taxes and military violence, and their lives will probably be sacrificed unless British influence can avail to produce an interposition of the Shah for their protection.

New York has refused to patronize a Passion-play; how would the people of London, asks the *Fountain*, like the introduction of that kind of thing? "The Sisters of the Poor" enacted the play, entitled "Bethlehem" representing the nativity and Adhhood of Christ on Sunday week at the schools belonging to St. Michael's, Finsbury, under the superintendence of the vicar, and—says the *Morning Post* in the presence of a number of the members of the Church and Stage Guild. The scenes are said to have been "prettily mounted, the properties having quite a realistic effect." The performance lasted three hours and included "The Adoration of the Three Kings" (frankincense being represented by burning incense in a censer), "The Presentation in the Temple" (each member of the chorus holding a lighted taper), "The Flight into Egypt," and "Christ among the Doctors in the Temple." It is the fashion to revive old fashions. Does that apply to superstitions? Ritualism, a sort of attempt to revive Romanism. Will the play also revive the impious miracle-play of the mediæval age?

The latest miracle hoax has taken place in Russia. Some peasants were drawing water from a well in Gadiatch, when one of them discerned a picture on the surface of the water, which picture presently took to itself the shape of the Virgin Mary. Then they were joined by two girls of the village, who, in response to a narrative of the wonder, declared that, two hours before, they had seen the picture floating in the air, and had watched it settle down into the well. All miracle stories spread fast, and finding his well growing "holy" and popular, the owner speedily built a chapel above it. The priesthood are somewhat partial to miracles, but in this case the deflection of their congregations to the chapel of the Holy Well became so serious that they applied to the police authorities for an investigation of the supposed miracle. The Stanovi of Gadiatch secured the miraculous picture and lodged it in the police-office. Then began a rigid inquiry, and as inquiry is fatal to priestly miracles, it soon transpired that the presentment of the Virgin had been purchased of a pedlar by the proprietor of the well, who had connived with his peasantry to increase the value of his estate by the institution of a shrine. The offerings of the pilgrims had already brought him a handsome remuneration, which, however, may not, after all, compensate him for the results of a trial for sacrilege which he is now awaiting.

—Several facts mentioned in recent Japan news indicate that a reaction has begun to set in there against the tide of rationalism that was felt so strongly in that empire two years ago. First we have the report of an immense open-air Christian meeting at Tokio. Next we find that Mr. DeForest of the American Board, on a recent trip to the north coast, addressed large audiences for three days in a theatre at Totton. Meetings were

held during the day and the evening, sometimes with an attendance of 1,200. Another straw is seen in the recent organization of a church of forty members at Immakari under direction of the American Board. The company had been worshipping in a heathen temple, but being turned out of that they raised \$700 in four days, and built a house of their own. A cultured Japanese, far from being a Christian himself, seeing this, remarked: "This is Christ. This is the power that is to save our nation." There are now 117 Protestant missionaries in Japan, twenty nine of this number being under the American Board. The Methodists have the next largest number, fourteen. It is believed that there are now not less than 3,500 professed Christians in that empire.

—We are no doubt experiencing an unusually severe winter, and it is feared that a great deal of suffering will result, especially in cities and large towns where there is to be found, generally, a number of the very poor; but we have not had, comparatively, such a trying time as appears to have been felt in England and on the continent of Europe. There have been storms and snow in a manner almost unprecedented. A couple of weeks ago a tremendous storm visited England and France and even the shores of the Mediterranean. In England the snow is said to have accumulated in some places to the depth of twenty feet, and to be four feet (one statement says five feet) deep in the London streets. Nearly all railway and other traffic was suspended for days, throughout the kingdom; trains were not only blocked but buried; and the rivers overflowed, the Thames rising ten feet above high water mark at London, and flooding the whole Lambeth and Southwark district. It is estimated that in London alone ten millions dollars' worth of damage was done, while the hindrance to business caused immense loss. Many vessels were lost. Dover pier was damaged to the extent of fifty thousand dollars, and the whole coast was a scene of great suffering and loss. Many people perished, and as communications were re-opened, the terrible effects of the storm became increasingly evident. No such weather has been experienced within the memory of the present generation, if ever. In Paris so much snow has fallen as to be a serious annoyance, but there has been nothing like the disastrous weather in England.

At last we are getting an insight into the cost of that stupendous act of Imperialist unrighteousness the Afghan War. The total expenditure, excluding that incurred for frontier railways and telegraphs, is put down by the Indian Government at £17,500,000, and probably, judging by precedent, there is more to come. A great deal of this was so uncalled for and extravagant the estimates being understated last spring to the extent of two millions—that the SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA has found it necessary to put on record in a formal despatch that there was "no justification" for a great deal of the expenditure. Yet EARL LYTON has had the effrontery to stand up in the House of Lords to justify the Afghan War. Probably the British tax-payer will have to pay some six millions of this lavish outlay. What has been gained by it? Our Eastern Empire, which has to cope with a debt of £240,000,000, has been impoverished at a criti-

cal juncture. We have withdrawn from Afghanistan, with the exception of Candahar, which is to be evacuated, but will cost us, says Lord Northbrook, a million and a half per annum so long as it is retained. Our puppet, the Ameer of Cabul, is recognised over only a limited district. He is developing the arbitrary tendencies of Afghan rulers, and any day we may hear of his downfall. Anarchy prevails over a great part of the country, and it is quite possible that Ayoub Khan may reappear with a military force to contest the claims of Abdur Rahman. All this is the outcome of the policy of adventure devised by Lord Beaconsfield and carried out by Lord Lytton, his *pro tege*.—*Nonconformist*.

If we may believe Professor Max Muller, the touch of nature that makes the whole world kin is to be found in the science of language. Zeus, Bel, Thor, Brahma, Jehovah, are to be accepted as but differentiated articulations of the one supreme thought common to all humanity, the Omnipotent. Revelation, he teaches, invented no new names but gave new meanings to old ones; and thus *deus*, from the sanscrit *div*, the sky—the beautiful, the measureless, the unreachable—became, in course of time, the word to express the revealed God of Christianity. All this, of course, may or may not be true; the great appellate Court of Time may reverse the decision even of an Oxford Professor. An interesting protest against a recent application of this theory is contained in a letter printed in the *Times* of the 30th ult., addressed to Professor Max Muller by a number of Chinese bishops and missionaries. In Professor Legge's "Sacred Books of China," forming the third volume of "The Sacred Books of the East," now being issued by the Clarendon Press under the general editorship of Professor Max Muller, a term or title "Shang-ti" has been translated God, in the sense of the God of revelation. The attachment of this meaning to the term is thought by the signers of the letter in question not only to be a literary mistake, but one which will seriously add to the embarrassments of missionary labor in China. To us the term "Shang-ti" means anything or nothing, we should not recognise it if we saw it in Chinese; and it may stand for the abstract spirit of philosophy or the Prince of Destruction for aught we can tell. But whatever may have been the ideas connected with the term in the mind of Confucius, or those which prevail in the minds of his followers to-day, if the Chinese are presented with the Christian "God" as the English equivalent of "Shang-ti," they will naturally be led to think the two are one in all but name, just as an unguarded reading of Prof. Legge's text by an English reader might lead to the astounding discovery that the revealed God was also known to the great Chinese philosopher. If, therefore, "Shang-ti" returns to China re-coined, and stamped with the assay mark of Oxford University as "God," how can missionaries in China teach their converts to regard Him whom they preach as other than their familiar deity, whose attributes are limited by their own puerile conceptions. This seems to be the motive of the protest entered by the missionaries against the Professor. It is a curious criticism from a wholly unexpected source, both upon Professor Legge's book and also upon the larger subject of the science of language as taught by Prof. Max Muller.