

VI.—EDITORIAL NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

Comparative Destitution in Christian and Pagan Lands.

The venerable Dr. McCosh remarks that in the contemplation of the waste of resources by want of church union, while not only in heathen countries but in our own great cities there are multitudes who have not had the gospel preached to them, he fears that the judgment of Heaven may descend upon the churches. He counsels the forming of a Federation in America to see that the whole country be divided into parishes or districts, each to be provided with a gospel minister and a lay agency put under obligations to have the gospel preached to every creature, young and old. ● He will be glad to correspond with those who are ready to carry out this view. This is a suggestion in the right direction. There is everywhere a manifest disproportion between the different local fields. In Africa, at least 150,000,000 of people are entirely destitute of all knowledge of the gospel. The Soudan districts and the Congo Free State are absolutely without the gospel. In Siam 13 Presbyterian missionaries, including women, are the sole force for evangelizing the native Siamese and Laos population! These are two instances of the immense vacancies in heathen fields. I spoke in a village of Scotland having a population of about 1,200—800 of which are of a church-going age, and there are five churches and as many ministers! One, or, at most, two ministers could care for the entire population and leave the others free to go to these vast vacancies of heathendom, and leave the money that these other church edifices cost free to be expended in foreign fields. God will surely hold us accountable for the immense waste of resources implied in maintaining so many churches simply in the interests of sectarianism! A. T. P.

—An indignant correspondent, an

American missionary in Sweden, writes us:

"I am astonished at reading one sentence in a letter which you published in the March number (page 214) of THE MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD, and am very sorry that you should allow it to go out to your thousands of readers *without comment*. The writer, in speaking of the drink curse in Africa, says: 'The amazing thing is that all this traffic [the rum trade in Old Calabar, West Africa,] is conducted, in the main, by not over a dozen firms, the members of which are most excellent men, many of them, *I believe, sincere Christians.*'

"Do, I beg of you, say to your readers, that you do not endorse such a sentiment. It is high time to protest against the doctrine of some of our English friends—that a man can be a Christian and at the same time deal out death and damnation to his fellow-men!"

It is scarcely necessary to say that an editor is not to be held personally responsible for all the sentiments expressed by his correspondents. In this instance we felt that our highly respected correspondent stretched his charity beyond proper bounds. We are not willing to believe that the man who traffics in liquor as a drink, in this enlightened age, is a "sincere Christian," or a Christian in any sense. And the sin is the greater, incomparably, when a British or an American merchant holds out the temptation and inflicts the ruin coolly and deliberately upon the poor benighted African, in his heathen ignorance and degradation. The slave traffic and the rum traffic are twin curses, and no really good man can have anything to do with either, save to pray and strive for their overthrow. J. M. S.

—There are two pictures Stanley loves to draw. The first is Mohammedanism overrunning North Africa from Guardafui to Cape Juby, where the gospel of force is triumphant and