

The Canadian Independent.

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

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Topics of the Week.

THE number of Sabbath school teachers in Great Britain and Ireland is estimated at 400,000 and the scholars at 4,000,000.

THE two candidates for the Presidentship of the United States have now been nominated. It so happens that both are military men, and both had a good record on the Northern side in the great war. Personally they are both very respectable, and that is so far well, though it does not follow as a mere matter of course.

THAT Rome does not want the Scriptures, and cares not to give them to the people, is manifest from the fact that its missionaries were in Japan from 1549 to 1587, but attempted no translation of the Scriptures, though they claimed to have 300 priests, a college, and 300,000 converts, in the country. Protestants have been there for a quarter of a century and the translation of the New Testament is complete. The difference is palpable, and it is an immense difference.

BENNETT, who shot the Hon. G. Brown, has been tried, convicted of murder, and sentenced to be hanged on the 23rd July. That the verdict was in accordance with the evidence can scarcely be doubted, and the sentence followed as a matter of course. There has been some talk of a petition in favour of having the sentence commuted, but on what grounds, except on that of opposition to all capital punishment, it is not very easy to make out. The doomed man is more than usually callous and defiant. More, we suspect, from perusal of animal indulgence than from any mere speculative unbelief.

THE London City Mission Society reports 447 missionaries in its employ. Its income the past year was \$259,820. Of the 447 missionaries, sixty-nine are set apart for special work, nineteen of whom are employed in visiting public houses and coffee houses, nine among foreigners from various lands, four among the Jews, three among Welshmen in London, eight in hospitals, work-houses, and infirmaries; others among omnibus and tram-car men, letter-carriers, telegraph boys, factories, workshops, railway stations, hotels, soldiers in London, and one special missionary to thieves. Canal boatmen, drovers, Billingsgate fish people, and bakers have each a separate missionary.

A STRIKING illustration of the weakness of infidel arguments may be found in the remarks of an English miner, at the close of a lecture by Mr. Bradlaugh, who challenged any one present to reply to his argument. The collier arose and said: "Maister Bradlaugh, me and my mate Jim were both Methodys, till one of these infidel chaps cam' this way. Jim turned infidel, and used to badger me about attending prayer-meetings; but one day, in the pit, a large cob of coal came down upon Jim's head. Jim thought he was killed—and, ah mon! but he did holler and cry to God." Then turning to Mr. Bradlaugh—with a knowing look—he said: "Young man, there's nowt like cobs of coal for knocking infidelity out of a man!"

NEW ZEALAND, by the last census, taken in 1878, had a population of 414,412. In addition to these there were 43,595 Maori, making in all 458,007. Of these 10,564 objected to making any statement as to their religious belief. Of the rest 334,745 declared themselves to be Protestants, and of Roman Catholics, including the Greek Church, there were 58,881. The largest body of Protestants were connected with the

Church of England. These amounted to 176,337. The Presbyterians came next, 95,103. We notice that thirty registered themselves as Atheists. The ratio of Presbyterians to the entire population has for the last twelve years been on the decrease. In 1867 it was 25.12 per cent., while in 1878 it was only 22.95.

IN a sermon lately preached in Manchester, by the Bishop of the diocese, reference was made to the supine or contemptuous indifference which there seemed to the preacher to be at the present day in regard to the result of great issues which were being tried at the bar of public opinion, and said he thought there never was, perhaps, more excitement about questions of the hour and of the surface, and less seriousness about questions that went down into the depths of every matter affecting the welfare of the Church or of society for centuries. He urged the necessity of unity amongst Protestant Churches, but said he had no scheme of union to produce. Men's minds were hardly yet in the temper to entertain schemes. They were too captious, or too critical, or too prejudiced.

AN English Church Association in Manchester has hit upon an admirable device for relieving distress. The ladies purchase materials and cut out garments for distribution among the poor, and then hire needy women to make them at low wages. The sewing women work from eleven to four, are given a good dinner and paid an English sixpence for a day's work. The advantage of this system of relieving the poor is that it brings them out of their homes into a room which belongs to the ladies, and where the latter can exercise some beneficial influence upon the poor women whom they thus gather together. None but the really destitute care to work for such low wages, and the fact that they are thus willing to help themselves is proof that they are at least deserving of assistance.

BRADLAUGH is trying to become the hero of the hour, and some not very wise people are doing their best to help him, by making him a martyr. He is not a very encouraging illustration of what Atheism does for anyone's manhood. He first said that an oath could have no binding force with him, and that, therefore, he could not take it. When he found he could not retain his seat without taking the said oath the poor creature was quite ready to "eat his leek" and swear, and his only regret was that he was not allowed to complete his personal degradation. Honour must not be much to such folks, though it is as much in this case as with those who are ready to sign confessions of faith in which they do not believe or to appeal to a God whom they neither reverence nor love.

THE \$2,500,000 which George Peabody left to establish homes for the poor of London had grown to over \$3,500,000 last December, through additions of rent and interest money to the principal. The trustees of the fund have already housed 9,905 persons in 2,355 separate dwellings, and have made arrangements to buy nine acres of land in Glasshouse street, near the mint; Whitecross street, St. Luke's; Bedfordbury; Great Wild street, Drury Lane; Peartree court, Clerkenwell; and Old Pye street, Westminster. To cover these sites with buildings the trustees have obtained a loan of \$1,500,000 from the fund, in yearly instalments of \$500,000, and on the condition that the whole shall be repaid in fifteen years. They calculate that this sum will provide homes for 10,000 persons. The average weekly earnings of the head of each family in the Peabody buildings last year was about \$6, the average rent of each dwelling about \$1, and of each room about fifty cents.

THE following decree is taken from a proclamation by the King of Siam issued at the request of Rev. Mr. McGilvray: "That religious and civil duties do not conflict, and that any religion that is seen to be true by any person may be embraced without any restraint; that the responsibility of a correct choice rests on the individual making it; that there is nothing in the foreign treaty, nor in the laws and customs of Siam, to throw any restrictions upon the religious worship of any. To be more specific, if any person or persons wish to embrace the Christian religion, they are freely allowed to follow their own choice; and this proclamation is designed from this time forth to remove any fear that may have existed to the contrary. It is, moreover, strictly enjoined on the princes and rulers and friends of those who may wish to embrace Christianity, that they throw no obstacle in the way, and that no creed be enforced upon the Christians, nor work demanded of them, which their religion forbids them to hold or to do, as the worship and feasting of demons or departed spirits, and working on the Sabbath day.

A CORRESPONDENT of the New York "Times" says: "It is not to be wondered at that some of the Nonconformists and Liberal churchmen who voted for Gladstone and his party at the last election should have taken alarm at his appointment of Lord Ripon to India, the Lord Ripon who, being converted to Rome, submitted so promptly to the Papal discipline as to resign the proud position he occupied at the time of Grand Master of the English Freemasons. Now, without 'impeaching' the Premier on religious grounds, or indorsing the agitation which has already commenced, it is just as well to look the business 'straight in the eye.' Mr. Gladstone's sister, who lately died, was a Roman Catholic. His cousin, Mr. Hugh Gladstone, is a Roman Catholic. Earl Spencer, Lord President of the Council in the present Government, is a Catholic. The mother of the Duke of Argyll, Lord Privy Seal, is a Catholic. Earl Cowper, the Viceroy of Ireland, is a 'Prince of the Holy Roman Empire,' and therefore, in alliance with the Pope. The wife of Milner Gibson is a Roman Catholic, and Mr. Gladstone has raised him to the peerage."

PROTESTANTISM makes encouraging progress in Spain. The Act of Religious Liberty was decreed by the Cortes, May 5th, 1869. There are now six congregations and missions in Madrid; three in Barcelona, one in Granada, Cordova, Huelva, Jerez, San Fernando, Uterera, Puerto de Santa Maria Algeciras, La Linea, Malaga, Camunas Zaragoza, Valladolid, Salamanca Bilbao, and in over twenty cities besides. It is estimated that there are at least ten thousand attendants on Protestant worship and over five thousand children in the schools. When King Alfonso came to the throne in 1875, it was supposed that religious liberty was at an end. The new constitution conceded religious liberty to non-Catholics, but prohibited public manifestations of religious dissent. This left the whole very much at the mercy of those who administered the law. One might think everything a public manifestation of dissent, while others would view matters differently. As it is generally understood no inscription can be put over schools or rooms for public worship, or for the sale of Bibles, etc. Bibles, however, can be exposed for sale in stores or by colporteurs, and new churches and schools have to give twenty-four hours' notice. All this may appear to Protestants to be the day of small things, but it is a mighty step in advance in Spain, and it has been taken in spite of the Roman Catholic Church, which there, as wherever it has power, is the enemy of free discussion and anything like freedom, even of thought.