

The Canadian Independent.

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

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Topics of the Week.

At the Reformed Presbyterian Church Sunday school entertainment, Cincinnati, O., on December 29, sixteen Chinamen took part. There are but thirty-four Chinamen in the city, and twenty-four are pupils of this school.

REV. DR. WILLIAM TAYLOR suggests the propriety of having missionary biographies in Sunday school libraries. The English navy, he said, had been manned by boys who had read the life of Nelson, and so the mission field might be manned by boys drawn to it by reading such lives as Livingstone's or Moffat's.

It is authoritatively stated that the attention of the Governments of Europe has recently been directed towards formulating anti-Socialistic measures. The recent attempt upon the life of the Czar of Russia is to have the effect of quickening the apprehensions of the Powers, and some stringent measures are soon to be adopted in the hope of crushing the evil. But will they succeed? we don't believe it. Mere brute force has little power over social evils of the kind referred to.

A COLOURED preacher in Georgia lately put the matter of heaven negatively after the following fashion: "Hebben ain't no place for a man who has to dodge roun' a corner for fear of meetin' some one who'll ask for dat little bill dat nebber was paid." The grammar may not be very presentable and the whole get up of the sentiment may be thought rather home-spun but there is a right good sound of common sense and correct idea about it which can stand discussion, and might occasionally be repeated to advantage.

THERE seems every prospect of the destitution in Ireland being very severe during the coming months, and in all quarters meetings are being held and organizations formed in order to send food to the starving. It is only but far on the other hand to add that some who claim to know the facts as well as those who are the greatest alarmists affirm that the destitution is not nearly so great as represented, and that a good deal of the cry is got up for political purposes. We fear the destitution is only too real, and in any case it is best to err on the side of charity and brotherhood.

AFTER remarking on the perils of ignorance, a Republican journal points out two enemies to the Republic in France, of which it speaks as follows. "The first is the 'clerical enemy,' it is powerfully organized, and its influence extends over the whole land. We must fight it to death, by saving our children from its detestable influence, and, by not letting it come forth from the threshold of its temples, or allowing it to mix in the business of the State. The second enemy of our institutions is the 'authoritative Socialist element,' which recruits its adherents in our industrial centres, where the workmen have no time for getting knowledge. Only a few read and write at all. These have passed through the clerical schools, where they have been imbued with authoritative theories, and, arrived at manhood, under the pressure of want and misery, they have passed from the religion of Catholicism to that of Socialism. Of yore they assented to the strangest dogmas, now they accept, undiscussed, the most impracticable theories. The 'notion of possibility escapes them.' They believed in the cure's miracles, now they believe in the social ones promised them by their new teachers."

MR. HAMMOND has concluded his labours in Lon-

don, Ontario, and an enthusiastic paragraphist credits one thousand conversions to his instrumentality there. We have no great liking for computations of conversions that have no basis in certainty, and think that unless they are very guarded they are in bad taste. We are, however, quite prepared to believe that much good has been accomplished in London, as in many other places, by the Children's Revivalist. As Mr. Hammond intends visiting Montreal soon, some "conservative" Christian objects to him and his methods, in the Montreal "Witness," and is answered by "A Church Deacon" in a very convincing manner, adducing facts which we know to be such. The following is the important part of his letter. — "The writer was one of a group of six or seven boys, the Secretary of the Liverpool Y. M. C. A. was another, who during Mr. Hammond's last visit to Montreal, used to meet at each other's houses for prayer. We had all enlisted under our great Captain as a result of Mr. Hammond's work, though some of us were not fond of Mr. Hammond, but were affected by the religious spirit then pervading the city. Two others of our number were active Christians in honourable positions in our city. The others also, so far as I know, remain true, and our number now represents, I think, four denominations. I was then in the High School, and well remember what a change was effected in my own form; swearing, then too common, was all but permanently abolished, and those who stood to their colours, although at first made fun of, were respected for the stand they had taken, and increased in influence. This is but one account of several that could be given of the value of true revivals by A CHURCH DEACON."

THE St. Louis correspondent of the Chicago "Interior" gives a rather distressing view of the state of religion in that city. We hope things are not so bad as he represents. Still the tendencies he speaks of and condemns are too common everywhere, and churches and localities in Canada could easily be found that would have very little reason to cast the first stone at the Christians of St. Louis, though we have not heard of any among us who have got the length of church dances "for the accommodation of society people." "An unusually large number of our churches have resorted, this season, to fairs, concerts and bazaars for the purpose of raising funds for church purposes. This kind of work used to be left to the smaller churches, but now the large and fashionable have lifted it clear out of the reach of the feeble churches, and in so doing have not improved its morality, to say nothing of its prosperity. It is gratifying that none of the Presbyterian churches have resorted to genteel gambling, but it is humiliating to know that any Protestant church has done so. When our church notices in secular papers and our large posters announce that certain costly articles will be raffled for, and that certain evenings will be devoted to dancing, for the accommodation of society people, you don't have far to go to prove that piety is fast becoming an obsolete word. If revival was ever needed, it is needed now in the St. Louis churches. Even our music is degenerated to mere art in the hands of amateurs, and many of our sermons avoid theology from fear of being called old foggy. But still there are pupils and choirs that are not ashamed to preach and sing the gospel. In our churches also are many members who are live, working Christians." When such plans are thought to be necessary to keep any church afloat, the sooner it goes down the better. In Canada we have not got public church dancing parties, but we have plenty of private ones countenanced and encouraged by church members and office-bearers.

SABBATH AND EXPENSIVE FUNERALS.

Efforts have long been made but with very partial success to put a stop to Sabbath funerals. It has been, and is, urged that such a practice greatly interferes with the proper ministerial work of the day, breaks in upon the Sabbath quiet, and is liable to abuses of various kinds. It is acknowledged that there are cases of such a kind that interment on the Sabbath is not only allowable but an absolute necessity, and, of course, to these no objection could ever be urged. But, such will be found to be the rare exception, rather than the ordinary rule. Usually the Sabbath is fixed on because it is a day of leisure at any rate, and because thereby the funeral can be got over without interfering with the ordinary business hours or work of the week. If the parties were so poor that every hour taken from ordinary labour implied so much less food and comfort, we should feel that even in that there was a very valid reason for Sabbath funerals, for no one could say that such necessarily, and in all cases, implied sin. On the contrary, if ever individuals may be expected to be thoughtful in spirit, tender in feeling, and devoutly reverent in the presence of God we should naturally expect that this would be when they—dying men—gather together to carry dead ones to their last resting place. In such a country as this, however, it is comparatively rare for people to be so very poor that the time taken from ordinary toil for the purpose of burying a relative or friend, could be regarded as so important as to justify of itself having the funeral on Sabbath, while in any such instances we are persuaded there would be no difficulty in having the requisite clerical attendance even on the Lord's day.

But, when ministers are directing their attention to this matter, as we see that in many localities they are, and are seeking to educate people to more correct ideas about it, they might very properly and profitably go a good way further than most of them seem to have any idea of doing. If funerals were conducted in a becoming common sense fashion, many a poor family would have good reason to rejoice and be thankful. We say nothing of the painfully unpunctual manner in which they are generally managed, though this even is a matter of no little importance. The company may, for instance, be invited for three o'clock, but it is as likely as not, that it will be four, or half-past, before an actual start is made. In winter accordingly it is as much as one's life is worth to attend a funeral, while for men in business it is an unnecessary annoyance and loss which might be easily obviated by the hour mentioned being rigidly kept, whoever might be present or whoever was expected.

What, however, is of chief moment is the foolish and unnecessary expense incurred on such occasions—expense which in very many cases can be ill-afforded and which yet will not be dispensed with from fear that it might be regarded as shabby to the living and disrespectful to the dead. The comparatively poor will not attempt a change lest their straitened circumstances should be made public and the tongues of gossip be let loose at their expense. Accordingly the well-to-do, the liberal, and the religious ought to lead the way, and introduce a more rational and less expensive fashion. Many a poor, respectable family, at the very time when every dollar is precious, is thus senselessly and cruelly taxed by Mrs. Grundy, and from fear of what people will say are all but forced to wrong the living in order to be free from the suspicion of dishonouring the dead. Ministers and elders could do a good work in this respect, by themselves setting the right example and by inducing the wealthy members of their congregations to study simplicity and inexpensiveness in their funeral arrangements. Why