

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LXIV.

Vol. XVIII.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 1902.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR
VOLUME LIII.

No. 15.

Preparing for Battle. Although among Ontario Prohibitionists there has been quite general disappointment—not to use any stronger term—in reference to the conditions under which the referendum is to be submitted, it seems probable that a very vigorous campaign will be carried on with the hope and purpose of securing the adoption of the Prohibitory Liquor Act by the popular vote on the subject to be taken next December. A manifesto of the Dominion Alliance on the subject has been published in pamphlet form for distribution throughout the country. It is accompanied by two leaflets, one of which urges Prohibitionists to vote in full strength, because, if they stayed away from the polls, the result would be a nominal victory for the liquor traffic. The figures would make it appear that public opinion had undergone a change, and the explanation that many workers had stayed at home would not be everywhere accepted. It is also stated that "the last plebiscite was taken under conditions that were unfavorable to Prohibitionists. It did not represent their full strength. They can poll in December a very much larger vote than they polled in 1898. Doing this will make their position before the public and before the Legislature even stronger than it is now. They have before them an opportunity to add strength to the prohibition movement and hasten the triumph of the prohibition cause." The Prohibitionists of the Province appear also to be taking vigorous action to secure in the approaching Provincial elections so far as possible the nomination of candidates pledged, if elected, to strive for the enactment and enforcement of legislation prohibiting the traffic in intoxicating beverages to the extent of the ascertained power of the Province.

The Court-martialed Australians. Reports published some weeks ago, but generally discredited, to the effect that certain Colonial soldiers in South Africa had been tried by court-martial on the charge of cruelty to Boer prisoners and had been sentenced, some to death and some to imprisonment or transportation, have been renewed in such explicit form as seems to leave no room for doubt as to their truth. The soldiers so severely dealt with are said to be Australians, and some of them at least were officers. The London correspondent, Mr. I. N. Ford, alludes to the matter in a letter under date of March 31 as follows: "The story told in these despatches several weeks ago about the trial and execution of Australians for atrocities in retaliation for Boer outrages has reached Melbourne and caused excitement. The details have been known in military circles here through a leakage from the War Office, but have been kept out of the newspapers. Lord Kitchener's rigorous enforcement of discipline can hardly escape observation when Parliament meets."

The Beef Trust. A recent advance in the price of fresh meats, which, we are told, is conservatively estimated will take \$100,000,000 from the people of the United States to swell the profits of the "Beef Trust," has served to call special attention to the operations and methods of that colossal combination. "Absolutely controlling trade aggregating \$600,000,000 annually, the unofficial combination of interests known as the Beef Trust," says the *New York Herald*, "has succeeded, after many years of organization and expansion, in so completely dominating the provision markets of the United States that independent competition is killed. The strategic policy of the Beef Trust has become steadily more despotic and aggressive, until wholesale and retail butchers in New York and other cities who will not sign the iron clad agreement of the Chicago combination are driven out of

business by scores, both by being cut off from supplies and being openly undersold by agencies especially established for the purpose of crushing competition." Of this \$600,000,000 of yearly business, all but some \$40,000,000 is said to be handled by only four firms who co-operate to the smallest details of regulating supply and demand, from the stock yards to the retail markets. These four firms are Armour and Co., Swift and Co., G. H. Hammond and Co. and Nelson A. Morris and Co. Matters are so arranged between these great firms that natural competition in the meat trade is strangled. In the purchase of supplies from the stock yards they refrain from bidding against each other, and whenever independent buyers show pernicious activity, the Beef Trust men by united action and understanding sweep the yards clean of stock, so barring out competition, and advance prices to a point at which the opposition cannot market its purchases. By such means and by special rebates obtained illegally from railroads, the Trust is able to place its products at any point in the country at a cost which enables it to kill out, by temporarily underselling, any competition which may be offered "by dealers who kill their beef in their own country-side." And not only in the purchasing market, but in the selling market, competition must be crushed. The wholesale butchers were asked to sell the Trust's products on commission instead of buying from the farmers. If the dealer consented, competition was by so much removed and the farmer's industry by so much embarrassed; if the dealer declined, the Trust promptly opened an agency in his territory and pushed Western beef at prices which compelled submission on the part of the dealer. In the same way commission dealers were crowded out of business or compelled to accept such positions and salaries as the Trust might grant them. It would appear that the Beef Trust, now feeling secure from effective competition, has raised the price of meats to such a point as to call forth a vigorous protest from the retail sellers of New York and to make the price of fresh meat almost prohibitive for a considerable proportion of the city's population. Whether or not the agitation against the Beef Trust will have any practical results remains to be seen, but it at least serves to call attention to schemes and methods prevailing in the business world of the present, which tend to promote industrial and commercial oligarchies as soulless and as tyrannous as any which the political world has seen.

Dawson not Deserted. The reports widely published in United States and Canadian papers of an impending exodus from Dawson which would leave that town in a practically deserted condition appear to have been largely, if not wholly, fictitious, and are explicitly contradicted in a statement published by Mr. Saylor, United States, consul at Dawson. Mr. Saylor says that there is absolutely no truth whatever in the rumor published. "The statement that a business panic prevails in Dawson, and that the miners are deserting the creeks, is also entirely false. From personal investigation I am able to say that the business men of the community have the utmost confidence in the future of Dawson, and are preparing for the heavy summer trade. Concerning the creeks I have within the past week visited Bonanza, Eldorado, Dominion, Sulphur, Gold Run, and Hunker creeks, upon which the greater portion of the work of the district is done, and have found that operations are progressing satisfactorily upon all of them. Mining men generally with whom I have conversed regard the outlook as very hopeful. They expect that the clean-up of the present season will compare very favorably with that of previous years. Preparations for the summer work are well under way, and a demand for additional men will manifest itself very shortly." Mr. Saylor adds that he is at a loss to explain the origin of the false reports which have been spread abroad, and believes that they should be denied as forcibly as possible. There are no indications apparent either in mining or commercial circles which justify any such statements as have been published. At the present time (Mar. 29) everything points to an active and prosperous season both as regards the mining districts and the business interests of Dawson.

More Severe Fighting in South Africa. Advices from South Africa tell of continued and severe fighting on March 31st, in the neighborhood of Hart's River in the southwestern Transvaal between part of General Kitchener's forces and the forces of Generals Delarey and Kemp resulting in the repulse of the Boers and heavy losses on both sides. Lord Kitchener's report forwarded from Pretoria on April 3rd, says: "General Kitchener, (Lord Kitchener's brother), sent Colonels Keir and Cookson from Vreikull, Western Transvaal, March 31st, to go towards Hart's River. They soon struck the track of guns and carried on a running fight for eight miles, following the track through the bush. Emerging on a plain, large Boer reinforcements advanced against their flanks, forcing the British troops to take up a defensive position, which they hastily entrenched. Fighting ensued at close quarters until the Boers were repulsed on all sides. Delarey, Kemp and other leaders vainly attempted to persuade their men to renew their attack. Fifteen hundred Boers participated in the engagement, but they had suffered too heavily and cleared away to the northwest and south. The British losses were also severe. The Canadian Rifles especially distinguished themselves, one party, commanded by Lieut. Bruce Carruthers, holding its post till every man was killed or wounded. Others of the forces showed great steadiness, allowing the Boers to advance within two hundred yards of them and repelling them with a steady rifle fire." A despatch received by Governor-General Lord Minto dated Klein-hart's River, March 31st, states that the Second Canadian Mounted Rifles had nine non-commissioned officers and men killed and forty non-commissioned officers and men wounded, among whom were Lt. R. H. Ryan, of Kentville, N. S., wounded severely in the forearm, Lt. Geo. B. McKay, of Montreal, in the hand, Lt. A. F. Markham of St. John, in the arm and Lt. W. Loudon of Toronto, in the shoulder. The three latter are reported slightly wounded. The gallant behaviour of the Canadians in this engagement has received the highest praise.

The Referendum in Manitoba. The referendum held last Wednesday in Manitoba on the Prohibitory Liquor Act resulted in the rejection of the Act. This result was not generally unexpected, but the largeness of the vote polled and of the majority against the Act excite surprise. We have not seen any statement which assumes to be based on complete returns, but it seems probable that the total vote will not be less than 28,000, and that the majority against the Act will be more than 6,000. These figures are in startling contrast with the figures of the Plebiscite taken in 1898, when the total vote was 15,397 and the majority in favor of prohibition 9,441. In explanation of this apparent change of sentiment, it is to be considered that in 1898 the vote was on prohibition as a principle, as applied to the whole Dominion, and also as having reference to the manufacture, importation and all wholesale business as well as to the sale of liquor within the Province. It is not improbable, therefore, that a good many who voted "Yes" in the Plebiscite would fail to cast an affirmative vote for the Manitoba Act, regarding such a measure of partial prohibition as necessarily ineffective. There is clear evidence that the leading prohibitionists of the Province were by no means united in the effort to secure an affirmative vote on the referendum. Many of them had been greatly exasperated at the course pursued by the Government in calling for a referendum on the Act, after the party had made Provincial Prohibition a plank in the platform on which it had gone to the country in the last general elections and had obtained the popular endorsement. So strong was the feeling against the Government that the Manitoba Branch of the Dominion Alliance had taken decided ground against the referendum, and had issued a proclamation, urgently requesting prohibitionists in the Province to abstain from voting on April 2nd. Other Prohibitionist leaders, it is true, took a different course and sought to promote a large affirmative vote, but the course pursued by those who rejected the referendum no doubt largely influenced the result. As a further explanation of the result it is alleged by prohibitionists that the grossest frauds were practised on the part of the liquor men in the election especially in Winnipeg and its vicinity, men recording votes where they pleased and as often as they pleased. Certainly the record of the liquor traffic is not so exalted as to make these allegations seem improbable. But whatever may be the facts in this connection it is evident that provincial prohibition in Manitoba has for the present suffered defeat. But perhaps the result is not really so much of a defeat for the cause of temperance reform nor so much of a victory for the liquor business as those interested in it would like to believe.