

The Canadian . . .

## Epworth Era

ORGAN OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUES AND  
OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES  
IN THE METHODIST CHURCH.

Published Monthly at TORONTO, ONT.

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REV. WM. BRIGGS, D.D., Publisher.

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### Ecumenical Missionary Conference.

#### Editorial Correspondence.

The greatest event in the Christian world during the past month was the meeting of the Ecumenical Missionary Conference at New York, which was attended by over two thousand delegates from all parts of the world. They came together, not to legislate, but to pray and plan for the speedy evangelization of the world and to recommend measures which will most effectively further this object. The Conference furnished an illustration of unity of feeling and purpose, as nearly every missionary society in the world was represented. Although widely differing in doctrine and church government, they are all united in accepting the Saviour's command to preach the Gospel to every creature.

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The meetings were held in Carnegie Hall, New York, commencing on Saturday, April 21st, and continuing to May 1st. It takes something very unusual to make much of a stir in New York, but the papers gave considerable attention to the Conference. One of them remarked that in any other city the assembly would have been "an event," but in the great metropolis it was simply "an incident." Be that as it may, the influence of the gathering for good will be considerable, for it will be reported widely by the religious press.

Carnegie Hall, which is capable of holding four thousand people, was crowded at every session, and overflow meetings were frequently held in adjoining churches.

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It was announced that there were over six hundred missionaries in actual attendance. They were given the best seats, and the most prominent places on the programme, and were always listened to with great attention. They were not all orators by any means, but most of them had a wonderful story to tell. The audiences were marvelously enthusiastic, and the applause was often loud and long. The people seemed to be influenced by "matter" rather than by "manner," for

upon more than one occasion a subject which was presented in the form of a paper, and every word read in a quiet way, stirred up wonderful manifestations of appreciation.

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Across the front of the hall, above the platform, there stretched a large map of the world, which was colored in such a way as to show what portions were christianized, and what countries still remained in heathenism. Strange to say, the whole of Canada was represented as pagan. Rev. Robert Johnston, D.D., of London, Ont., called attention to this blunder in a few appropriate remarks. He spoke of the aggressive work of the various Canadian churches, and said that with God's blessing the Gospel had been so faithfully preached, that only about forty thousand pagans remained in the Dominion. The Doctor protested vigorously against the falsehood of the map which declared Canada to be a heathen country. Referring to what had been so emphatically said in the Conference about the importance of disseminating missionary information, he thought the man who made the map should obtain some accurate knowledge of the facts before attempting anything of the kind again. The Canadians present greatly enjoyed Dr. Johnston's remarks.

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Speaking of Canadians—there were not nearly as many present as one would have expected to see. Considering the proximity of Ontario to the Conference and the importance of the occasion, the attendance was rather small. The people of the United States take much more stock in affairs of this kind than do our people. Among the delegates and visitors from our church, the following were noticed: Revs Dr. Sutherland, Dr. Henderson, Dr. Ryckman, Dr. Waketield, Dr. Potts, A. D. Morton, S. F. Huestis, G. H. Robinson, A. P. Latter, W. E. Hassard, E. R. Young, Jun., G. Agar, Dr. Stephenson, Dr. Allison, W. J. Ferguson, Rev. A. J. Irwin, Rev. J. R. Real, and Mrs. Real. There may have been others, but I did not happen to see them.

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The Conference was honored by the presence of President McKinley, Ex-President Harrison, and Governor Roosevelt. Mr. Harrison occupied the chair at the afternoon meeting, and delivered an address in the evening. He made a decided hit in referring to Admiral Dewey's remark, that the duties of the President were "simple." Addressing President McKinley, he said: "It is an honor for us that you should leave for a time those great and grave duties, which some one has recently called 'simple.'" When he spoke the word "simple" the audience laughed so loudly and cheered so much that it was impossible for the General to continue for a moment. The reference was understood by every one. The Admiral's characterization of the duties of the Chief Executive of the United States as "simple" has gone round the world and penetrated even the mission fields. The missionaries laughed as quickly and as heartily as the politicians.

Among other good things the President paid the following tribute to the missionaries through whose efforts so much has been accomplished for civilization: "The story of Christian missions is one of thrilling interest and marvellous results. The sacrifices of the missionaries for their fellow-men constitute one of the most glorious pages of the world's history. The missionary, of whatever church or ecclesiastical body, who devotes his life to the service of the Master and of men, carrying the torch of truth and enlightenment, deserves the gratitude and homage of mankind. The noble, self-effacing, willing ministers of peace and good-will should be classed with the world's heroes. Wielding the sword of the spirit, they have conquered ignorance and prejudice. They have been the pioneers of civilization. They have illumined the darkness of idolatry and superstition with the light of intelligence and truth. They have been messengers of righteousness and love. They have braved disease, and danger, and death, and in their exile have suffered unspeakable hardships, but their noble spirits have never wavered. They count their labor no sacrifice. 'Away with the word in such a view and with such a thought,' says David Livingstone: 'it is emphatically no sacrifice; say, rather, it is a privilege.'"

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When General Harrison rose to take charge of the afternoon meeting he was very warmly received. He said: "I count it a great honor—a call to preside over the deliberations of this great body. It is to associate one's self with the most influential and enduring work that is being done in this day of great enterprises. A view of the whole army is a good thing; the heart is strengthened by an enlarged comradeship. It gives promise that the flanks will be covered and a reserve organized. After days in the brush the sense of numbers is lost. It greatly strengthens the soldier and quickens his pace when he advances to battle, if a glance to right or left reveals many pennons, and a marshalled host moving under one great leader to execute a single battle plan."

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Governor Roosevelt thus expressed his appreciation of missionary work: "I wish it was in my power to convey my experience to those people—often well-meaning people—who speak about the inefficiency of foreign missions. I think if they really could realize but a tenth part of the work that is being done, and the work that has been done, they would realize that no more practical work, no work more productive of fruit for civilization could exist than that work being carried on by the men and women who give their lives to preach the Gospel of Christ to mankind—the men and women who not only have preached, but have done; who have made action follow pledge, performance square with promise."

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Rev. Judson Smith, D.D., referred to the unity of the Protestant Churches in carrying on missionary enterprises. He said: "Lately we have seen a new and wonderful thing. In the war of the British against the Boers men from Can-