

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LX.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,
VOLUME XLIX.

Vol. XIV.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1898.

No. 42.

A Fashoda Blue Book. The condition of affairs in Central Africa has been regarded as involving some peril to the continuance of peaceful relations between Great Britain and France. In view of this, the publication of a Fashoda blue book, giving correspondence between the two governments respecting their respective claims to African territory, is a matter of considerable interest. The correspondence begins with a despatch, dated December 10, 1897, from Sir Edward Monson, British Ambassador at Paris, to Lord Salisbury, referring to the rumors of the massacre of the Marchand expedition and expressing the Ambassador's satisfaction that he has been allowed to acquaint M. Hanotaux, French Foreign Minister of that day, with Lord Salisbury's view that, if other questions are adjusted, Great Britain will make no difficulty regarding the French claim on the northern and eastern shores of Lake Tchad. The despatch shows, however, that the Ambassador made it clear that this concession must not be understood as admitting the right of any European power except Great Britain to occupy any part of the Nile Valley. This is followed by a despatch from M. Hanotaux, protesting respectfully against Lord Salisbury's views. On August 23 of the present year, however, Lord Salisbury wrote Lord Cromer, British diplomatic agent at Cairo, giving him instructions that after the capture of Khartoum two flotillas should go southward, the one to Fashoda, the other up the Blue Nile as far as it should prove navigable for steamers. Under these instructions the Sirdar (General Kitchener) was personally to command the Fashoda flotilla and to take a few troops, if he should consider it desirable, to assist Great Britain's sphere of influence in the Nile Valley. On September 7, Sir Edmund Monson reported to Lord Salisbury a conversation in which M. Delcasse, French Foreign Minister, announced that Major Marchand had no authority to decide on questions of right, and had been instructed to abstain from any action likely to lead to local conflict. M. Delcasse further expressed a conviction that the matter was susceptible of arrangement by means of discussion. To this Lord Salisbury replied, on September 9, that Great Britain regarded the operations of the Sirdar (Gen. Kitchener) as placing all the territories of Khalifa Abdullah by right of conquest in the hands of the British and Egyptian Governments, and insisted that the contention admitted of no discussion. On September 15—still following the blue book—the Sirdar reported the results of his expedition to Fashoda, fully confirming the announcements already cabled to the Associated Press, including the fact that General Kitchener's arrival there prevented a second Dervish attack on Marchand. Though not prepared to resist the hoisting of the Egyptian flag at Fashoda, Major Marchand assured General Kitchener that he had concluded with the Shilluk chiefs a treaty which placed the country under French protection, that the treaty had been sent to France for ratification and that he had orders from the French Government to occupy Fashoda. The statement of the French officer as to the treaty was, however, contradicted by the Shilluk chiefs, who, the Sirdar reports, "came to our camp and positively denied that they had concluded any treaty with Marchand, while all the Shilluks declared their allegiance to the British Government. Moreover, Marchand was in such a precarious position that nothing could have prevented his annihilation by the Dervishes had we been a fortnight later in crushing the Khalifa." Other despatches indicated that M. Delcasse declined Great Britain's request for the immediate recall of Major Marchand, and that Great Britain agreed to despatch a message for the French Government as a matter of courtesy, without accepting

any responsibility for the results which it might entail, and still maintaining that the matter admitted of no compromise. In the final despatch appearing in the blue book, Lord Salisbury, under date of October 3, instructs Sir Edmund Monson to inform M. Delcasse that the latter's message to Major Marchand had been sent, but that Great Britain views the Marchand mission as having no political significance whatever.

The International Conference. The Conference which is charged with the duty of framing a treaty for the adjustment of certain matters of international interest between the United States and Canada has adjourned for a few weeks, and when it reassembles the place of meeting will be Washington instead of Quebec. Newspaper correspondents report statements from a number of the United States Commissioners indicating their expectation of valuable results from the Conference. Ex-Secretary of State Foster is reported as saying: "The outlook is that nearly every subject mentioned in the protocol will be embraced in the treaty." Hon. Nelson A. Dingley, of Maine, is credited with the remark: "The negotiations of the Conference have been carried on in a fair and honorable spirit. I am sanguine that the treaty will mark a new epoch between the two countries." Senators Faulkner and Fairbanks are said to have given expression to similar sentiments, and Hon. Jefferson Coolidge said: "This Anglo-American Conference will settle many points that have caused friction between the two countries." Lord Herschell, the British Commissioner, is reported as declaring himself "delighted with the present outlook." The Canadian Commissioners do not appear to have expressed themselves in so optimistic a vein in reference to the results of the Conference. Sir Wilfrid Laurier indeed declined to pronounce any opinion on the subject, either good or bad, which, considering the contingencies of the situation and his responsible position, was no doubt a prudent thing to do. Sir Louis Davies, however, is reported to have said: "I am not without hope that there will be a settlement of most of the subjects," and Mr. John Charlton considers that good progress has been made toward a fair and reasonable treaty. There is little doubt that the Commissioners, if left to their own judgment as to what is for the general interests of the two countries, would be able to reach an agreement as to most, if not all, points in dispute and to frame a treaty which would be greatly to their mutual advantage; but how much can be accomplished in the face of sectional interests and the influences which are being brought to bear by corporations and individuals is quite another matter.

The Paris Peace Commission. The joint Commissioners appointed by the United States and Spain for the purpose of arranging the terms of a treaty of peace between the two countries have been at work for the past fortnight in Paris. The fact that the proceedings are secret does not, of course, prevent the sending out of many reports which can be little more than guesses at what is taking place. It may or may not be true, therefore, that certain of the demands of the United States Commissioners are so obnoxious to Spain that a deadlock has been threatened. The two chief points of difficulty are the disposition of the Cuban debt and the ownership of the Philippines. The debt question may probably depend somewhat on what the United States intends to do with Cuba. If the island is to be independent, it could not of course be expected that the United States would assume responsibility for its debt, but if annexation

is the policy decided upon the case would be different. The expense of carrying the debt would probably be to the United States not more than half of what it is in Spain, by reason of the better rates of interest which the richer country can command. The Spanish Commissioners may be expected to contend strongly against the surrender of the Philippines, but if the United States government has made up its mind to assume the responsibilities involved in the acquisition of those distant islands, it is not probable that Spain can command any influence to prevent. Great Britain will strongly favor the claim of the United States to the Philippines. Germany appears disposed to co-operate with, rather than to oppose, the Anglo-American interests in this matter, and France, though not favoring the transference of the islands to the United States, will hardly be able, if disposed, to make any effective opposition.

The Plebiscite. The returns from the Plebiscite have come in very slowly, and it is said the official figures will not be available for some time to come. Anti-prohibitionist papers have been claiming a larger and larger negative majority in Quebec, until, as some of them have declared, there was enough to turn the scale against the other provinces and show for the whole Dominion a majority against prohibition. But if such an expectation is being cherished it will doubtless be disappointed. There seems to be no doubt whatever but that the result of the vote will show a substantial majority for prohibition, though estimates differ considerably as to the size of the majority. It is stated to be the opinion of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery that the majority will figure up from ten to fifteen thousand. Mr. F. S. Spence, Secretary of the Dominion Alliance, has, however, sent out an estimate of the vote, which makes the majority for prohibition very considerably larger. Mr. Spence's figures—giving the majorities for each province—are as follows:

	For.	Against.
Ontario	37,344	
Nova Scotia	29,199	
New Brunswick	17,372	
P. E. Island	8,333	
North West	2,259	
Manitoba	12,270	
British Columbia	1,184	
Quebec		66,208
Totals	107,961	66,208

Majority for prohibition, 41,753.
The figures given for the Maritime Provinces and Manitoba are understood to be official, while those from the other provinces are estimates.
After the above was in type, the Montreal Witness of Saturday last, was received in which was published a statement from Mr. Spence, making the total majority for prohibition 102,228, the negative majority in Quebec 93,511, making the net majority for prohibition 8,717.

The deliverance of the Archbishop of Canterbury in his charges issued last week to his clergy appears, according to the despatches, to concede almost everything that the extreme ritualists have claimed. The Archbishop is stated to have declared plainly that the doctrine of the real presence, as embodied in the doctrine of consubstantiation, is permitted, though not expressly taught, by the Church of England; that though compulsory confession is absolutely illegal, voluntary confession is legal, and no clergyman is justified in refusing to hear confession. Prayers for the dead are also commended. The Primate judges, however, that invocation of the Virgin and the saints, and the elevation and reservation of the sacraments are not permissible. While the Archbishop's manifesto will doubtless give comfort to the ritualists and disappoint the low church party, it cannot but give added impulse to the agitation which the ritualistic movement in England has induced, and tend to weaken the faith of the people in the established church as a bulwark of Protestantism in England.

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