

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LX.

Vol. XIV.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 1898.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,
VOLUME XLIX.

No. 10.

Should the United States Interfere? The inquiry into the cause of the Maine disaster appears to be still in progress; at all events the finding of the court has not yet been published, and though reports are being sent abroad, based upon alleged statements of persons who are engaged in the investigation, to the effect that the facts disclosed warrant the conclusion that the disaster was not an accident, these reports cannot be regarded as worthy of much credence. The United States Government is winning respect by its determination not to be plunged into a war with Spain over this incident. But before the Havana disaster took place, there was the question as to the duty or expediency of the United States intervening in the affairs of Cuba, and, apart from any question as to the cause of that disaster, the question of interference remains to be considered. The condition of Cuba and its people, after these years of constant war, has become so deplorable as to appeal powerfully to the sympathies of the civilized world. All the horrors of war have been visited upon Spain's ill-fated colony, the demoralization of industry is complete, the sufferings of the people are terrible to contemplate and they are said to be dying of starvation by scores of thousands. The offering of autonomy to Cuba in its present condition seems like offering to a man, made delirious by starvation, the means of earning his living. The offer has come too late. It appears certain that Spain can do nothing more for Cuba, except to exhaust utterly her own resources in prolonging the agony of despair. Under these circumstances it certainly becomes a question whether some civilized government, or concert of powers, should not interfere to save the island from utter destruction. There is no country which is in so good a position to do this, and none which has a better right to interfere than the United States. To do so would involve very serious responsibility, which wise citizens and public men of statesmanlike breadth of view in that country will be in no hurry to accept. But if the United States Government, from feelings of philanthropy and a sense of duty on the part of a strong nation toward a people in hopeless distress, should resolve to intervene for the salvation of Cuba, the circumstances would seem abundantly to justify the step, and in taking it, the United States would merit the sympathy of the civilized world.

Salisbury's Success. The foreign policy of Lord Salisbury comes in for frequent and sometimes quite contemptuous criticism, as lacking firmness and being almost a peace-at-any-price policy. But "nothing succeeds like success," and just now Lord Salisbury is made to appear as quite a conquering hero in the field of diplomacy, and is the subject of much laudatory remark in the political news letters of the week. Matters appear at present to be going very satisfactorily for British interests in the far East. Although the negotiations at Peking for an officially guaranteed loan miscarried, it is understood that a loan has been effected half English, half German, which, though nominally a private loan, is negotiated under conditions that make it practically a Government affair. It is said, too, that Lord Salisbury has succeeded in obtaining a new set of conditions from China more important than those which failed, because they involve for the first time a claim upon the Li-Kin, or internal taxation of Empire revenues, heretofore absolutely in the hands of the provincial Mandarins, but now to be controlled if not collected by representatives of the bond-holders. This, with the opening of rivers to steam traffic, which it is understood is likewise included in the stipulations, will do more to develop a healthy Chinese commerce than any number of new treaty ports. "Whether or not Lord Salisbury

is incapable of fighting, even with his back against the wall," writes the London correspondent of the New York Herald, "he has done more without blows than Great Britain's navy could have won." It is as well, however, to recognize the fact that Britain's navy had a little something to do in rendering Lord Salisbury's gentle methods of diplomacy effective. And there appears to us no reason whatever to believe that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was not acting in full accord and concert with the Premier, when he openly declared that, even at the cost of war, Great Britain would oppose the limitation of Chinese ports to the trade of particular nations. No doubt Lord Salisbury understands that, at certain junctures, the growl of the British lion is not without value in a diplomatic point of view, and that it was quite important that Russia, Germany and France, as well as China, should recognize that, under the velvet glove of British diplomacy, and promptly responsive to the Sovereign's will, there is a power far more significant than the "mailed fist" of the grandiloquent Kaiser and quite as worthy of being reckoned with as the mighty claw of the Russian Bear. Mr. Chamberlain's stirring up of public sentiment on the West African question, too, has evidently not been without purpose and result, and has helped very materially to make British diplomacy effective with France.

The Ontario Elections.

The political campaign concluded on Tuesday of last week in Ontario has been a warm one, and the result has so seriously weakened the Government that at present it seems doubtful whether, in the new Legislature, Premier Hardy can count upon the support of a working majority. In the last House the Liberals had a majority of twenty-six over the Conservatives, and there were sixteen Patrons or Independents who were in general friendly to the Government. After the elections some of the Conservative papers were claiming for their party a majority. The returns as at present reported would seem, however, to give the Government a majority of two or three over the Conservatives, which may be increased and may be diminished by recounts. It is a significant fact that the Patrons will have almost disappeared from the new Legislature. Of the sixteen seats held by them in the late House, they retain only two, and, of the fourteen they have lost, twelve have been won by the Conservatives. The change in public sentiment is hardly to be accounted for by a failure on the part of the Government to conduct the affairs of the Province honestly and with ability. The Province, it is generally admitted, has been well governed and its affairs appear to be in a very satisfactory condition. The argument that, one party having been in power for twenty-five years, a change had become desirable, no doubt had some effect. But there can scarcely be a doubt that if Sir Oliver Mowatt had remained at the head of the Government it would have been handsomely sustained at the polls. His successor may be an able man and an honest administrator, but he has not, and probably never will have, the confidence of the people of Ontario to the degree that his predecessor did. It is not unlikely that the temperance question had some influence on the results of the election. The Government under Sir Oliver Mowatt had made promises in reference to temperance legislation which indicated a strong reliance upon the temperance sentiment of the Province and a corresponding antagonism of the liquor interest. But the course pursued by the present Premier has not been such as to encourage an enthusiastic support on the part of the temperance people, and it is quite probable that these facts should not be lost sight of when enquiring into the cause of Mr. Hardy's diminished following.

Relief Expedition Abandoned.

It appears that the United States Government has decided to abandon its expedition for the relief of the miners in the Klondike country, for which quite elaborate preparations had been made. Included in these preparations is a herd of reindeer purchased in Northern Europe, which a few days ago arrived in New York by the steamship Manitoban. The more recent accounts received from the Klondike country seem to justify the conclusion that there will be no very serious lack of food among the miners. Congress is to be asked to take action authorizing the Government to dispose of the supplies purchased for the expedition, including the reindeer, and to abandon the project entirely. It is believed the reindeer can be sold at a price sufficient to reimburse the Government for the expense involved in importing them. It is stated that Secretary Alger has been offered one hundred dollars a piece for one hundred of the animals, which is about what they have cost.

A Warlike Appearance.

Events appear to indicate considerable probability of a war between the United States and Spain. Despatches from Havana persistently assert—though unofficially of course—that evidence has been found that the Maine was blown up by a torpedo or submarine mine. Not much dependence can be placed on these assertions. It is also stated that Spain has asked for the recall of U. S. Consul General Lee, from Havana, and the replacement of the warships, designated by the U. S. Government to carry supplies to the sufferers in Cuba, by merchant vessels in order to deprive the assistance thus sent to the insurgents of any official character, and that the United States Government has refused the request of Spain in these matters. While these statements cannot be accepted without further confirmation, it does not appear unlikely that such requests should be made by the Spanish Government. The strongest indication of war is seen in the fact that the Government of the United States is taking vigorous measures to prepare for it. Foreign shipbuilding firms are being approached in reference to the purchase of a number of warships. Work on the coast defenses is being pushed forward. There is great activity in the navy yards and arrangements are being made with railways for the prospective movement of artillery and troops. These facts indicate a belief, that if war is not inevitable, it is at least not improbable.

The Yukon Railway Bill.

In the Dominion House of Commons the debate on the Yukon Railway bill has been continued during the week. At eleven o'clock Friday evening Mr. Borden, of Halifax, proposed to adjourn the debate, but the Premier refused. Sir Wilfrid said the measure was urgent and too much time had been lost already. Sir Charles Tupper undertook that if the Government would permit an adjournment he would do what he could to expedite the discussion. Premier Laurier wanted the opposition leader to agree that the debate should end next Tuesday, but the opposition leader could not promise that. Mr. Borden closed by moving that the bill be not read a second time, but that it be resolved:

That this House, while recognizing the necessity for providing adequate facilities for transportation into the Canadian Yukon gold fields, regards as indefensible the terms and conditions of the proposed contract, but will cordially support a grant of substantial assistance in aid of the immediate construction of a railway by the best available route under such conditions and safeguards as will prevent the creation of any railroad or mining monopoly.