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The War. So far as is to be gathered from the accounts received, the situation as between the hostile forces in Manchuria has not changed materially during the past week. The recent battle, the scene of which was the vicinity of the Shakhi river, like the great battle of Liao Yang, was prolonged from day to day and occupied a full week. As reported last week, it resulted in disaster to the Russian arms. General Kuropatkin's army was not only checked in its advance, but was driven back with heavy loss in men, artillery and military stores. This heavy disaster following so many defeats, and following too Kuropatkin's boast that the time had come when he would compel the Japanese to do his will, means an additional and serious loss of prestige for the Russian army. There have been no official statements as to the losses sustained by the opposing forces in the late battle and none from unofficial sources that can be regarded as fully trustworthy. Some estimates place the Russian losses as high as 30,000. This may be an extravagant estimate, but it is conceded on all hands that the list of casualties was very large, and there appears to be no doubt that in this engagement the Russians lost much more heavily than the Japanese. The condition of the country, owing to the heavy rains, and the worn out condition of both armies, has prevented much heavy fighting during the past week. The Russian army appears to have maintained the position held by it a week ago, but it was sufficiently serious to cause great disappointment and dismay in Russia and to destroy all hope of a further southern advance of the Russian arms in Manchuria before next spring. The garrison at Port Arthur under General Stoessel is still holding out bravely, but the besiegers are drawing the curtain more and more closely about the doomed fortress, and the day of its fall is drawing near.

Political. The sensation of the past week in political circles has been the resignation of Hon. A. G. Blair from his office as Chairman of the Railway Commission. Mr. Blair's resignation, although a surprise, it is said, even to the other members of the Commission and to his own intimate friends, would not of course in itself necessarily affect political issues in any marked degree. It is the contingencies connected with the event—especially the uncertainty as to Mr. Blair's immediate intentions—that have given rise to the excitement. At present writing he has not seen fit to take the public into his confidence. In announcing his resignation to the other members of the Commission Mr. Blair intimated that this step was taken in his own personal interest and because there had been presented to him an opportunity to turn his mind and his energies in a direction which would be much more profitable to him than the position he held as Chairman of the Railway Commission. Mr. Blair has also authorized the statement that, beyond affirming his strong objection to the Grand Trunk Pacific scheme, he has no present intention of re-entering public life. It is well known that Mr. Blair's opposition to the Grand Trunk Pacific scheme when it was discussed in Parliament in 1903 was strenuous and powerful, and it is generally believed to have had considerable influence upon public opinion. The Opposition press have generally interpreted Mr. Blair's words in respect to reaffirming his strong objections to the scheme as indicating an intention to take the stump in opposition to the Government's railway policy, and there is evidently an expectation that his doing so would tell heavily against the Government. So far however there is no intimation from Mr. Blair that he intends to take this course. The Government newspapers naturally seek to discount the influence of Mr. Blair's present opposition to the G. T. P. scheme, saying that his views on the subject have been already published and are well known, and that the arguments which he advanced against the scheme are the same as the Opposition leaders have been urging in the current campaign. What the very advantageous position is which awaits Mr. Blair's acceptance is still unknown to the general public. It has been reported that he is to accept a solicitorship in connection with the Canadian Pacific or in connection with the Grand Trunk. Another report is that he is to become manager of an important milling company, but these reports have all been explicitly denied.

The Synod and the Versions. At the recent meeting in Montreal of the Synod of the Church of England a lively debate occurred over the proposition to permit, "at the discretion of the Ordinary," the use of "what is known as the American version of the Bible" in public worship. The use of the English edition of the Revised Version, it should be explained, had already been authorized. But the proposal to place on the same basis the "American Version," (by which we suppose is meant the American Standard edition, so called, of the Revised Version) met with vigorous opposition, and though the proposal emanated from the Bishop, it was finally rejected by the Synod. Judge Hanington of New Brunswick, was particularly outspoken and determined in his opposition to the proposed innovation. The Judge apparently did not think it necessary to consider whether or not the new version gives the sense of the original Scriptures more correctly and in terms more easily understood by the people than does the old. If his remarks are correctly reported by the *Montreal Witness* the fact that the version in question had an American stamp on it appeared sufficient to determine his judgment in the matter. He admired the Americans for many things, he said, but he was not an admirer of American institutions. The Mother Church had not used this American edition, and this seemed to him a good reason why it should not be adopted by the Church in Canada. He would not use this version, he declared, if an angel from heaven offered it. The Judge appeared to take the ground that uniformity in the rendering of the inspired Word was of more importance than conformity to the exact sense of the original Scriptures. He thought a clergyman should not explain to his congregation that his text in the English rendering did not give the correct sense of the original, as to do so must prove unsettling to the minds of young people. One would think this a somewhat weighty argument for the use of the most correct version obtainable, but the Judge evidently did not so regard it. There were, on the other hand, members of the Synod who warmly upheld the "American Version" and pleaded for its use. But some of its warmest advocates did not appear to have a very clear idea of the differences between this version and the Authorized and the English revision. Thus, Rev. Mr. Dicker is reported as saying that the American edition was simply the Authorized Version word for word, except for necessary marginal references. Mr. Jarvis who also warmly upheld the value of the American edition said it was word for word the Authorized Version. Whether Mr. Dicker and Mr. Jarvis meant by "the Authorized Version" the King James Version or the English edition of the Canterbury Revision of 1884, it is evident that their words are not a correct description of the American Standard edition of the Revised Version. But perhaps these gentlemen were not correctly reported. To our minds the American Standard edition of the Revised Version is the best edition of the Bible for public or for private reading, and it is best because it differs in many of its renderings both from the King James Version and the English edition of the Revised Version and in doing so gives the sense of the original more correctly and in terms more intelligible to the ordinary reader. The American edition is also much superior to the others in respect to its headings of pages and chapters, and especially in respect to a new and very valuable system of references. . . . The triennial Convention of the Protestant and Episcopal Church of the United States, sitting in Boston, has also discussed at length the question of permitting the use of the Revised Version, but the question was decided in the negative by a majority of both the clergymen and lay delegates.

Hudson Bay Expedition.

Mr. A. P. Lowe who was in charge of the Government expedition to Hudson Bay has returned to Ottawa after an absence of about one year and three months. He and his party wintered at Fullerton Inlet, the extreme northwest point of Hudson's Bay, and in July last came out by Hudson's Strait to Port Burwell, where the Neptune met the Eric, and received supplies of coal and provisions. The arrangements for the meeting between the two steamers were so perfect that they arrived within an hour of each other. Leaving Cumberland Sound on July 25, the "Neptune" pro-

ceeded north through Baffin's Bay to Cape Sabine, noted as the headquarters of so many polar and polar relief expeditions. It was there that fourteen out of twenty men of Greely's expedition perished of starvation. Beachy Island the headquarters of Sir John Franklin's party, and where also the Franklin relief expedition in 1858 passed their first winter, was visited, and many interesting relics of the ill-fated Franklin expedition were found. Only one American whaling vessel and four Dundee whalers were met with in Hudson's and Baffin's bays. The American whaler belongs to a company which has its headquarters in Hudson's Bay. There is no disposition whatever to resent or resist Canadian jurisdiction in those waters. On the contrary, it is welcomed as affording security and protection, and the American ship will enter alongside the Dominion steamer "Arctic," Captain Bernier's vessel, at Cape Fullerton, on the north-west coast of Hudson's Bay. The whale fishery seems to be pretty well depleted, as only three or four were seen during the cruise of the "Neptune." Mr. Low is satisfied that for three and a half months in the year the Hudson Straits are navigable for commercial purposes, during which time, it will be conceded, an immense amount of grain could be shipped to Europe via the Hudson's Bay route, where the long-projected railway constructed from Manitoba and the Territories to the west coast of that great inland sea.

The Abstainers Advantage.

Mr. T. P. Whittaker, a member of the British House of Commons, is also a managing director of the United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Institution, Mr. Whittaker has given much study to the value of total abstinence as an asset in life insurance. By comparing statistics extending over a half century in connection with his institution he finds that out of 100,000 persons alive at thirty years of age in the temperance and general sections respectively, something like 11,207 more abstainers than non-abstainers would be alive at seventy years of age. The difference in favor of the abstainers would be 5,193 at the age of eighty, and 533 at the age of ninety. According to a Standard Life Assurance table known as the "OM" table, the expectation of life of an assured male aged thirty is 35.1 years, whereas the expectation of the institution's temperance lives at that age is 38.8 years a difference of 3.7 years. Mr. Whittaker also finds that in cases where the insured live in unhealthy climates or engage in unhealthy occupations, the advantage of the abstainers is still more marked. Similar results have been noted in the experience of other insurance institutions. In this connection the *Montreal Witness* calls attention to an interesting comparison drawn some time ago between the statistics of two Friendly Societies the Rechabites and Oddfellows, both being composed of men in the same station of life, but the latter chiefly consisting of moderate drinkers. Taking the ten years from 1803 to 1902, the Oddfellows showed that the average number of days of sickness per member was between ten days, two hours, (minimum in 1897), and twelve days and six hours (maximum in 1900). The death rate was one in fifty three in 1893; one in eighty four in 1902. The average duration of sickness among the Rechabites during the same years was from six days and two hours (minimum in 1903), to seven days and fourteen hours (maximum in 1899); death rate in 1893, one in ninety; in 1902 one in a hundred and sixty one. The *Witness* adds: Insurance companies are very generally beginning, officially, to take cognizance of the value of abstinence. The "Insurance News" a prominent financial journal in the United States, sent to the head office of a large number of companies and organizations a query as to whether, other things being equal, the habitual user of intoxicants was as good a risk as the total abstainer. Out of forty two replies received, thirty nine replied to the first query in the negative, and in more or less vigorous terms denounced alcohol as an enemy to health. The remaining three considered "excessive indulgence" injurious. This is certainly a mighty advance since the days when the most radical medical men would merely declare that "the most perfect health was compatible with total abstinence from 'all intoxicating beverages,' and seems to suggest that the 'fanatics' and extremists" of whom we sometimes hear so much, are, after all has been said, among the wisest farthest seeing and most business like of patriots.