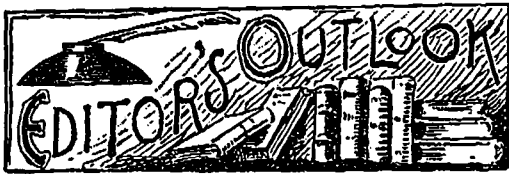




KINDLE the Yule fires, set ringing the chimes
Under the larches or blossoming limes,
Under blue tropical skies—or the gray
Dome of the north—breaks the glad Christmas day;
Bells, from your tall campaniles, ring clear—
Tell to the earth—"Merry Christmas is here."

Branches of holly and tassels of pine,
Cedar and laurel and mistletoe twine;
Stately young firs from the dim forest bring,
Fringes of palm from the groined arches swing.
Waits, with your seraphic voices draw near—
Carol it forth—"Merry Christmas is here."

Kindle the torches—loud carillons ring—
Hearts all aglow, to the altar, O bring:
Outpour the flagons of plenty, to ease
Pitiless hunger and wasting disease;
Herald it—echo it—throughout the sphere—
"Christmas, the world's blessed feast-day, is here!"



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THE attention of our readers is particularly drawn to our Clubbing List, containing the leading weeklies and monthlies published in Canada and the United States. By subscribing for the ILLUSTRATED you will obtain these periodicals at greatly reduced prices and also save yourselves the trouble of making two or more different remittances to the different publishers. We have not been able to make these favorable arrangements without considerable trouble and expense, but if by thus helping our patrons to obtain their periodicals at a cheaper rate we can convince them that we are always desirous of promoting their interests, we will be more than satisfied. Now is the time to subscribe and we fully expect that a very large number of our readers will avail themselves of the favorable opportunity thus offered them. Regarding the ILLUSTRATED we may say that it will be made more and more entertaining and instructive and to that end a serial story by a celebrated author will be published, commencing in our next issue; also special contributed articles of great interest. All the departments will be kept up to the high standard they have attained, and nothing will be wanting to make the ILLUSTRATED the most popular Family Magazine and the finest illustrated monthly published in the Dominion.

A Merry Christmas to all.

SINCE the meeting of the General Conference in Montreal last September, the Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto, makes another stride forward in its popular periodicals. A new paper for young people, with the progressive name "*Onward*," an eight-page, well illustrated weekly, is issued at the low price of 60 cents a year, singly—over 5 copies. 50 cents a year. It is edited by the Rev. Dr. Withrow, whose management of the *Methodist Magazine* and Sunday-school periodicals of the Methodist Church has been so successful.

THE Manitoba Government issued a few days ago its third crop bulletin, giving the result of the harvest. The wheat yield was 14,669,769 bushels; oats, 9,513,433; barley, 2,069,415. The average yield of wheat per acre was 20.1 bushels; of oats, 41.3; barley, 31.1. Even with the great shrinkage, caused by frost and continuous wet weather, the average yield per acre is far above the most favored states in the neighboring republic, while the quality is greatly superior. There is no doubt that, with the improvements in farming and farming machinery now being made, a few years will see our North-West the great wheat growing centre of this continent.

THE British farmer delegates have fulfilled their mission to this country. Ample opportunities were afforded them of gathering such information as would enable them to thoroughly enlighten their fellow-countrymen regarding the vast resources and capabilities of the Dominion for industrious settlers. At a dinner given the delegates by the mayor and citizens of Ottawa on the eve of their departure for home, they all spoke enthusiastically of the great pleasure they had derived from their visit, and were unstinted in their praise of our country. There is not the slightest doubt but that the visit of these representative men will be productive of much good, and will materially help to dispel the false impressions which most people in the old country unfortunately have regarding our climate and resources. While in Toronto the delegates visited the establishment of the Massey Manufacturing Co., and after a thorough inspection of the various departments, they expressed their surprise and astonishment at the immense proportions of the works, and the great pleasure they had experienced in their visit.

HON. GEORGE E. FOSTER, Minister of Finance, is now in the West Indies, negotiating for reciprocal trade with the various islands. This will open at least one new market for our agricultural produce and manufactures. The British West Indies take from the United States \$16,000,000 worth of produce annually, their principal purchases being: animals, \$307,000; bread and biscuits, \$297,000; corn and cornmeal, \$489,000; oats, \$60,000; wheat and flour, \$2,084,000; carriages, \$79,000; chemicals and drugs, \$82,000;

fish, \$96,000; hay, \$29,000; beef, \$200,000; pickled pork, \$605,000; lard, \$231,000; dairy products, \$362,000; vegetables, \$118,000; lumber and furniture, \$850,000. Our trade with these islands is, on the other hand, insignificant, amounting to about \$1,600,000. It will be thus seen that we will be able to prosecute a much more extensive trade with all the islands if Mr. Foster's mission is successful.

THE Canadian exports of live cattle during the season just closed, from the port of Montreal, have reached 123,627 head, being 37,959 head more than last year, and the largest of any previous year. Thirteen years ago the business of shipping live cattle to Great Britain was beginning to develop from its experimental stage; the exports in that year (1877) being 6,940 head. The following year the figures reached 9,000 head, and now it has assumed the gigantic proportions of 123,627 head as the result of the season's operations from Montreal alone. Strong efforts are being made by the United States to secure admission for American live cattle to the British markets, but the British Minister of Agriculture declares that neither threats nor blandishments will induce the Imperial Government to admit cattle which may possibly bring disease with them. Fortunately the market remains open to our live cattle, as nothing has occurred to shake the faith of the British authorities in the soundness of our stock.

THE Republicans in the United States have been hoisted with their own petard. In the States elections last month the Democrats carried the country by an overwhelming majority, the defeat of the Republicans being attributed mainly to the McKinley tariff bill. Among the defeated candidates was Major McKinley, the father of the obnoxious bill. Although it is too much to expect that the bill will be repealed in its entirety, still there is every reason to hope that it will be considerably modified and otherwise altered by the next Congress. A remarkable feature of the elections was the introduction of a new political factor in the shape of the National Farmers' Alliance and the election of a large number of candidates nominated by the farmers in opposition to the regular party nominees. The President of the Alliance reports that the next Congress will contain thirty-eight straight Alliance men, to which number must be added twelve or fifteen who will support Alliance measures. What the farmers' organizations particularly ask for is a fair adjustment of taxation so that the poor will not be oppressed and the rich benefited. They also ask for other reforms which are looked upon as socialistic in their character. It is apparent from the success which attended their efforts in electing to the next congress fifty men pledged to support their measures, that they have become thoroughly aroused to the necessity of concerted action for the protection and advancement of their own interests. The Democrats have secured a majority so great in the new House that they will be completely independent of the representatives of the Alliance, but if the two great par-