

## Nation Building.

BY REV. MALCOLM MCCORROR, M. A.

It is little more than a quarter of a century ago that the truth began to filter out into the older sections of the country that far away to the west of the "Big Sea water," there lay a land of prairie and mountains and forest rich in all the material resources for the building up of a great nation. There were many doubting Thomases who scouted the idea that the "Great Lone Land" would ever be anything more than a preserve sacred to the hunter and trapper and for those who sought for adventure far away from the haunts of men. But the men of faith and vision saw a different sight. They knew that the Great Creator makes no mistake and that this great western heritage had not been called into existence on the mere purposeless play of creative energy. They knew that these vast ranges were destined for something higher than the breeding ground of fur-bearing animals. They felt that this land was being kept in readiness for the overflow of the nation, and that the day was coming when a great stream of homeseekers, impelled by the ever-present need of bread, would flow from all parts of the world to Western Canada, even as the wild birds are driven by an instinctive force to the feeding grounds. They saw a vision, a great transformation scene. They saw the great prairies transformed as by magic into golden wheat fields, and the line of settlement steadily advancing westward and northward; they saw the great mountain solitudes penetrated by the steel highway and the everlasting hills yielding up their hidden treasures and the desert wastes dotted by towns and cities tenanted by thousands of happy and prosperous men and women. And more than that, the men of true prophetic vision resolved that the foundations of the great new western nation that was to be, should be laid in righteousness and that men would not forget the God whom they worshipped under other skies.

And it was, as it always is the men of vision who were right. The predictions of other years are being fulfilled and the visions of the men who, even in the darkest days, never doubted, are being realized. There are not a few remaining who rejoice that they were permitted to take some part in the foundation work, while some have fallen asleep. No man who knows Western Canada and who has in him the heart of a patriot can refrain from thanking God for what has been accomplished in nation building during the past quarter of a century. There has been great material development and, what is of still greater importance, the growing communities have been permeated by the leaven of the gospel and in spite of many hindrances and difficulties our Canadian and Canadian ideals have been steadily maintained.

But thoughtful men are feeling that the great testing time for the country is near at hand, and that the great problem by which the leaders in Church and State is being faced in maintenance of Canadian unity and of those moral and religious principles which have been the distinctive glory of the Empire and have given her a place of proud pre-eminence among the nations. For what is the situation to-day? We have now the only vacant land in this western hemisphere, and the eyes of the world are being turned toward Western Canada as never before. The Orient is looking with eager and hungry eyes across the Pacific to our western shores, and clamoring for admission. Into all parts of Europe the news has come to those struggling in hopeless serfdom of the land of bounty beyond the Atlantic. Into the dear old motherland the news has gone of comfort and speedy independence for those who are willing to toil. The wave that flows from Canada into the Western States has turned and our own exiled Canadian brothers, as well as those born under the stars and bars, are building up homes under the meteor flag. And what is more, the great "captains of industry" are seeing the opportunities for profitable investment and business is being extended in all directions. The announcement of another great trans-continental railway is but one of the signs of the times and an indication of what shrewd and far-seeing business men think of the future of the country. That the country has entered upon an era of rapid material development is patent to all.

And what does all this involve? Does it not mean a much more rapid increase in population than we have ever known and that a mixed multitude from all parts of the world will spread itself over our country? Does it not mean that the problems in statecraft and in education and missionary work in the past have been as child's play compared with those which we will speedily have to face? Does it not mean too that if Canada ever needed leaders in Church and State of large vision and noble outlook in order that the heart of the nation may be kept strong and true, and that the baser elements that work for weakness and decay may be kept under, she needs them today.

Look at the present situation. We have the Indian population and, although they are fading away every consideration of humanity demands that we shall deal generously and kindly with those into whose heritage we have entered. There

are the stolid Chinaman and the shifty Japanese, who do not present the most plastic material for Canadian citizenship. There is in the fertile plains of Southern Alberta a solid colony of 4000 Mormons whose political and religious ideals are very different from our own. There are foreigners from every country of Europe whose standards of living and social ideals are far below those that we have imbibed. There is the Donkhor, with his stolid fanaticism born of persecution and ignorance, and the Galician whose dense illiteracy is leavened too often by sentiments that are anti-British. And there is the rapidly increasing class who sneer at our old-fashioned Canadian ideals and stand for a greater liberty and license in relation to the laws of God and man.

No intelligent man needs to be told that material wealth will not alone make a nation great or that national greatness is more than a matter of counting heads. No sane man needs to be told that any national superstructure that is not built upon the solid bed-rock of righteousness is like a house built upon the sand, and is doomed to speedy ruin. And it is an axiomatic truth that unless this motley mix of heterogeneous elements is permeated by common ideals and made homogeneous by a great unifying force, the result will be simply an aggregation of discordant units without national cohesion or strength. It is plain to all that the assimilate and unifying forces must go steadily on until this raw material is built into the fibre of our national life.

Our past experience in Canada has been such as to make us hopeful for the future. The "Fathers of Confederation" saw that if we were ever to become anything more than a string of ill-jointed provinces with local jealousy and discord there must be a great unifying force and that we must be drawn together by the bond of common ideals and a common national aim. And how splendidly their dream of a united Canada, and of a Canada drawn closer to the great mother heart has been realized, let the events of the past few years tell.

And if we are to attain to the splendid national possibilities which lie before us this assimilative process must go steadily on. A great deal has been said about the separation of Church and State but this is a work in which Church and State must heartily join their forces and work toward a common end, the Church working for the evangelization and the State for the education of the whole mass. The state must see to it that the school is planted in every community and that those foreign communities which resent the school as a needless luxury involving them in an extra tax are not allowed to remain in ignorance. Every school in the land must be made a well-spring of Christian and Canadian patriotism and a university for the training of citizens. And the Church must see to it that no corner of the land is left unmanured, and that at every point the forces that debase and destroy are grappled with, and made to retreat before the forces which are divine. The teacher and the preacher may stand out less prominently in the public view than some others, his remuneration may be less than can be gained in other callings, but there are no callings which offer such splendid opportunities for the moulding of our national life and the working out of our national ideals.

May we not all cherish the vision of a great united Canada, of a country filled with a people loyal to all the best traditions of the past but with faces set steadfastly toward the future, of a country loyal to itself and to the great world-girdling empire and more than all loyal to Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords.—The Presbyterian.

## The Lost Vision.

BY REV. S. E. WISHARD, D. D.

The Scriptures abound in teaching concerning the lost vision of man. They give also the explanation of this perilous condition. "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them." The vision of divine things has been lost through unbelief and disobedience, and the blind love to have it so.

Men have lost the vision of God. They do not see his all-loving power that reaches down to their greatest necessities and perils. They have lost the vision of his holy character, and "have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like of corruptible man." Blind unbelief represents God by a visible image, or if the idol is too coarse for cultured infidelity, the imagination paints the divine One to suit the depraved views of the darkened mind. The beauty and excellence of his glorious majesty are invisible to the minds that see only earthly things. Not having seen him by faith, there is no transformation into his likeness. The inspired representations of God are to them as lifeless tales. They have lost all power of vision, can see "no beauty in him that they should desire him." They have never seen the light of that countenance that has blessed life and brought unutterable joy to the souls

that can say and sing, "One thing I know, that whereas I was born blind, now I see."

Having lost the vision of God, man has lost the vision of truth. "He has changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever." He has not only lost the vision of the truth concerning God; but the truth which God has revealed concerning man—his condition, character and destiny.

The tremendous motives for holy living and serving, which God has revealed in his truth, have not taken hold of those who prefer to walk in darkness. Neither smoking Sinai, nor darkened Calvary, the scene over which God hung the curtain of night at noonday, has fallen upon the lost vision of the sinner. Onward he moves to doom, while heaven and earth conspire to reveal his danger and halt his downward steps.

God out of sight, truth undiscovered, he has lost the vision of heaven and glory. He is as blind to the mighty attractions that lie in the spiritual world beyond as a Hottentot is to the marvelous revelations of the telescope. Of that walking in the divine likeness he has never caught a glimpse. Of the glory which shall be revealed in us he has no perception. The sufferings of this present time only more darkly becloud his already blinded mind instead of being stepping-stones to the glory beyond.

Walking in sin, the natural man's vision is closed to the priceless gift of spiritual liberty in Jesus Christ. He regards the Christian life as a bondage. Were he a child of God, he fears he would have most repulsive duties laid upon him. Having no taste for spiritual service, no discovery of its liberty, he sees only through carnal eyes and judges with a carnal judgment. His darkened vision misrepresents God and his service. He chooses rather the slavery, the oppressive bondage of sin, and wears his chains, while the servants of the King walk at liberty. He can never know the liberty of the children of God until his lost vision is restored. There is One who came to open the eyes of the blind, to restore the lost vision. Having finished his work, he has sent the Holy Spirit to anoint the eyes of the blind, to take the precious things of Christ and show them to the soul that has never seen them. "He openeth the eyes of the blind." He restores the spiritual vision. He that was blind then sees for the first time the beauty of the Lord. Having his vision restored, his enraptured soul cries out: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."—Herald and Presbyterian.

## The Cedars of Lebanon.

BY MRS. GHOSN EL-HOWIE.

The frequent references to the cedars of Lebanon in the Bible naturally create a desire on the part of tourists to the Holy Land to visit these relics of antiquity. Comparatively few transitory visitors, however, ever realize this cherished wish, for the tourist season is over before the snows are sufficiently melted to make possible a visit to them. Moreover, in favorable circumstances at least two days extra would need to be added to the itinerary, according to the place of departure, whether Beyrouth, Damascus or Baalbec, in order to reach and visit them with any comfort.

These famous trees are situated on the western slope of Lebanon, on a kind of plateau more than 6000 feet above the Mediterranean, at the head of Wady Kadiha, one of the wildest and most romantic gorges in the Lebanon. They comprise a group of some 400 trees, most of them of comparatively modern growth. The hoary giants of Solomon's days are now very few, perhaps not more than a dozen. The girth of the largest is about forty-one feet and the height nearly 100 feet. The branches extend horizontally from the trunk and spread forth a noble canopy under which man and beast find agreeable shade. The prophet Ezekiel is so intimately acquainted with the characteristics of the cedar that he finds in it a most appropriate figure unto which to liken "the Assyrian," "his height was excelled above all the trees of the field," "his boughs were multiplied and his branches became long." "Thus he was fair in his greatness in the length of his branches."—Ezekiel, 31.

The fruit of the cedar is a light-colored compact cone, about four inches in length and seven inches in circumference. It rests in an upright position on the branches, supported on a little wooden stem. Many hundreds of them are preserved among the valued souvenirs of travel in the Holy Land, in the cabinets of European and American travellers.

It is a grand experience to sit under the "shadowing shroud" (Ezek., 31: 3,) the dense shade of those solemnly majestic trees, and look up into the rich, close, dark-green canopy above; the awful silence and impressiveness of their stately presence fills one with a feeling of awe and reverence that is akin to worship, and one can understand something of the spirit which led the heathen to choose groves for the worship of their idols, (1 Kings 15: 13,) and the awful snare that they became