

# Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,  
VOLUME LXI.

{ THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR  
VOLUME L.

Vol. XV.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 1899.

No. 15

**The British Navy.** The fact that Great Britain is this year adding so materially to the strength of her navy indicates plainly that, in spite of the peace conference which the Czar has called, the British Government feels that it is still as necessary as ever to be prepared for contingencies whether of peace or war. During the present year it is expected that not less than fifty ships of war of all kinds will enter the navy, and the naval forces will exceed one hundred and ten thousand men. Among the new war vessels will be the five great battleships, Albion, Canopus, Glory, Goliath and Ocean, totalling 54,750 tons, and costing £5,000,000; fourteen protected cruisers and 31 unprotected ships. Moreover, six new armored ships will be begun, making a total of 32 armored vessels, 17 protected vessels and 49 unarmored vessels completing, advancing or beginning. That is, 1899 will see the stupendous number of 98 British warships in hand, representing an outlay of \$175,000,000. It is stated that there has been a change in the policy of the Admiralty in respect to auxiliary cruisers and that the Government will withdraw the subsidies to certain fast passenger steamers granted on condition that they may be taken over for the use of the navy in time of war. The Admiralty view of the case appears to be that Great Britain is rapidly selling her sailing tonnage and replacing it with steamships, which will have the effect of confining ocean traffic to the well-known routes, and that in the event of hostilities, these routes would be still further simplified, so that the problem of commercial defence mainly concerns the protection of the great oversea routes. The Admiralty proposes to accomplish this partly by squadrons on convoy duty and partly by flying squadrons operating from bases commanding these routes. This view, however, is criticised and American naval officers are quoted to show the immense service which auxiliary cruisers, as scouts, can do for regular squadrons. Admiral Sampson's statement that the American Line steamers proved indispensable in the late war with Spain is particularly referred to.

**The Plains of Abraham.** Some interest attaches to the question as to what use the historic Plains of Abraham, in the vicinity of Quebec city, will be devoted. The land is now held as public property under a ninety-nine years lease from the Ursuline nuns to the British Government and transferred to the Canadian Government. This lease expires May 1, 1901, and the ownership of the property reverts to the nuns. As the land is beautifully situated in the immediate vicinity of the city, its value for building and residential purposes is of course very considerable. Already, it is said, those who are acting as advisers of the nuns are laying out the property in streets and building lots,—that is, we suppose, on paper. There would doubtless be a general protest against devoting this historic ground to such purposes, and probably what is being done is not so much with the intention of actually cutting up the property and selling it, off in building lots, as of calling attention to its commercial value and provoking a public agitation in favor of making the Plains of Abraham permanently public property, and so inducing the Government to pay a large price for it. It is said, however, that the lease contains no stipulation giving the Government the option of renewing it. At its expiration the property reverts to the nuns. If the price set upon it shall prove to be exorbitant, the Government can secure it by process of expropriation.

**The Philippines.** The military operations of the United States in the Philippines has been so far successful that Aguinaldo's capital,

Malolos, has been taken and his forces driven back in a demoralized condition. Under these circumstances a proclamation has been issued by the Philippine Commission of the United States to the people of the Islands. The proclamation assures the Filipinos of the cordial good-will and fraternal feeling toward them of the President and people of the United States and asserts that the object of the United States Government—apart from the solemn obligations assumed toward the family of nations by its acceptance of the sovereignty over the Islands—is the well-being, prosperity and happiness of the Philippine people and their elevation to a position among the most civilized peoples of the world. The points of cardinal importance include a declaration that the supremacy of the United States will be enforced throughout the archipelago; that the Filipinos will be granted the most ample liberty and self-government reasonable with the maintenance of a wise, just, stable, effective and economical administration of public affairs and compatible with the sovereign and international rights and the obligations of the United States; the civil rights of the Philippine people will be guaranteed; religious freedom will be assured and all persons shall have equal standing in the eyes of the law. The question of the collection of taxes and their proper application, the improving of means of transportation, public works, schools, foreign commerce, government reforms are also enlarged upon. The effect of this proclamation will be watched with interest. Submission sooner or later to the supremacy of the United States is of course inevitable for the Filipinos, and it may be that the time has come already when a considerable part of the people are ready to recognize this and accept what is offered them. But this is uncertain, and at all events there is little doubt but that Aguinaldo and his lieutenants will carry on for sometime a guerilla warfare which must prove troublesome and expensive to the United States. The American Republic may do a great deal for the people of the Philippines if it will only give them of its best, and if it shall give its worst the Filipinos may have little reason for gratitude for American intervention. The New York 'Times' recognizes this when it says: "Our greatest danger is the danger of politics. Every incompetent we send to the Philippines in the guise of a public servant, on account of his 'pull' at home, every American who goes there 'on the make' armed with special privileges which exempt him from the operation of equal rules, every example of Algerism, in a word, that we show to the Filipinos will retard the pacification of the islands far more than the loss of a pitched battle. We must make our despotism just."

**The Dominion Parliament.** It is evident that our Legislators at Ottawa have lost none of that talking ability which has made them famous. Possibly some of the oratory with which the walls of Parliament resound may not reach the Ciceronian standard of excellence, but what it may lack in quality it is to be hoped is more than made up in volume, for certainly in respect to quantity the Parliamentary oratory of Canada leaves nothing to be desired. Speeches of from four to five hours in length are comparatively common and in some cases the orator finds it necessary to occupy an additional hour or so in order fully to embosom himself on the subject with which he is inspired. The longest speech made in the House so far this session—and one may be permitted to hope that it will not be exceeded—was delivered by Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, who occupied six hours, principally in an attack upon the department of the Interior and its Minister, with especial reference to the administration of affairs in the Yukon district. The

next longest speech was that of the Hon. Mr. Sifton, the Minister of the Interior, who occupied some five hours and a half in replying to Sir Hibbert. After all this talk it does not appear that a great deal of light has been thrown upon the subject. Sir Hibbert Tupper has charged that the Yukon business has been badly mismanaged, that the men placed in official position there were either incompetent or dishonest, or both, that there has been great dissatisfaction among the miners and that from complaints and charges made by many persons against the Government officials in the Yukon it appeared that the latter had been guilty of fraud and corruption in many instances. The Minister of the Interior, in his reply, complained that Sir Hibbert had not formulated his charges in any definite manner, but had made accusations on the authority of persons whose names were not given. Mr. Sifton contended that, though doubtless mistakes and irregularities might have occurred in the Yukon, yet the Government had employed every means in its power to secure a proper administration of affairs. Considering the remoteness of the district and the absence of means of communication, it had been necessary to intrust the management of affairs in the Yukon almost entirely to the chief officials, and the fitness of the men selected for these positions had been recognized by leading men in both political parties. The discussion of the subject was continued on the part of the Opposition by Mr. Borden, member for Halifax, and on the part of the Government by Mr. Fraser, member for Guysborough.

**Wireless Telegraphy.** Wireless telegraphy represents a new scientific achievement which may have results of the most important character. The possibility of transmitting telegraphic messages by means of electric currents, without the use of wires or cables, has been known for some years, and experiments have gone some way toward demonstrating the feasibility of its adaptation to practical use. During the stormy weather of the past winter, it is stated, two lightships near Goodwin Sands, off the coast of England, were able by this means to exchange messages when communication by any other means was impossible. The inventor—or at least one of the inventors—of the system is Signor Marconi, an Italian. Especial attention has been lately called to the invention by the fact that by means of it messages have been transmitted between France and England. The points between which the messages were exchanged by the wireless system were Boulogne and South Foreland Light, the distance being thirty-two miles. How the result is produced we have not seen explained—except that it is by means of the action of electricity operating through two very sensitive instruments. Marconi is said to compare the action to that of one tuning-fork in vibration upon another. A vertical conductor or vibrator is used, at least in some circumstances. Experiments are said to have shown that intervening hills do not effect the transmission of the electric current. Whether or not wireless telegraphy will be feasible for long distances is doubtful, but Signor Marconi is reported as saying that he thinks it possible that the time will come when messages will be sent across the ocean without the intervention of cables.

—The invitations to the Peace Conference, which were consigned to the Dutch Government for distribution have been issued. The following Governments have received invitations through their representatives at the Hague: Great Britain, Russia, Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Turkey, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Luxemburg, Servia, Roumania, Montenegro, Greece, Switzerland, the United States, Siam, Persia, China and Japan.