

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LXI.

{ THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR
VOLUME I.

Vol. XV.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 1899.

No. 1.

The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. There has been of late a good deal of talk of the abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, or at least such a modification of the treaty as is necessary to permit the construction and control of a Nicaraguan Canal by the United States. It appears indeed to be beyond doubt that negotiations, with that end in view, will be opened at an early day. By the terms of this treaty, which was negotiated in 1850, it was agreed between the Governments of Great Britain and the United States, that neither would obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over the proposed Nicaraguan ship canal, that neither would ever erect or maintain any fortifications commanding the same or in the vicinity thereof, or occupy, colonize or assume dominion over Nicaragua or any part of Central America. The Government at Washington now desires to construct and control a canal across the isthmus, and, with this in view, is understood to be seeking such a modification of the treaty as is necessary to the carrying of that purpose into effect. It does not seem probable that Great Britain will oppose the policy of the United States in this matter. In view of her American possessions and her large commercial interests, Great Britain might not unreasonably insist upon an equal share with the United States in the construction and control of the Canal. But probably the British Government considers that the interests which it represents will be sufficiently secured, with the exclusive ownership and control of the work vested in the United States. Commercially Great Britain will benefit as much by the Canal as any other nation. It will cost \$150,000,000 perhaps \$200,000,000, will probably have to compete with the Panama Canal, and its construction is hardly likely to prove a very profitable venture financially. The leading English newspapers on the Government side favor the abrogation of the treaty as reasonable concession to a friendly power, and those of the opposition, while they consider that the concession to be asked would involve the surrender by Great Britain of valuable rights for which compensation in some form should be received, are still not disposed to oppose the principle of American construction and control of the Canal.

Trouble in Transvaal. Apparently more trouble is brewing in the South African Dutch republic. The relations between the Government of the Transvaal and the Uitlanders, as the foreign population of the country is called, never harmonious, have assumed a highly belligerent character, and a collision between the British in South Africa and the Boers of the Transvaal is not very unlikely to occur as an outcome of the present situation. This it appears that the more violent among the Boers desire. A Transvaal paper, the "Rand Post" is quoted as saying: "We advise upon a fixed act of war. Let the women and children on the English side be sent away from the city, and with them those persons evilly disposed to us. Then let Johannesburg be destroyed and the perpetrators of the turbulences here be taken and thrown into the shafts of their own mines. Let Johannesburg be converted into a rubbish heap as a tombstone to the authors of our troubles." One cannot but sympathize with the Boers in their desire to pursue a quiet pastoral life, untroubled by the problems which a mixed population and the conditions of what is called advanced civilization involve. They want no mining towns, like Johannesburg, and no Uitlander population within the borders of their republic, and they will not modify their laws and institutions to accommodate and satisfy the foreign population (chiefly English and engaged in mining) which is now comparatively large and possessed of much wealth. This wealth

is heavily taxed for the benefit of the republic, while its possessors have little or no influence in determining its expenditure. The Uitlanders loudly complain that they are oppressed by the Boers, while the latter are exasperated at the presence of the foreigners whom they would like to bundle bag and baggage out of the country. The Boers and their forefathers have been a long time in Africa. They are a hardy, brave and religious people, and it certainly seems as if they have a right, if any body has, to realize their own ideals as to life and government in that bit of the great continent which they claim as their country. Just what has led up to the present acute stage in the relations between Boers and Uitlanders does not appear. But matters have been brought to a head by the killing of an Englishman by a Boer policeman. This killing, which the Transvaal authorities call manslaughter, the Uitlanders call murder, and, through the British Consul at Johannesburg, they have sent a petition on the subject to the Queen.

A Chinese Regiment. British officers and British discipline have proved quite effective, as all the world has seen, in transforming the Egyptian fellah into a very respectable soldier, and the Egyptian fellah, as all the world knows, was not looked upon as first class raw material for an army. Now it appears that "Sergeant What's-his-name," having succeeded so well with the Egyptian, is to be permitted to try his hand on the Chinaman. A recent London despatch says that a staff of British officers is en route to Wei-Hai-Wei to organize the first Chinese regiment ever mustered into the British army. The regiment, it is said, is intended primarily for duty at Wei-Hai-Wei, the port on the north coast of the Shan-Tung peninsula, recently ceded to Great Britain for use as a naval station. The 1,000 men required will all be secured from the province of Shan-Tung within the ten mile British limit. The Shan-Tung mountaineer, living as he does in a rather rigorous climate, is said to be hardy and of fine physique, fearless and thoroughly amenable to discipline. It seems quite possible therefore that with the necessary discipline and equipment, such material, which is abundant in the northern provinces of the Empire, should be converted into a formidable army for the defence of the ancient Empire. But if the forces of China are to be turned to such account, it is evident that it must be by some power from without the Empire, since no such ability resides in the Chinese Government.

The Italian Government and the Vatican. The Italian Council of State has just given a decision in a case involving important financial considerations between the Italian Government and the Vatican. When in 1870 the Italian Government took possession of Rome, it undertook to pay each year into the papal treasury between \$600,000 and \$700,000 to serve as a civil list fund for the Pope. Neither the present Pontiff nor his predecessor, however, has ever drawn any of this money, taking the ground that to do so would imply a recognition of the present condition of things in Italy and of the abolition of the temporal power of the papacy. This situation has been made a ground of appeal to the faithful for financial support, it being represented that unless their contributions were generous the papacy would be obliged to accept the money assigned as a civil list fund by the Italian Government and thus forfeit its independence by placing the Pope in the pay of the Government, in the same way as every other Italian bishop and priest. Sometimes a child which in a fit of bad temper has refused what has been set before it, finds its feelings still more deeply wounded

when the despised food is promptly removed. It appears to have been a good deal that way with the Vatican in its disposition toward the money offered it by the Government. The Pope did not expect his refusal to touch the money to be taken quite seriously. The Vatican understood that though the Pope did not draw his civil list money, it remained to his credit at compound interest and payable on demand whenever he might see fit to make use of it. This comfortable assurance has proved delusive. Last year for the first time, in drawing up a statement of the budget of the holy See, mention was made of these accumulations of the papal civil list—amounting to about \$15,000,000—remaining in the treasury of the Italian Government. But the Government lost no time in pointing out that there was no such sum as \$15,000,000 in its treasury to the credit of the Pope. It took the ground that inasmuch as there is statutory limitation at the close of every five years, the only sums to the credit of the Pontiff were the accumulated annuities of the last five years, and that the papacy had forfeited all right to any other moneys payable under the terms of the treaty of 1870. The papacy at once appealed to the Council of State, and the latter has just given a decision, sustaining the position of the Government as against the Vatican.

Penny Postage. By proclamation of Postmaster-General Mulock, important changes in Canadian letter rates were brought into effect on Christmas day. These changes do not affect postal rates within Canada or with the United States, but they involve a reduction, from five cents to two cents per half ounce, on letters sent from any part of Canada to any place in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, also on letters to British India, Newfoundland, Natal, Jamaica, British Guiana, British Honduras, British East Africa, the Niger Coast Protectorate, the Niger Companies' territories, Uganda, Aden, Ascension, Sarawak, Malay States, Johore. We have grown accustomed to the triumphant declaration that modern science has made communication between all parts of the globe so easy and so speedy, that distance has been well nigh annihilated, but now we seem to be in need of a stronger hyperbole to indicate the degree of progress which has been reached, for so far as the cost of postage is concerned, it looks as though distance had been reduced to a minus quantity. The Canadian citizen can now write to his friend in India at a cost of two cents for postage, but if he desires to send a letter to a neighboring town or village, he must pay fifty per cent. more. The change just effected in postal rates can hardly fail to lead to other changes, including a reduction to a two cent letter rate throughout the Dominion and with the United States. It will be observed that, though a large number of the British Colonies are included in the reciprocal two cent rate system, there are important omissions which include Cape Colony, New Zealand and the Australian colonies. The rate of postage in Australia is now two pence half penny, and at present those colonies do not see their way clear to reduce it, nor do they care to adopt an imperial rate of letter postage lower than the domestic rate.

Since the above paragraph was written a despatch from Ottawa announces that from the first of the year the reduction of postage rates on letters from three to two cents is to apply within the Dominion, as well as between Canada and the United Kingdom and other parts of the British Empire mentioned above. The Government is enabled to make this important change in virtue of legislation secured at the last session of Parliament, and the first of the year had been fixed upon as the appropriate time for its introduction. By the terms of existing postal arrangements with the United States the reduction will apply to letters mailed in Canada to that country, so that it is now possible for anyone in Canada, at a cost of two cents, to send a letter to any part of the continent north of Mexico, to the British Isles, to India or to any of the colonies mentioned above as included in the imperial penny postage arrangement. This will be a boon to many people. Besides being of large advantage to business men, it will promote more frequent communication among friends and tend to increase largely the volume of correspondence. The change will at first necessarily be attended with considerable shrinkage in the revenue from postal duties and it will be interesting to observe to what extent the deficit will be made good by the increased volume of business.