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Mr. Winston Churchill who is now a member of the British House of Commons, and whose despatches and experiences as a war correspondent in South Africa are fresh in the memory of all, is now on this side the Atlantic on a lecturing tour, in the course of which he has visited Montreal and Ottawa, and will probably appear in some other Canadian cities. Mr. Churchill, of course, has not escaped the ubiquitous newspaper reporter, and he has not refused to talk about South African affairs. He is represented as not feeling any alarm in reference to the present military situation, but believes that Lord Kitchener should be furnished with the means of bringing the present sanguinary struggle to a close as speedily as possible, since the prolongation of hostilities and the Boer claim for independence in the Transvaal and the Orange State serves to keep Cape Colony in a turmoil of excitement, for Dutch colonists naturally sympathize strongly with the people of their own race. As soon as the war is over, Mr. Churchill says, the Transvaal will become a loyal colony as there will be an increasing majority of Outlanders in the country. It will be different, however, with the Orange State, which is essentially a pastoral country, populated principally by people of Dutch descent. Mr. Churchill regards the Boer commander, Christian de Wet, as a leader of magnificent ability, and he does not place much reliance on the stories which represent that large numbers of the Boers have been recently killed in battle. He never saw large numbers of them killed and does not think that the Boers are any braver or more willing to be killed now than they were five months ago. Mr. Churchill bears testimony to the bravery and excellence of the Canadian soldiers and has a good word for the British Tommy Atkins who, he says, is the best fighting man the world has ever produced. Nor has Mr. Churchill any sympathy with the charges of inefficiency made against British officers who, as the casualty list showed, had gone bravely up against the enemy and freely lost their lives in the performance of their duty. One can appreciate Mr. Churchill's sentiments towards the British officers, but it might not be amiss to remind him that no one has called in question their courage and their ability to die with their face to the foe. But reckless bravery is far from being all that is required in an able officer. If these brave fellows had only some of the remarkable ability of the Boers, to fight without getting either killed or captured, it would add greatly to their value as defenders of the Empire.

In accordance with an act adopted by the Canadian Parliament, providing for the conditional liberation of convicts in the penitentiaries and other prisons of the Dominion, what is known as the ticket-of-leave system has been on trial in this country for the past year or two. The report of the Minister of Justice in reference to the experiment is in a general way favorable. In the administration of the system so far much has been left to the discretion of the Minister. Certain principles, however, have been observed in issuing the tickets-of-leave. Unless under very exceptional circumstances they are in all cases issued to first offenders only; that is to say, they are not as a rule granted to prisoners who are serving their second term. In advancing the issue of a ticket-of-leave, regard has also been had to the age of the convict, the nature of the crime, and such circumstances connected therewith as would enable the Minister to judge whether or not the case was one in which there existed the probability of relapse on the part of the convict. Information has also been obtained from the warden of the penitentiary or prison and from other available sources, as to the applicant's character and conduct. In short

the utmost care has been exercised to prevent the granting of these tickets-of-leave to those not found to be entitled to them on account of their antecedents or their conduct in prison or both. The first ticket was issued in 1899 and the system has not therefore been in operation long enough to justify any confident conclusion, but the minister considers that the results have been satisfactory. During the year following the issue of the first ticket 145 tickets-of-leave were granted, of which 115 were issued to penitentiary convicts, the other 30 being issued to persons confined in jails and other public prisons. Of the total number (145) four have been forfeited as provided by the Act, on account of the holder being convicted of an indictable offence and one has been cancelled for a breach of its conditions, making a total of five licenses revoked, a proportion of 3.45 per cent. of the whole number issued. The very small number of licenses forfeited and cancelled shows that at least the great majority of the recipients of this favor were not unworthy of it and leads to the hope that by administering the Act with proper caution the result in the future will be such as fully to justify its enactment.

The Government and those entrusted with the duty of caring for the public health appear to be alive to the importance of taking vigilant measures to prevent the spread of smallpox which has appeared in Westmorland county. The situation is a serious one as it is, and one that, without the exercise of the utmost vigilance, is not unlikely to become much more so. So far the disease has been confined principally to the north shore of Westmorland. It has been of so mild a type as not to be easily distinguished from chickenpox, and though there have been some fifty or sixty cases, it is said that few if any deaths have resulted from the disease. But the very mildness of the disease has been favorable to its propagation, since those affected with it did not in some cases know from what they were suffering, their illness in many cases it would appear not being such as to prevent them moving around, and pains were not taken to isolate the patients as would have been done if the disease had been of a pronounced character. There seems, however, to be no doubt that the disease is smallpox of a mild type, and there is no assurance that it will not at any time take on a virulent form. It is said that the greater number of the persons who have had the disease in Westmorland county have recovered and that there are now only some ten or fifteen cases which are being carefully watched, and at the same time every practicable precaution is being taken to prevent the spread of the disease. But it is only within the past week or so that these very necessary precautions have been observed, and there is therefore great danger that the contagion may have already been carried to different parts of the country. Under all the circumstances physicians and local boards of health cannot be too vigilant in watching for symptoms of smallpox or too insistent upon isolation in any case in which the disease is suspected.

Dr. Joseph Parker, the famous London preacher, has been following the example of Mr. C. M. Sheldon in an experiment designed to show the world how a daily newspaper should be conducted. The editor of the London Daily Sun was shrewd enough to perceive that it would be an excellent advertising scheme to have his paper edited for a week by a preacher and religious author of world-wide reputation. Whether the great preacher has manifested an equal shrewdness in this matter, is more doubtful. From all accounts, it does not appear that there are many persons who consider Dr. Parker's brief career as a daily journalist, an unqualified

success. It appears to have been about as successful, however, as Mr. Sheldon's was, and that perhaps is as much as could have been expected. There is little value in such experiments, since they establish nothing, except perhaps the fact, which every sensible person should be able to recognize without any such demonstration, that the successful journalist must have training and experience in his work as well as men of other callings. A daily paper edited by Dr. Joseph Parker for a week, as an experiment in the way of conducting a great daily on lines which the consciences of Christian men could approve, is quite sure to have a large patronage and to pay its way for that week. Public curiosity in the matter, if nothing else, carries it that far. But such an experiment does little toward solving the problem of how to produce for fifty-two weeks in the year, such a daily paper as the Christian conscience can approve, and as the public will so support as to make the enterprise a financial success. A real daily paper setting for itself a high moral standard, and making an honest endeavor, through summer's heat and winter's cold, to live up to that standard, although it may not attain to perfection, is worth immeasurably more in the interests of pure and wholesome journalism than any number of ephemeral products resulting from such experiments as those of Mr. Sheldon and Dr. Parker.

If full credence is to be placed in the latest despatches from Peking, gratifying progress is being made toward a settlement of existing difficulties between the Chinese government and the associated Powers. One important step in advance was taken when the nations reached an agreement as to the particulars which should be embodied in their demand upon the Chinese government. The joint-note of the powers embodied a demand for the maintenance, under conditions to be determined by the Powers, of the interdiction against the importation of arms as well as of materials employed exclusively for the manufacture of arms and ammunition; suitable indemnities for the Governments, societies, companies and individuals, as well as for Chinese who during the late occurrences have suffered in person or in property in consequence of their being in the service of foreign governments; the destruction of the forts which might obstruct free communication between Peking and the sea; the right to the military occupation of certain points, to be determined by an understanding among the Powers, in order to maintain open communication between the capital and the sea; the right for each Power to maintain a permanent guard for its legation, and to put the diplomatic quarter in a defensible condition, the Chinese having no right to reside in that quarter. The note was in other respects of so strenuous a character that it was generally supposed that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to secure China's acceptance of the terms presented. But if the Peking despatch of Dec. 30, can be accepted as correct, Prince Ching and Li Hung Chang have communicated to the foreign envoys an imperial edict in which the Emperor declares that China accepts the joint note and authorizes Prince Ching and Li Hung Chang to negotiate and to ask for a suspension of hostilities. It is further stated that the Emperor's instructions are to agree fully to the note, but to endeavor to get the best terms possible, particularly in the matter of limiting the number of the legation guards and also as to the places where these are located. This is so different from what was expected that Mr. Wu, the Chinese Minister at Washington, is represented as being at a loss what construction to place upon the despatch, and as being on the whole inclined to believe that the despatch overstates the facts, and that what the Emperor has directed is that Chinese plenipotentiaries proceed to discuss in a friendly manner with the envoys the terms of the agreement with a view to obtain the best terms possible along certain specified lines and also in others not contained in the cablegram.