



MR. PRESTON AND THE MISSIONARIES.

I SEE that my friend, Mr. W. T. R. Preston, is giving the missionary authorities some advice as the result of two years' friendly observation of the work of their representatives in Japan. There is no indication, as I write, of the manner in which they intend to treat this advice; but if I were responsible for the management of Christian missions in Japan, I would consider very seriously what Mr. Preston has to say. He is not a hostile critic; but he is a fiend on efficiency. He does hate to see work botched or neglected. Possibly he sets too high a standard of excellence for missionary achievement; but that would be a reason why his advice as to methods should be considered rather than one why it should be disregarded. They might not attain to the superlative success he has in view; but they would be on the right road as far as they could breast the hill.

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INCIDENTALLY I have come to the conclusion that Mr. Preston is a poor politician. The Conservative press has taught us to think of "hug-the-machine" Preston as the incarnation of experienced and adroit party chicanery. He is pictured for us as the man behind the machine, the shrewd and long-headed schemer who knows all the dark and devious ways of party manipulation, the "handy man" of the Liberals when in Opposition and their favourite child when in power. And, naturally, I along with the rest of the reading public had allowed some of this chatter to soak in. I thought of Preston as shrewd and clever—a past master in the arts of political strategy. But I am beginning to have my doubts. That he was miraculously successful in keeping life in the old party organisation when the Liberals were in Opposition and as poor as the proverbial church mice, is a matter of history; but that is about all there is to the legend. Certainly in those days, he did not win his victories with the long purse; for his party did not possess it. Yet he did win victories—though often only "moral" ones. Is it not possible that he kept alive the saving fire of enthusiasm in the breasts of his fellow workers by that tireless zeal for fighting which now leads him into every "fracas" that comes his way?

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ONE would have thought, for instance, that Preston had troubles enough of his own these stormy times without stirring up the missionary churches to regard him with a questioning—if not a hostile

—eye. To begin with, the Conservative party of Canada—no inconsiderable body of men—look upon him with suspicion. He has had their antagonism practically all his life. Then he goes to London to enjoy a nice office given him by his grateful party friends. You would have said: "That fixes Preston, at least as long as the Liberals are in power." But the first thing we know, he is the centre of a storm in the immigration department, and good old Alf. Jury is out here giving evidence against him. It seems incredible; but it is so written on the records. Now how do you account for that? Well, we find pretty soon that, whatever else may be said about it, Preston has obviously been doing some hard hitting. Instead of lying back luxuriously in a sinecure, he has been keeping up his pugilistic exercises. I am as far as possible from expressing an opinion as to the rights or wrongs of that business. The impression that Lord Strathcona was against Preston has done him infinite harm with the Canadian people who regard their High Commissioner as about the best national product. But it all bears out my belief that Preston is a mighty poor politician. He doesn't even know a "soft snap" when he sees it.

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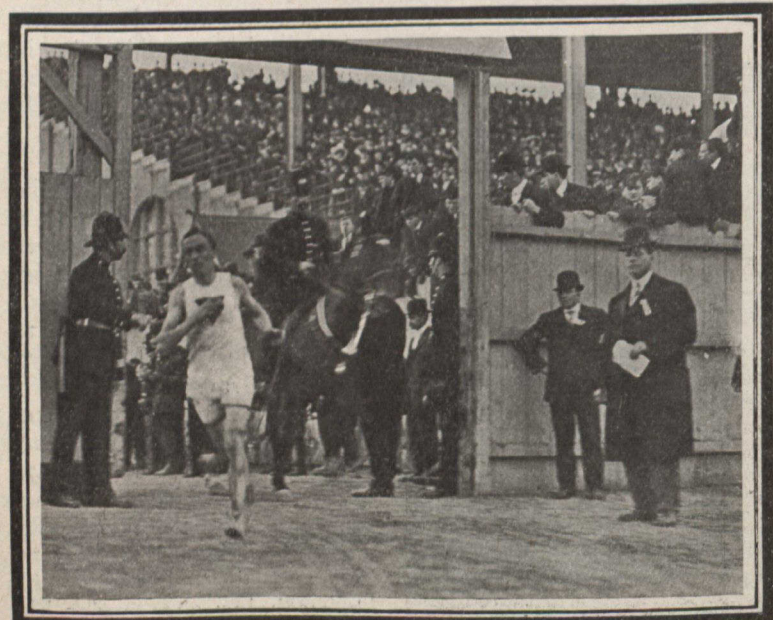
IN that London business, he managed to get foul of organised labour, too—something no truly good politician would ever dream of doing—and, in the end, he was transplanted to Japan. Now he comes home from Japan with the scars of another fight on him. There he has been defying established trade conditions and seems to have upset nearly everything in the kingdom except the Mikado. There is a good deal of mystery about this part of the business; but it is rumoured that much will come out when Parliament meets. Suffice it to say that it is more and more trouble for the gentleman who was supposed to have retired peacefully to his reward in London a dozen years ago. But is his cup of troubles full? Not for a minute. While he is waiting for this affair to develop, he "takes on" the missionary leaders of Canada. Christian missions in Japan are no more his business than that of any other Christian. He may have his opinion of the way in which they are managed; but there was no especial call for him to get the preachers down on him by assailing methods which they have established and followed for many a year with much boasted success. But that point of view does not seem to have occurred to the pugnacious Preston. He saw what he regarded as a mistake, and he immediately pointed it out—through a megaphone. He is the "enfant terrible" of Canada.

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BUT he is a mighty poor politician. He was providentially provided for the Liberals when they had nothing to offer an organiser but an opportunity to fight; and subsequent events would seem to indicate that they could not have offered Preston anything else half so tempting.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

SCENES IN THE WARD MARATHON RACE AT TORONTO, SATURDAY, OCT. 9



Jack Near, of the Central Y.M.C.A., Winning the Race,
Twenty Miles in less than Two Hours.



Line-up of the Marathon Contestants at the Judges' Stand on the Grounds of the
Canadian National Exhibition.