

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LXIV.

Vol. XVIII.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 1902.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR
VOLUME LIII.

No. 23.

Peace Expected. Advices during the week from London and from Pretoria in reference to South African affairs have been generally favorable to the conclusion that the war is practically over and that peace is about to be established. In the House of Commons on Friday, the Government leader, Mr. Balfour, stated that he hoped to be able by Monday to announce the result of the peace negotiations in South Africa. He could not however be absolutely certain of this, and until that was the case he did not consider it expedient to take up the budget. As the budget was arranged to meet the conditions which would be involved in a continuance of the war, the assurance of peace would doubtless lead to some modifications, and the opinion is freely expressed that, with the war terminated, the Government would seize the opportunity to drop the unpopular import tax on grain and flour. The Boer delegates who had been in consultation with Lord Kitchener and Lord Milner for some days at Pretoria, left there on Wednesday night to return to Vereeniging, the scene of the conference of the Boer delegations. The Pretoria delegation included the chief military and other leaders among the Boers, and it is believed that among the delegates there was practical unanimity in their willingness to accept the terms of peace which the British Government has conceded. It is apprehended however that there may be some difficulty in bringing all the Boer delegations to this point of view, and that accordingly there may be some delay in the announcement of peace. As to the terms of peace embodied in the British Government's ultimatum there is no authoritative information.

A Defence of General Warren. Those who attentively followed the despatches from South Africa during the earlier stages of the war will remember that the attack upon the strategic position of Spion Kop in which the British forces suffered so severely was under the immediate direction of General Sir Charles Warren, acting under General Buller, then in supreme command. A few weeks ago General Warren publicly complained that his military reputation had suffered by the publication of certain documents and the withholding of others bearing upon the operations, and that as things stood a quite incorrect view of the matter had been given. That complaint has been followed by the publication of a book having reference to General Warren's action at Spion Kop. The author conceals his identity under the pseudonym of "Defender," but is understood to express Sir Charles Warren's own views respecting Spion Kop and the responsibility for the disastrous repulse suffered by the British troops. The contention of "Defender" is, according to Mr. I. N. Ford, that Spion Kop was considered by the Boers to be, and really was, the key of the situation in Natal, and that the blame for the failure does not justly rest on General Warren who ordered the situation to be taken, but on Colonel Thorneycroft who abandoned it without consulting him and without sufficient reason. Serious mistakes were made, it is contended, on the summit of the Kop for which the General was not responsible. So far as General Warren was concerned everything was ready and action would have been taken during the night in regard to all points mentioned by General Buller, had not the retirement prevented it. It was known on the top of the Kop that guns were to go up, but quite possibly Colonel Thorneycroft was not aware of this circumstance, as he did not place himself in position to know anything but what was taking place in the firing line, and at sundown, when everything should have been done and could have been done, he ordered the withdrawal. The writer says the general result of all information is to make it clear that Spion Kop was the key position domin-

ating the country, and that no one was more astonished at the unauthorized abandonment than General Warren except the Boers themselves.

A Geologist's Report Concerning Martinique. Professor Robert T. Hill, United States Government geologist, who has been making an examination of the part of the island of Martinique affected by the recent volcanic eruptions, reports that the zone of the catastrophe contains on land, about eight square miles of destruction. There were three well marked zones, first a centre of annihilation, in which all life, vegetable and animal, was utterly destroyed. The greater northern part of St. Pierre was in this zone. Second, a zone of singeing, blistering flames, also fatal to all life, killing all men and animals, burning the leaves on the trees and scorching but not utterly destroying the trees themselves. Third, a large outer, non-destructive zone of ashes, wherein some vegetation was injured. The focus of annihilation was the new crater midway between the sea and the peak of Mont Pelee, where now exists a new area of active volcanism, with hundreds of fumaroles, or miniature volcanoes. The salient topography of the region is unaltered. The destruction of St. Pierre was due to the new crater. The explosion had great superficial force, acting in radial directions, as evidenced by the dismounting and carrying for yards of the guns in the battery on the hill south of St. Pierre, and the colossal statue of the virgin in the same locality, and also by the condition of the ruined houses in St. Pierre.

Rosebery Emphatically for Free Trade. The London correspondent of the *New York Evening Post* is unable to see any immediate future for the scheme of an Imperial Customs Union for which Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, is supposed to be working. Lord Rosebery's speech, delivered May 23rd, is regarded as having sealed the fate of such a scheme. Not more than two-thirds of the Ministerialists, this correspondent believes, would follow Mr. Chamberlain in support of such a scheme, while Lord Rosebery's emphatic opposition makes it certain that it will have no sympathy or support from any section of the Liberal party. "For good or for evil" Lord Rosebery declared with strong emphasis, the Liberal party is bound to free trade. "So strongly," says the *Post* correspondent, are the best voices of the nation speaking out against the protective tariff round the empire which Mr. Chamberlain foreshadows, and which Canada and Australia seem to desire, that it would not be surprising if a speedy conclusion of peace in South Africa should lead the Chancellor of the Exchequer to announce that the consequent reduction in the prospective expenditure would enable him to dispense with the \$12,000,000 from the new wheat and flour duties, which consequently would be repealed. If, on the contrary, Mr. Chamberlain persists, then, as an ex-minister declared yesterday, no government could withstand the agitation which the prospects of a dear loaf would provoke up and down the country. Instead of one election defeat, as at Bury, this month, there would be dozens."

Severely Critical. A second volume of the *London Times'* 'History of the War in South Africa' has just been issued, and is attracting much attention on account of its unsparing criticisms of the British Generals and the War Office. According to the account of the book given in London despatches, no enemy of Great Britain could more frankly expose and denounce the blunders on the British side. Generals Buller and Gatacre are handled with particular severity, and even General

White comes in for a share of adverse criticism. That officer's last fight before he withdrew to Ladysmith, the author considers was in reality a serious defeat of infantry badly handled by the officers in command, who proved quite unfit to grapple with the difficult situation in which, largely by the mistakes of others, he was placed. The cavalry was as bad as the infantry and the situation was only saved by the heroism of the artillery. Touching the crowning misfortune at Colenso, the author says: "Just as in the hour of battle General Buller had failed the men whom he led, so now, in the hour of trial, he was to fail his country, which had intrusted the fortune of the war into his hands. He utterly lost heart. Not only did he despair of doing anything himself, but he despaired for others." It would not be surprising or especially significant that so severe a criticism of the men and methods of the war should be written by an Englishman. What chiefly gives the book significance is the fact that it is published under the auspices of *The Times*, England's most representative newspaper and one which is more than friendly in its attitude toward the present administration. The fact seems clearly to indicate that in 'The Thunderer's' opinion the criticism, severe as it is, is not unjust and that the interests of the nation demand that it should be frankly expressed.

Making Churchmen With Non-Conformist Money. The very large majority of 237 by which the Government Education Bill passed its second reading in the British House of Commons has been somewhat disheartening for the opponents of the measure, but has not caused them to despair as to the ultimate outcome. For it is recalled that the Education Bill of 1896 passed its second reading by a still greater majority, and yet the opposition which it encountered in the Committee stage proved fatal. It is quite possible for a measure to receive the endorsement of the House when its general principles only are under consideration upon a second reading, and to suffer defeat when its provisions come to be considered in detail. Remarking upon the discussion preceding the vote on the second reading the *Baptist Times* of London says:

"Such speeches as those of Mr. Bryce, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Asquith, and more than all, that of Lord Hugh Cecil, will have a profound and far-reaching effect. In some reports Lord Hugh's speech was the finest delivered. It was marked by courtesy, moderation, honesty and loftiness of ideal. We regret more than we can say that a man of such brilliant powers and of so fine a spirit should not see the injustice inflicted by the Bill on those whom he asks to be the allies of the church in the great struggle against materialism and worldliness. No criticism of the measure hitherto is comparable to Sir William Harcourt's for incisiveness and clearness. He put the whole religious difficulty into a nutshell. Lord Hugh Cecil frankly avowed that the object of the supporters of the Bill was to attach the children to a denomination, *i. e.* is to make them Churchmen. That is all very well, as Sir William Harcourt forcibly said, for the denomination to which they are attached, but what about the denominations from which they are detached, and which have to pay for the process? An alliance for spiritual ends between the church and the Nonconformity is the wish and the ideal of every earnest man, but an alliance cannot be cemented with injustice. Equality is the only sure basis of alliance. This brings us to the root of the whole matter. The Establishment is the real cause of the religious difficulty. And one effect of this Bill, if it passed into law, will be to revive and reinvigorate that campaign for complete religious equality which in recent years has shown some signs of languishing. As Dr. Horton said the other day, it will be a nail in the coffin of the Establishment."