

Messenger and Visitor

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The United Empire.

One thing of importance which the Queen's Jubilee celebration has emphasized and made prominent is the growing sense of political unity throughout the British Empire and the strengthening rather than the weakening of the bonds which bind together the mother land and her colonies. Time was—not so many years ago—when those bonds seemed to be growing slack, when it was being pointed out by leading British statesmen that the relation between the parent state and the colonies could not continue indefinitely and that, in the case of such a colony as Canada which had become so largely autonomous in government, it was to be expected, and perhaps to be desired in the common interest, that the political tie between the motherland and the colony should at no very distant day be severed. It was quite plainly intimated in certain influential quarters that, when a child of the Empire might desire to set up house-keeping on its own account, it would not be the policy of the home Government to forbid its doing so.

That kind of talk is not heard now-a-days. The "little England" idea is out of date, a grander political horizon has opened to the view of British statesmen and larger ideas as to the nation's political destiny prevail. Leading minds, both in England and the colonies, are coming more and more to the conviction that the true line of development does not lie toward separation and isolation, but in the direction of more intimate political and fiscal relations between the home-land and the colonies and in a firmer cohesion of all portions of the British realm, so that all its forces may be most effectually united in the upbuilding of the nation and for the well-being of the world.

Whatever may be the difficulties—and difficulties of a serious character there doubtless are—in the way of Imperial Federation, hard-headed men are no longer disposed to treat it as a fad, or smile at it as a sentiment which, however fine to contemplate, must be regarded as having its place strictly among things theoretical. If the political relations which have so long and so happily subsisted between Great Britain and her older colonies are to be permanent, it would seem essential that those relations should become closer and more vital. Leading statesmen in the large self-governing colonies are coming to feel that the time has arrived to put away provincial things and to assume the attributes of nationality. There is, however, nowhere any disposition to sever the bonds which bind the colonies to the Mother country, but, on the other hand, the growing desire is to make those bonds stronger and the unity of the nation more complete. The federation of the Empire may have to be classed to-day among things theoretical rather than practical, but it is surely something for a nation to grasp in thought so grand an idea, and the conception of the sentiment may prove to be preliminary to its realization. What seems impossible at a distance often becomes easily practicable as we draw near to it.

"The distant mountains that appear
Their solid bastions to the skies
Are crossed by pathways that appear
As we to higher levels rise."

The meeting of British and colonial Statesmen at the heart of the nation at this present time is full of interest and significance. Never before have our Imperial and colonial Statesmen seemed to have so much in common. There appears to be a sense of new things in their hearts, a conviction that a real epoch in British history has been reached. Never has the political horizon appeared so great or the possibilities of development and influence for the

British Empire so grand and inspiring. Hon. Mr. Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, will shortly, it is stated, meet the colonial Premiers now in London, in conference to discuss with them affairs of Imperial and Colonial interest. The time seems specially opportune for such conference. Never was the loyalty of the people of all parts of the empire toward their Sovereign and their flag, and all that flag and Sovereign represent, more general and hearty. Believing as we do that the enlargement of British influence means good not only to the subjects of Victoria, but to the world at large, we cannot but hail with gratitude the evidences of expansion and of unity which the Jubilee celebration reveals in fact and in prospect.

Guided Though Hindered.

Sometimes good men may be hindered of God in their particular purposes and plans. This is one of the lessons which we may learn from the Sunday School lesson for the current week. God may even hinder a man from doing a good thing. No one can say that it was not a good thing that Paul and his fellow-laborers in the gospel had in view when they proposed to preach the Word of Life in the Province of Asia, yet this they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to do. Again, when they sought to go into Bithynia, their intended mission was still one of mercy and salvation. Their purpose was good and their hearts earnest in the matter. But again they were hindered. The Spirit suffered them not. These experiences were doubtless trying to the faith and patience of these good men. It would be especially hard for so earnest and strong-willed a man as Paul to be turned back once and again from a work which he had set himself to undertake in the name of his Lord, and the apostle, we know, was not likely to turn back in such a case unless fully convinced that it was not God's will that he should go forward. In the sequel, however, we perceive a part, if not the whole, of the reason why Paul and his companions were not suffered to preach the Word in Asia and in Bithynia. Their Lord had another and more important mission for them. They were prevented from doing a good work in order that they might do a better. We cannot doubt that if Paul and Silas and Timothy could have gone into the parts of Asia Minor which they proposed to visit they would have preached faithfully and perhaps have won many converts, but a higher intelligence than theirs saw that it was more important that they should cross over into Europe, in order that they might preach the gospel there and lay the foundations of the churches in Macedonia and Achaia.

And so, no doubt, it happens sometimes now-a-days that a good man finds himself hindered in something which he has undertaken with a single heart and for the glory of God. He is not suffered to fulfil his purpose and he feels troubled because it seems as if the Lord had despised his offered service. It is wise under such circumstances for one to consider that, if his way is indeed hedged up by Providence, it may be because the Lord intends to open for him a way into more fruitful service. At all events we may be sure that the Lord never despises any service that it is in the hearts of His servants to offer. There is work for all, there are rewards for all, and they who are prompt to obey the clear call when it comes shall have the way made plain for them. When Paul knew that Christ had called him to preach His gospel he conferred not with flesh and blood, but obeyed. When he was convinced that his Lord was sending him over to Macedonia, he straightway set forth, but he was careful not to set forth on missions on which the Lord had not sent him.

If Paul interpreted the message brought him in vision by "a man of Macedonia" as an intimation that the people of that country were consciously waiting and longing for the gospel, he must have been sadly disappointed when he reached Philippi. The people of Macedonia knew nothing about Paul and his gospel, and if they had been told of his preaching in Asia Minor they would in general have cared little about it. The Macedonian cry voiced not the conscious, but rather the unconscious, needs

of a people living and dying without Christ, and of millions of others who, after them or through them, should receive the Word of Life. So, at the present day, the cry that comes from India to us is not the cry of men and women who are consciously longing for the gospel; it is rather the mute appeal of a people so sunken in moral degradation, so overcome by the paralyzing influences of heathenism as to have no lively consciousness of their miserable condition and scarce any conception of what salvation means. If ever a young man or woman goes from America to India, thinking to find the heathen hungering for the gospel and waiting eagerly to hear and to receive the story of Jesus and His love, practical experience soon teaches them that the condition of the heathen and their attitude toward the gospel is very different from that. But the fact that the heathen are so little conscious of their needs is no reason why the gospel should not be sent to them. The man who lies by the wayside with a broken limb, fully conscious of his needs and crying earnestly for help, must appeal strongly to our sympathies; but if the man were so badly hurt as to be only half conscious of his injuries and unable even to cry for help, his case would not be less pitiable and the mute appeal which his very helplessness and unconsciousness should make could not be disregarded. Shall not the love of Christ as well as human compassion prompt us to give the saving truth to those whose need of it is all the greater because they cannot at all conceive how great that need is?

The prompt and practical answer which Paul and his companions gave to that cry from Macedonia meant much for Macedonia and Greece; it has meant much too for Europe and America and for us. And the answering on our part of similar cries coming to-day across the seas will mean much for generations yet unborn and for civilizations yet to arise.

Editorial Notes.

The N. B. Western Association met on Friday last at the Range, Queens County. A section of the Second Cumberland Baptist church. The number of delegates present was smaller than usual. The meetings were held, however, under favorable conditions as to weather, and good congregations attended the services, especially on Sunday. A spirit of entire harmony prevailed in all the meetings and the services and discussions were generally of a very profitable character. Among those present from outside the bounds of the Association were Revs. Dr. Trotter of Acadia College, J. W. Manning of the F. M. Board and R. Bosworth of the Grande Ligne mission. An extended report of the proceedings will be given in our next issue.

From a table prepared by Mr. Thomas G. Shearman, a New York lawyer, it appears that there are in the United States 2,000 persons worth \$20,000,000 each; 400 persons worth \$10,000,000 each; 1,000 persons worth \$5,000,000 each; 2,000 persons worth \$2,500,000 each, and 6,000 persons worth \$1,000,000. The totals of these are \$24,000,000,000 owned by 9,600 persons. Of the 70,000,000 persons in the United States, Mr. Shearman estimates that less than 25,000 of them possess more than half its wealth. Yet the United States is a country in which, as is well known, all men are born free and equal, and we all know "there is no such thing as luck." How then is it that 25,000 people possess more wealth than the remaining 69,975,000? It must be that wealth is the reward of "smartness."

The estimate made of Victoria's personality, says the New York Tribune, "is that it has been throughout a potent and triumphant fact in most of the great doings of her reign; incomparably more potent than that of any of her predecessors. This, it may well be believed, is entirely true. By a delightful paradox, the most constitutional of monarchs has been the most autocratic. The Queen who has most of all subordinated her will to that of her people has most of all impressed her will upon them and upon all the progress of their social arts. That is explained by the further analysis of her character and circumstances. She is seen to have been

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