

Messenger and Visitor

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CHINA.

News coming from different sources in reference to conditions in China goes to show that great changes are in progress throughout the Provinces of that vast Empire. The sleep of centuries is being broken, and the country in which all things seemed to continue as they were is feeling the influence of the modern time spirit. China's response to that spirit, if as yet feeble and half-conscious, is no doubt real, and prophetic of a future full of significance for the East and perhaps also for the West. Some important documents bearing on the awakening of China and the preponderating influence of the Japanese in the social and political changes through which their big neighbor is passing have been published in Shanghai by the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese. From this source it is learned that while an increasing number of Chinese students go to Europe and America, yet, owing to the nearness of Japan and the fact that the same written language is used there as in China—students seeking education abroad find it much easier to go to Japan.

About a hundred students from each of the eighteen Provinces have been sent yearly over to Japan to learn how the Japanese have prospered so rapidly. After a few months' of years' residence there, they return and write for the Chinese papers and publish new books on every conceivable subject. As they have had no time to learn the whole truth they publish the half truths which are so proverbially dangerous. In a translation of John Stuart Mill's "Essay on Liberty" is an ambiguous passage which may be read to imply that the leader of the party which condemned Jesus Christ was Paul, and that the Sepoy rebellion was caused by the British Government insisting that in the public schools, supported by public funds, the reading of Christian books should be a *sine qua non*. The result is an immense amount of new ideas, good, bad and indifferent—some giving excellent advice, others inciting to rebellion, while others are only commonplace. A general impression seems to be gaining ground that Japanese civilization is better for China than that of Christendom. In Shanghai fifty different bookshops, which have agencies all over the Empire, are devoted to the sale of these books.

The influence of this Japanese culture probably does nothing to allay the anti-foreign feeling among the Chinese though it has had the effect of rendering anti-foreign propaganda less calumnious and more intelligent. This is shown in a manifesto put forth recently against foreigners in the Province of Heinan, and in other ways.

"The Chinese press has produced cartoons picturing foreign nations like wild beasts about to eat up or capture China. In the north is the Russian bear; in the centre is the English bulldog; in the southeast is the American eagle, while in the south there is the French frog. Round Formosa is a lasso thrown out by Japan, and around Shantung is a link representing a German sausage. Foreign railways, mining and other syndicates are like spiders webs, devised first to entangle, so as finally to absorb China. To avert this calamity the Chinese planned and carried out the great Boxer movement, and now they wonder if they cannot succeed far better by the aid of a powerful ally."

There is little cause for surprise if a more intelligent outlook does not deliver the Chinese from suspicion and jealousy of the aggressive Western powers, or if the spirit of the new Orient now coming to consciousness should express itself in such sentences as these from a Japanese writer in *The Taikunpao*, Tien Tsi:

"The Teu-ontic, Latin and Slav races have become arrogant and contemptuous towards other people, and have a settled policy of aggression, attacking the colored races, trampling on and slaughtering them wholesale. In short, this racial imperialism is only another name for what is most brutal and wicked, and, therefore, hateful to all good men. Those who would inaugurate the Golden Age, with its glorious and beautiful human life, will have to pay for its perfect, all-satisfying and enchanting joys with innumerable human heads, and measureless human blood. This is nature's just and inexorable law. That is why I said

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that war is no obstacle to universal federation, but a preparation for it."

The Chinese Government now tacitly acknowledges that the missionaries are their friends, for the educational work begun by the missionaries long ago on a small scale is now being taken up on a gigantic scale throughout the Empire. Tuen Shih Kai, Viceroy of Chili, and Chow Fu, ex-Governor of Shantung, have both been leaders in the education movement. They are both strongly in favor of Japanese educators. The new Japano-Chinese literature is being encouraged and financed by Government officers and gentry of both countries. The Shantung Imperial University, just completed, is remarkably well built and organized for teaching 600 students, and has English, American and German, as well as Japanese professors.

"IN THE MIDST OF THE YEARS."

That was a significant time note which the prophet Habakkuk struck when he prayed, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years; in the midst of the years make it known." He was thinking of Israel as midway in her career. She was far from that golden age of miracle which brought her forth upon the highway of the world's history. She seemed equally far from the consummation of her national hopes and ideals. She had fallen upon flat, stale, inconspicuous years. The times were undistinguished by such manifest workings of God as the former days had witnessed. They were uninspired years, filled with material projects and inarticulate turmoil. Hence the prophet's prayer for a revival of God's work "in the midst of the years."

That note of urgency befits the times in which we live. We, too, are "in the midst of the years." It is nineteen centuries since the Christian Church was launched. The glories of the early days of Christianity have somewhat passed from our sky. We are unstirred by expectation of great crisis in the near future. We have struck the flat years. The age is materialistic. The thought of mankind is absorbed in worldly schemes. In Canada our national aims run level with the ground. We are carving new provinces out of our western territories; we are projecting a second trans-continental railway; we are opening our doors to the unhomed millions of the world, inviting them to locate on our lands. These, indeed, are great schemes as regards national development. But what of our national life in its spirit and tone and temper? What shall it profit a nation if it gain the whole world and lose its soul? If, on this long, level stretch of our history we forget God, the civilization we are rearing will carry with it the elements of decay. The twin forces of patriotism and religion unite to inspire the prayer, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years."

But the time note of Habakkuk's prayer has a nearer and more personal application. The years of our middle life are subjected to peculiar spiritual peril. Because they are the strenuous years they are frequently unspiritual years. Men and women "in the midst of the years" are absorbed in work, the building of a home, the provision of a competence, the making of a reputation, the achievement of an ambition. It is easy to forget God "in the midst of the years." Youth has its idealism, its fond hopes and beautiful dreams. Heaven lies about us in the morning of our life, and age is mellow and tender, reminiscent and reflective. The heavens bend low again and touch us with their charm. We tie up, as it were, the two ends of our life, looping them by prayer and hope to heaven. The sag comes in the middle. The years of creative activity look too much earthward. Every pastor knows that the force of life "in the midst of the years" is mainly diverted from religious work. The spiritual glow is in the young and in the old. If we could have a revival that would call into the spiritual activities of the church our members in middle life, a power would be brought to bear that would lift our whole church life up to splendid victoriousness. There are excellent reasons why the Church should concentrate much of her solicitude upon the young. There are equally excellent reasons why she should tenderly minister to those who are growing old. But there are urgent reasons also why much prayer and thought and effort should be directed toward those who stand "in the midst of the years."

—Rev. A. T. Dykeman, the highly esteemed pastor of the Fairville church, has had an attack of pneumonia. As is his wont, he had been working hard and was somewhat reduced in health when the illness seized him. For a few days his condition was such as to cause his friends anxiety, but we are glad to learn that he is now on the way to recovery. We hear that Mr. Dykeman's physician has recommended a change of climate, and that, accordingly, he has resigned his charge. Of course Mr. Dykeman's friends will not wish to stand in the way of any move which is necessary in the interests of his health, but many will be sorry to hear that there is any prospect of his leaving Fairville where his untiring labors have resulted in large blessings to the church. We may be permitted to say here that a note having reference to Mr. Dykeman's illness was written for our last week's issue, but in some way it was mislaid in the printing office.

—President Trotter's letter, telling of the work of grace now in progress at Wolfville, will be read by many with deep and grateful interest. May the good work go on, and may the institutions continue to share largely in the blessing.

—The American Baptist Missionary Union has just closed what is spoken of as one of the best years in its history. Contributions from the churches during March amounted to \$20,000 more than for the corresponding month last year. There was a total increase in donations of \$10,154, but a decrease in legacies and matured annuities of \$36,904. The deficit for the year is \$11,374. The Am. Baptist Home Missionary Society reports a deficit of \$38,000, being \$20,000 less than was apprehended a few months ago. The deficit on the current year's undertakings is \$16,000, the balance of \$22,000 having been brought over from last year.

—The report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the Scottish Churches disputes recommends that the Free Church should hand over to the United Free Church all the property which it cannot adequately administer. As it is admitted that the former can utilize only a small proportion of the churches, manse and money handed over by the recent decision of the courts, the recommendation, if accepted by the Government, will mean the restoration of a large part of the property of the United Church. Legislation will be necessary to give effect to the recommendation, and it is said that little, if any, opposition to it is expected.

—At the meeting of the St. John License Commissioners last Wednesday, someone speaking in the liquor interest and in reference to a protest against licensing liquor saloons in the vicinity of churches, is reported as saying that a certain "Mrs. Corkery, a Roman Catholic, would produce nine-tenths of the people who attended the church opposite, in favor of her application." It is a pity that this should be true for the church's sake and for Mrs. Corkery's. We recently published some excellent instruction in reference to temperance from a Roman Catholic Bishop of this Province. It would appear, however, that there is a sad lack of attention to this good instruction on the part of many of the Bishop's co-religionists in St. John, for one need only glance over the list of applicants for liquor licenses in this city to understand that the great majority of those who gain their living by the business which produces drunkards as its fruit are more or less closely connected with the Roman Catholic Church.

—A good deal of interest is being taken in temperance matters in St. John in connection with the annual issuing of liquor licenses. The Evangelical Alliance of the city has taken a hand in the matter by way of presenting protests against certain applicants also against granting licenses to saloons in the vicinity of churches. At a meeting of the License Commissioners on Wednesday last several members of the Alliance were present to present the protest. A number of legal gentlemen were also present in the interests of the applicants for licenses, including Mr. A. L. Trueman, Judge of Probate, Mr. A. W. Macrae and Mr. Mullin. These gentlemen argued that the protest of the Alliance could not be received because it was not presented in accordance with the law which required three days' notice to be given. Some of the clergymen, however, argued that in accordance with the law the Commissioners themselves could act on their own initiative through information furnished them from any source, and if any objection was fairly made the board should give it a fair hearing. This view was opposed by the legal gentlemen, but the chairman of the Commissioners was sufficiently impressed by it to lead him to announce that, after hearing both sides, the members of the board would determine among themselves as to the course they would pursue. There can be little doubt that the law places it within the power of the Commissioners to consider the protests or objections urged by the Alliance, and if they do not do so the temperance people of the city will understand that it is because the Commissioners have no strong desire to see a strict enforcement of the law.

—The Independent of New York calls attention to what it calls a "beautiful case of self-oblation for a cause," presented for the last two months by Professor Scharf who acted as lobbyist for the Catholic Indian schools at Washington. "It is not yet forgotten," says *The Independent*, "that he was reported by several members of Congress to have urged them to vote for legislation favoring those Indian schools, and to have presented to them a list of twenty or thirty Republican Congressmen from doubtful districts, in which, through the agency of priests, the Catholic vote would be so turned as to assure their election if they would vote as desired. This Professor Scharf represented himself as authorized to speak for the Catholic authorities, or was certainly so understood by those whom he attempted to influence. He was also spoken of as a Professor in the Catholic University at Washington. But when his proceedings were made public, and were sharply criticized, the superior Catholic authorities denied that he represented them; Cardinal Gibbons declared that the man had no authority from him; he was reported to have no relation to the Catholic Univer-