

# Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,  
VOLUME LXII.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,  
VOLUME LI.

Vol. XVI.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 1900.

No. 21.

**The Quebec Bridge.** The Scientific American states that the new Cantilever bridge which is to be built over the St. Lawrence at Quebec will exceed in the length of its main span the two great suspension bridges across the East River at New York as well as the celebrated cantilevers that stretch across the Frith of Forth at Queen's Ferry. The Brooklyn bridge measures a few feet under 1,600 feet between the towers; the New East River bridge between the same points of measurement will be exactly 1,600; the two main spans of the Forth bridge are 1,710 feet in the clear, while the Quebec bridge is to have a central span of 1,800 feet. It is stated that the contract for the bridge has been secured by the Phoenix Iron and Steel Company, of Phoenixville, Pa., at a price of four and a half millions. "It is significant," says The Scientific American, "that in spite of the oft repeated statement that all subsequent bridges of this magnitude would be constructed on the suspension principle, the new Quebec bridge is to be of the cantilever type. The old objection of lack of stability which formerly held against suspension bridges has disappeared. The principles of the suspension type are better understood, or, shall we say, better applied, than they were, and with the improved materials that are now available, it is possible to give suspension bridges of the largest size all the rigidity which can reasonably be asked for. As regards the question of economy, the cantilever is by far the more costly type, the difference in cost increasing at a multiplying ratio of the increase in length. In view of this fact it is probable that the adoption of the cantilever type at Quebec was due to the local conditions."

**Premier Bond no Annexationist.** A despatch was sent forth recently from the St. Johns, Nfld., correspondent of the Associated Press to the effect that Premier Bond, of Newfoundland, would contest the next election in that colony on the platform of annexation to the United States. The despatch was very generally published by the newspapers of Canada and excited comment in various quarters. We are pleased to observe that Premier Bond now emphatically denies the truth of the statement. In a letter published in the St. John Telegraph of Thursday last Mr. Bond says: "The statement that I purpose contesting the next election on the platform of annexation to the United States is utterly unfounded." The people of Canada and of the Empire will be glad to be assured that there is no disposition on the part of the present Premier of Newfoundland, and probably not on the part of any other of its public men, to sever the ties which bind the colony to the Motherland, and this is the more gratifying in the face of the fact that, from a financial point of view, Newfoundland would no doubt have much to gain from union with the United States. Of course Canada would strenuously oppose and the Imperial Government would certainly veto any such scheme. But however hopeless the project might be, the existence of a growing sentiment in favor of it would be a cause of great annoyance and embarrassment both in Canada and Great Britain.

**The Indian Famine.** It is difficult for us to form any adequate conception of the extent and severity of the famine with which India is at present visited. In the native States the suffering is widespread and terrible, while the poorly organized and badly administered relief work is altogether inadequate to save great numbers of the afflicted people from absolute starvation. In the British Provinces the number of people receiving relief is

probably considerably larger than the whole population of Canada. More than a month ago Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, said, "We are now engaged in relieving in one form or another nearly 5,000,000 persons." Comparing the present famine with that of 1897, Lord Curzon showed that at the greatest intensity of the latter, which was in May, 700,000 persons in the Central Provinces were in receipt of relief, while this year in the same Provinces, which now as then is the region of greatest scarcity, 1,500,000 persons were receiving relief at the end of March. In one district alone, that of Raipur, 500,000 persons, 30 per cent. of the population, were upon relief at that date. In four districts in Bombay 20 to 30 per cent. and in the Ajmere-Merwada Division 20 per cent. of the entire population were in a similar condition. In answer to critics of British rule in India who contend that the pressure of land taxation upon the resources of the people is responsible for the poverty and suffering of the people in times of scarcity, Lord Curzon shows how impossible it would be by any modification of the present revenue system (leaving aside the question whether such modification would be desirable or, feasible) to enable the agricultural population to stand the shock of a calamity at once so sudden and so devastating: "The wheat crop in India averages six million tons, and is worth at least £24,000,000. This year the estimates received from the province point to a crop of about 3,000,000 tons. Even if we allow that the money value of these 3,000,000 tons in a famine year is greater than an ordinary year, we yet cannot put the losses of the Indian agriculturist on this one crop alone at less than from £8,000,000 to £10,000,000. Take another great staple crop, cotton. The Indian cotton crop averages in value £12,000,000 sterling. This year its outside value does not exceed £5,000,000, or a loss of £7,000,000 sterling. The third great crop is oilseeds, namely, linseed and rapeseed. It ordinarily covers 18 millions of acres. In the present year this crop is practically non-existent outside Bengal and the Northwestern Provinces and Oudh. These losses, great as they are in relation to the annual produce of India as a whole, are still greater in relation to the famine in the regions to which it is particularly confined. I will take the case of a single province. A very careful return of this year's harvests of food-grains has just been received from Bombay. On a very moderate computation the loss to the cultivators in that Presidency, as compared with the value of the harvests in preceding years, has been £15,000,000. They have also lost about \$3,000,000 on their cotton crop. What they have further lost in the matter of cattle it is impossible to conjecture, but the figures must be enormous. These facts appear to me to be sufficient in themselves to explain how it is that the present famine is so terrible, and the distress so great, and how impossible it would be for any Government to anticipate the consequences of a visitation of nature on so gigantic and ruinous a scale."

**Presbyterians and Creed Revision.** The General Assembly of the Presbyterian church of the United States is now holding its annual meetings in St. Louis. The honor of presiding over the Assembly—which it is said is much sought after in the denomination—has fallen to the Rev. Dr. Dickie, of Philadelphia. The withdrawal of Prof. McGiffert from the Presbyterian church has delivered the Assembly from any apprehension of a heresy trial this year. But the subject of creed revision will likely occupy the attention of the Assembly. Dr. Hillis, of New York, successor of Henry Ward Beecher and Lyman Abbott, has recently withdrawn from the Presbyterian church be-

cause he felt no longer able to accept certain parts of the Westminster Confession. The sections to which Dr. Hillis especially objected are the following:

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained unto everlasting death.

4. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either decreased or diminished.

There is probably no Protestant body in the world which, if it were today formulating a creed *de novo* would incorporate in it these statements or their equivalents, and it is said that a number of Presbyteries have sent overtures to the General Assembly, praying it in some way to relieve them of the burden of subscribing to these sections which it is declared are no longer believed by the great body of Presbyterians. Whether or not the Assembly will take any action in reference to these overtures remains to be seen. It is not improbable, however, that it will appoint a committee to consider the subject and report to the next annual meeting. Any proposal to modify the present Confession would doubtless encounter powerful opposition in the Assembly, but if the body is to maintain its organic unity, it would seem essential that something shall be done to give relief to a large and growing number of Presbyterians who, with Dr. Hillis, feel themselves no longer able in good conscience to accept the Westminster Confession in its entirety.

## The War.

The great event of the week is connection with the war is the relief of Mafeking, of which note is made in another article. Though up to present writing official confirmation is still lacking, and such meagre accounts as have been received from other sources are more or less conflicting, there seems to be no reason whatever to doubt that relief reached the beleaguered town on Tuesday or Wednesday of last week. From all other points the news is of a highly encouraging character. Lord Roberts has been holding his position at Kroonstad, perfecting his arrangements for the advance into the Transvaal, which is expected to take place very shortly. General Buller has advanced to Laing's Nek, having occupied Newcastle without meeting opposition from the enemy who have entreated hastily, so that Natal is now reported to be practically free from the Boers. On the eastern side of the Free State, Generals Rundle and Brabant have been moving northward, driving the Boers before them. They have passed through Ladybrand, a district rich in grain and stock, which the Boers had occupied and whence they had been drawing supplies. From official sources it is learned that General Rundle has occupied Clocolan, the enemy falling back on Senekal and Picksburg, and from an unofficial source the report comes that General Brabant has captured 1500 Boers at Clocolan. On the western side of the Free State, General Methuen is marching up the southern bank of the Vaal river, and General Hunter's force, having already entered the Transvaal, is making its way up the northern bank. The latter at last reports was at Christiansburg. General Methuen had advanced from Boshof, some 70 miles, to Hoopstad, which is about 22 miles southeast of Bloemhof, the Transvaal town which is the next position in General Hunter's line of march up the Vaal river. General Broadwood, who commands a division under Lord Roberts, has occupied Lindley without opposition. The Colonial Mounted Infantry under General Hutten, surprised and captured Commandant Botha and 23 others, 30 miles north of Kroonstad on Thursday. Surrenders of small bodies of Boers at different points are reported. At Hoopstad Gen. Methuen secured 250 rifles and 400,000 or 500,000 rounds of ammunition. All reports agree that the Free Staters are very badly demoralized, and the Transvaalers, it is said, are also getting sick of the war and anxious for peace. Rumors of a plot against President Kruger in order to compel peace are current. It is also reported that President Kruger has again addressed Lord Salisbury proposing terms of peace. This is very likely to be true. The Transvaal Government is probably hoping that its commissioners now in the United States may be able to secure something in the way of intervention, which shall obviate the necessity of unconditional surrender to Great Britain. The reception which the Boer delegates have met with both in New York and Washington, has been quite flattering to their hopes. They will find plenty of orators, including numerous Congressmen, who are more than ready to twist the lion's tail for their delectation, and to play with the Boer delegation for party political purposes, but so far as their expectant embrace anything of tangible value to the Boer cause, they are likely to be disappointed.