

Messenger and Visitor

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Empire Day.

Empire Day may be said to mark a new feature of Canadian school life. This title has been given to the 23rd of May, the day before the Queen's birthday, with the intention that, in the common schools of this country, it shall be devoted to exercises having for their object the cultivation of an intelligent and genuine patriotism in the hearts of our rising generation. How far the idea has been carried out this year we do not know. As it is an innovation, the observance may not have been very general, but it seems to us that the idea is one which reflects great credit upon its originator, who is said to be Mrs. Fessenden, of Hamilton, Ont., and one which is capable of realization with very great advantage to the future welfare of the country. If the idea awakens any considerable degree of enthusiasm in Canada, we may expect to see it adopted in all parts of the Empire where a common school system finds place. The importance is not easily over-estimated of cultivating in the minds and hearts of school children, along with a knowledge and a love of their own native land, a knowledge of the empire at large and of teaching them to apprehend the larger relationships, dignities and responsibilities which citizenship in so great a nation involves. Let the children be taught the great, inspiring facts of history in connection with their race and country, and let them feel the impulse of our national hopes and aspirations, that there may be cultivated in them a national self-respect which shall beget a proper sense of the dignity of citizenship and a scorn of political baseness. Certainly we do not want the children of Canada imbued with the doctrines of jingoism. We do not want the facts of history falsified or exaggerated in their text books, we do not want to educate a race of political bigots or braggarts to believe and to proclaim to the world that only under their own flag is there to be found anything valuable in government or anything praiseworthy in national life. We would have the youth of Canada educated to pay fitting homage to all that is worthy in the life and history of every people, but especially we would have them recognize the guiding hand of a good Providence in the history of the illustrious nation to which they belong, and be prepared, with brave hearts, to take their places and do their part nobly, as citizens in that greater Britain with whose destiny so much that is of utmost value for mankind would seem to be involved.

Pilate.

The portrait which the evangelists present of Pilate, the Roman governor who gave sentence against Jesus, is instructive. It is the picture of a man self-condemned because he deliberately sacrificed the highest claims of justice to self interest. Pilate was keen enough to see through the malice and hypocrisy of the Jews. He knew what justice to Jesus demanded, and that to give the Roman sanction to the infamous will of the Jews in this matter was nothing short of judicial murder. He was not so without moral sensibility as to be indifferent to the responsibility of putting an innocent man to death. But Pilate owned no allegiance to truth and righteousness strong enough to prompt him to face a real peril for the sake of saving any Jew from the cross, however good or innocent he might be. Pilate would have been pleased to wash his hands of the whole business if it could have been done by the symbolic act of dipping his hands in water before the multitude, he would have been pleased to atone for his crime, if that could have

been done by public insult to the Jews at whose behest the crime had been committed. But these things only show how conscious the man was of the infamy for which, through fear of the Jews, he had become responsible. Pilate would have liked to thwart the murderous purpose of the Jews. Every remnant of manhood in him urged him to deliver Jesus from their hands. But such a course might have caused the malicious hypocrisy of the Jews to be directed against himself. Pilate apprehended that it might mean trouble with Augustus, loss of preferment and political ruin; and there was no moral principle in Pilate's nature strong enough to cause him to stand up in the name of truth and righteousness and face such an alternative.

Well, Pilate is dead, but does his spirit find no reincarnation in these modern times? Is it not this very Pilate spirit which is, more than any other thing, a symptom and a menace of evil in our own day?—the spirit that can admire goodness, but refuses allegiance to it, that despises hypocrisy and malice and still cringes before them, and that is willing, for the sake of present gain, to send truth to the scaffold and exalt infamy to the throne. In the world, in the church, in the individual Christian, it is necessary that the Pilate should be crucified that the Christ may live and reign.

Editorial Notes

—The religious and pro-Sabbath sentiment of England, it appears, has proved too strong for the Sunday newspapers. The people opposed to the innovation united to make a very vigorous fight against it, and the proprietors of 'The Mail' and 'The Telegraph,' of London, becoming convinced that they were likely to lose more than they would gain by the venture, have announced the discontinuance of their Sunday editions. This result is a matter for congratulation not only because of the interests directly involved, but because of the influence it will have in discouraging the introduction of seven day journalism in other places.

—The North End has suffered severely in the fire, but no doubt the people will show their usual pluck and energy under difficulties. Some of the firms burned out are already doing business in other quarters, and others are making preparations for rebuilding as soon as possible. The calamity is one that, under the existing conditions, was bound to occur at some time, and, on the whole, there is much reason for thankfulness that the result is no worse, for if a strong northwest, instead of a southwest, wind had been blowing Thursday afternoon, one could hardly venture to say where the progress of the fire would have been stayed.

—The people of St. John, Amherst and Halifax are shortly to have the opportunity of hearing on the lecture platform Dr. George C. Lorimer, of Tremont Temple, Boston, whose great ability as preacher, lecturer and author have made him so widely known. It is at the request of Rev. Dr. Robinson, pastor of the Cornwallis St. church, Halifax, that Dr. Lorimer is coming to these Provinces at this time, and Dr. Robinson's purpose in arranging for the lectures is the very praiseworthy one of securing money to pay off the debt upon his church. He informs us that about half the standing debt of \$1,400 has been paid off within the past year, and he hopes soon to be able to wipe out the balance. Dr. Lorimer is to speak in the Main St. Baptist church, St. John, on June 13; in the Amherst Baptist church, on the 14th, and in Orpheus Hall, Halifax, on the 15th. Those who avail themselves of the privilege of hearing Dr. Lorimer on these occasions will no doubt receive much more than the value of their tickets, and they will also have the pleasure of assisting a good object. Preceding the lecture by Dr. Lorimer, we are informed, there will be a brief musical and literary programme, by popular local and foreign talent, among whom will be Mrs. Anna E. Robinson, (wife of Dr. R.) who is spoken of as "the leading star elocutionist of the Negro race."

—The men who send abroad from the capital of a nation despatches which are assumed to reflect the opinions or the policy of its government upon subjects of national or international importance are responsible for the exercise of a very large measure of influence for good or for evil. It is therefore not pleasant to perceive that those who are engaged in

sending forth such despatches from Washington are evidently not inspired by any desire to promote friendly relations between their own country and Canada. These writers of despatches apparently take great pleasure in representing that it is due to Canada's unreasonableness and obstinacy that the Alaskan boundary has not been settled, and that, too, in the face of the well-known fact that the American Commissioners declined to agree to any measure of settlement which would not leave the determination of the boundary practically in the hands of the United States. It is continually intimated that this matter and others might be easily arranged with London if it were not for Canadian influence, and Canada's demand to be consulted in respect to such a matter as the boundary of her territory is treated as an impertinence. Perhaps the source or sources of these despatches may be entirely irresponsible, but, as the Montreal 'Witness' remarks, "this settled determination to breed international ill-will cannot but have a baneful effect on both sides the line."

—If we except the Jubilee year, the Queen's birthday was probably never celebrated throughout the Empire with greater enthusiasm than on Wednesday last, the day which marked the completion of Her Majesty's eightieth year. In St. John there is no holiday of the year, with the one exception of Christmas, that is made so much of, and as this year it was certainly 'queen's weather' on the 24th, the population of the city poured itself through every avenue and by every available means of conveyance into the country, until a Sabbath quiet reigned in the city streets. Probably in the consciousness of most excursionists the events of the day were not intimately connected with patriotic aspirations. The small boy was more intent upon making a noise with his fire-works than upon glorifying the Queen, and the men and women who got away for a day's outing were more occupied with the loveliness of the day, the freshness of the springtime and the contents of their lunch baskets than with their relation to the noblest of sovereigns and the greatest of Empires. At the same time the holiday counts for something more than an opportunity for a day's enjoyment. It has its significance for the expression and cultivation of patriotism. It is safe to say that in Canada the attachment of the people to the sovereign and their loyalty to the empire were never more ardent than at present.

Christ Crucified.

BY WAYLAND HOYT, D. D.*

"And he went out, bearing the cross for himself" (v. 17). The author of "Ben Hur" makes the scene vivid. "He was nearly dead. Every few steps he staggered as if he would fall. A stained gown, badly torn, hung from his shoulders over a seamless under-tunic. An inscription on a board was tied to his neck. A crown of thorns had been crushed hard down upon his head, making cruel wounds, from which streams of blood, now dry and blackened, had run over his face and neck. The long hair tangled in the thorns, was clotted thick. His bare feet left red splotches upon the stones. The skin, where it could be seen, was ghastly white. His hands were tied before him." "O my soul, be not heedless at such sight of sacrifice, and for thy sake!

"Where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst" (v. 18). The central cross means atonement for sin. The cross of the thief penitent stands at the head of the great class into which that cross divides humanity,—those who accept the atonement. The cross of the thief impenitent stands at the head of that other class into which that central cross divides humanity,—those who reject the atonement. In which class are you?

"And there was written, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. . . . And it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek" (v. 19, 20). Contemptuous sneers at truth cannot annihilate truth. The truth still stands and shines. And the three then most universal languages told the truth to the world. "Hebrew is the tongue of religion; Greek, that of culture. Latin, the language of law and government. And Christ was declared King in them all. On his head are many crowns." Let me come under joyful subjection to such a King.

"Pilate answered, What I have written I have

*Notes of John 19: 17-30 in 'The S. S. Times.'