

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LX.

Vol. XIV.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 1898.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,
VOLUME XLIX.

No. 20.

They Can Die. In connection with the present war there is little, except the valor of her soldiers, that offers opportunity of congratulation to Spain and her people. The war itself is a result of an outworn and tyrannous colonial policy that, if it ever had excuse for existence, should in all conscience have been dead and buried a century ago. The policy, bad in itself, has been made the more oppressive and ruinous through corrupt and incapable administrators. With her proud and decadent aristocracy and her unintelligent populace, effective government for Spain or her colonies has become impossible. The opening of the war with the United States, which for months had been threatening, found the Spanish government wholly unprepared. The weakness and ineffectiveness of Spain's national government seems to characterize all the operations of her military leaders. The whole conduct of the war so far on the part of Spain indicates a lack of any strong definite purpose and of eminent military capacity. The one thing upon which Spain may be congratulated is the bravery of her soldiers, which taken in connection with the weakness and incapacity for effective government which has been pointed out, seems fully to justify the pathetic remark of a Spanish public man: "We do not know how to govern or to organize in peace or war, but we know how to die." All accounts of the battle of Manila appear to agree that though the fight against the greatly superior American ships must have been from the first almost a hopeless contest, yet the Spaniards showed great valor, fighting to the bitter end with a courage that could not but command the respect of their enemies and the world. One can but wish that, if these brave lives must be sacrificed, it might be in behalf of something holding out greater hope for the betterment of the world than the present state of Spain and the traditions of her government afford.

The Price of Wheat. The sudden and remarkable rise in the price of wheat, which has brought the retail price of the best brands of flour up to above seven dollars and a half per barrel, is due to several causes. The war has doubtless had something to do with it. It is true that the war so far has had no appreciable effect upon the world's wheat supply. It has not interfered with the raising or transportation of wheat, nor is it likely to do so to any material extent, unless it should happen that other nations are drawn into the conflict. And the war cannot greatly affect the demand for wheat. But the general apprehension that war must create a rise in the price of breadstuffs (as, under different conditions from the present, it frequently has done) has made the conditions favorable for speculators to manipulate the market for their own advantage. The principal reason, however, for the rise in the price of wheat is no doubt the serious shortage in the world's supply. The crop of last year on this continent was a good one, but in most of the wheat producing countries of the world it fell far below the average, and in some countries this had been the case for one or two previous years. The world's grain bin will be pretty well cleaned out this year, and those who had the grain in possession when the rise occurred stand to profit largely by the necessities of their fellowmen. Whether the present prices will be maintained, or whether they will rise or fall, will probably not depend to any great degree on the continuance or cessation of the war, but principally on the crop, prospective and actual, of 1898. If, in the course of a few weeks, there are general indications of a good crop of wheat, present prices are likely to weaken, and if such indications are realized, flour will be

cheaper, but probably the price will not rule so low as it has done for some years past. If, on the other hand, the world's crop for 1898 should turn out to be a poor one, prices may be expected to keep up and would be likely to advance beyond present figures. One of the effects of the present high price of wheat will be to attract capital and emigrants to the Canadian Northwest, and another will be to cause more wheat to be raised in these Maritime Provinces than has been the case in recent years. With wheat at present prices, it will probably be found more profitable on land that it is in a condition to produce it, than any other grain crop.

News of the death of Dalton McCarthy. Dalton McCarthy, M. P., which occurred on Wednesday evening, at his residence in Toronto, has evoked throughout the country very general and doubtless sincere expressions of regret. On Sunday evening of last week Mr. McCarthy was thrown from his carriage and received injuries which resulted in his death. Mr. McCarthy was born near Dublin sixty-two years ago, but his family having emigrated to Canada while he was quite young, he grew up in this country and in full sympathy with Canadian life and institutions. Following the example of his father and grandfather, Dalton McCarthy chose the law as his profession and was called to the bar of Upper Canada in 1859, when only 23 years of age. His great ability, supported by constant application to study and business, soon brought him into prominence, and by the time he was thirty years of age he was winning distinction in his profession and was also becoming known in political life. His reputation as a lawyer grew steadily and in his later years he was recognized as standing in the very first rank of the legal profession in Canada. It was not, however, until 1876 and after several elections in which he had been an unsuccessful candidate, that Mr. McCarthy entered the House of Commons as member for Cardwell. From that time until his death he continued in Parliament, and since 1882, as member for North Simcoe. Mr. McCarthy entered political life as a Conservative and during the greater part of Sir John Macdonald's leadership he remained firmly attached to the interests of that party. During the later years of his political career, however, Mr. McCarthy had taken an independent position. He vigorously and effectively opposed the policy of the late government in respect to the Manitoba School question and also broke with that party in its protection policy, but he did not transfer his allegiance to the Liberal party. On the floors of Parliament Mr. McCarthy was admittedly a great force. He was at all times a keen and forceful debater, and, on questions demanding legal knowledge and acumen, he had few if any peers in the House. He appeared ambitious to exercise influence rather than to hold office. He was never a member of any administration, though there was no question as to his being a man of Cabinet rank, or as to his opportunities for official position. It is said that he might have attained to the leadership of the Conservative party if he had sought it. The truth seems to be that Mr. McCarthy's convictions on political questions were too strongly and sincerely held to admit of the compromises necessary to a hard and fast connection with any political party. As an honest and exceedingly able man whose voice might be expected to be raised in Parliament in opposition to any important line of action which he regarded as false or unwise, Mr. McCarthy represented a force in politics of great value to Canada, and his sudden taking away, at an age when his best work seemed still possible, is an event to be deeply regretted.

The War. The past week has witnessed several engagements between United States and Spanish forces in the West Indies, but none of them have been of a decisive or very important character. In a fight which occurred at Cardenas, on the north side of Cuba, on Wednesday, the eleventh inst., the first loss of life on the American side occurred. A torpedo boat named the 'Winslow,' supported by two other American war vessels, the 'Hudson' and the 'Wilmington,' ventured into the harbor of Cardenas to attack a Spanish gun-boat. In this attempt the 'Winslow' got within range of a Spanish battery, the existence of which was unknown to the Americans. The Spanish guns opened an accurate fire on the torpedo boat with deadly effect. She was soon disabled. A shell bursting on her deck killed five of her brave crew. A number of others including her commander were wounded. The other American ships opened an effective fire upon the Spanish fort and the Hudson came bravely to her rescue of the disabled Winslow and towed her out of range of the Spanish guns. On the same day an attempt by the Americans to cut the cable in the harbor of Cienfuegos resulted successfully, but cost them one man killed and six wounded. Another incident of the week was the bombardment by Admiral Sampson's fleet of San Juan, the capital city of Porto Rico, on the morning of Thursday, the twelfth. The engagement is reported to have lasted three or four hours. The Spanish forts replied vigorously. Few of their shots, however, struck the American vessels and those that did strike did not for the most part inflict any damage. Two American sailors were killed and a number wounded, but the ships were practically uninjured. Admiral Sampson did not succeed in silencing the Spanish guns and though many of the shots, from the American fleet, took effect, it is uncertain how much damage was inflicted upon the San Juan fortifications. A report to the effect that San Juan had capitulated, said to have been received by the United States Government, lacks confirmation and is probably untrue. It is stated that an American army of 12,000 men will shortly be sent from the Pacific coast to Manila in order to occupy the Philippines. During the past week active measures were being taken for an immediate invasion of Cuba, but the news received at Washington on Friday that the Spanish squadron from Cape Verde was at Martinique in the West Indies has caused a stay in the projected invasion, as a great naval battle, which may decide the issues of the war, is now expected. At time of writing, however, there is no report of any meeting of the two hostile fleets. The latest news concerning the position of the Spanish fleet states that it is off the coast of Venezuela. Among the most recent war news is a despatch from Admiral Dewey, in which he reports to his government that he has plenty of coal, that he is maintaining a strict blockade of Manila, that the insurgent natives are hemming in the city, but have made no hostile demonstration yet, that he (Dewey) can take Manila at any moment, that provisions are scarce in the city and the Spanish governor will probably be obliged to surrender soon. It is understood that an American army will be sent as soon as possible to occupy Manila and to bring the Philippines under control of the United States.

—Mrs. Janet (Carlyle) Hanning, who died in Toronto a few months ago, had in her possession a collection of letters received from her famous brother, Thomas Carlyle. It is stated that there are fifty-six of these letters and that they have been disposed of by Mrs. Hanning's executors to the publishers of the Atlantic Monthly, Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin and Company, of Boston. Presumably the letters, or such parts of them as may be of interest to the public, will appear in the Atlantic.