

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LXII.

Vol. XVI.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1900.

{ THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR
VOLUME LI.

No. 50.

Proposes an Invasion of England. The speech delivered last Tuesday on the floors of the French Senate by General Mercier seems to be a clear indication of the fact that there are men in influential positions in France who are determined to promote ill feeling between France and Great Britain, and, if possible, involve the two countries in war. It is certainly a most significant and uncomfortable fact that General Mercier—a man who has held important positions not only in the French army but in the government, having been at one time Minister of War—should discuss, and should be permitted to discuss, before the Senate of which he is a member, the practicability of a successful invasion of England, saying that such a scheme could be held as a sword of Damocles over the head of England, and in the same connection proposing a resolution to the effect that the Senate should invite the Government to complete immediate preparations for the mobilization of the army and navy, by preparing everything necessary to embark and disembark as speedily as possible an expeditionary corps. It is probable that a part of General Mercier's intention was to embarrass the Government, and it is true that protests were uttered by several members of the Senate against his proposals, and the President ruled the resolution out of order. But this does not alter the fact that the speech, with the accompanying resolution, was made in the Parliament of France by one whose position as a public man, whatever may be said of his personal character, is sufficient to give the matter a sinister significance. From such a man as General Mercier, whose connection with the Dreyfus case showed him to be one who was quite ready to sacrifice his personal honor in a case in which he judged that the reputation of the French army was involved, almost anything is possible. Such men influenced by dreams of military glory, might easily be willing to inflame race hatreds and political jealousies to such a pitch as would inevitably involve their own nation in unjust and disastrous war. Unfortunately there appears to be in connection with the French army a sufficient number of men of the Mercier stripe to constitute a grave peril to the welfare of France and the peace of the world.

A Matter of Justice. It is natural that the people of cities and towns should desire to have new factories or other industrial enterprises established within their limits. The value to a community of such enterprises when they are of a proper and wholesome character must be recognized and it may be quite right that the promoters of them should receive some encouragement from the municipality in which they propose to locate their works. But concessions of this kind may easily go too far and involve undue burden for the taxpayer and grave injustice to established industries which have to stand on their own merits. In this connection the Globe, which has frequently uttered warning notes on this subject, very sensibly says: "There should be in a city like St. John no specially favored classes nor corporations, and a sound principle of justice toward all should be equally applied. Why should men who own property in, let us say, King Street, who have for years been carrying on some industry, who have regularly paid their taxes, and who have contributed to the wealth of the community by their industry and their energy be compelled to pay the taxes of men who have business in other parts of the town and who seek to evade the payment of their lot and scot? There is no compulsion on the part of anyone to come here, but those who come should at once take up the burden of citizenship and manfully meet the obligations. At least, the people should not allow the opposite spirit to be cultivated."

The far sighted Boers. Since his return to England General Buller has been speaking of some points, hitherto little noticed, in which British soldiers found themselves at a disadvantage in fighting with the Boers.

One of these is the much greater range of vision possessed by the latter. Their country being a very open one, the Boers are accustomed to looking at things at a great distance, with the result that they have developed a remarkable range of vision, so that in General Buller's opinion, it is no exaggeration to say that an ordinary Dutchman or Africander can see a British soldier approaching him two miles farther away than he can be seen by the latter, who is, generally speaking, a city-born man and therefore comparatively short-sighted. This fact, General Buller says, has been throughout a severe handicap, and has caused the death of many gallant British scouts. The fact noted by General Buller would indicate one of the points in which the Australian bushman and the Canadian cowboy would have the advantage over the British regular as a scout. General Buller might doubtless have added that the Dutchmen of South Africa are as a rule not only longer sighted but longer headed than the Britisher, and in this respect also the Colonial troops have the advantage of the regulars through their ability to take advantage of circumstances, to act independently and by their superior vigilance and alertness in scouting operations. As an instance of this, a Canadian soldier wrote home that the British regulars have learned now to keep under cover if possible when under fire, but at other times seem to prefer the most exposed and conspicuous positions, while the Canadians make it a rule to keep under cover whenever practical, so as not to advertise their presence and their numbers to the enemy.

The United States. In his message at the opening of the last session of the fifty-sixth Congress, occurring now on the eve of a new century, President McKinley quite naturally gives a backward look over the pathway which the nation has been travelling and notes its wonderful development. He reminds Congress that when the sixth Congress assembled in November, 1800, "the population of the United States was 5,308,483. It is now 76,304,799. Then we had sixteen States. Now we have forty-five. Then our territory consisted of 909,050 square miles. It is now 3,846,595 square miles. Education, religion and morality have kept pace with our advancement in other directions, and while extending its power the Government has adhered to its foundation principles and abated none of them in dealing with our new peoples and possessions. A nation so preserved and blessed gives reverent thanks to God, and invokes his guidance and the continuance of his care and favor." The present condition of the national finances is highly satisfactory. The excess of revenue over expenditure in the last fiscal year was more than seventy-nine and a half million dollars, the excess being due partly to increased receipts and partly to decreased expenses. Of this sum more than fifty-six and a half million dollars has been applied to the sinking fund for the extinguishment of the nation's indebtedness. The Treasury has also been able to refund at 2 per cent no less than \$364,943,750 of outstanding indebtedness bearing higher rates of interest, thus effecting a net saving to the Government of \$9,106,166, and in addition reducing interest charges for the next four years by more than \$7,000,000 a year. At the present time the available cash balance in the Treasury is \$139,393,794.50, without counting the gold reserve of \$150,000,000 more. Under these favorable circumstances the President advises the immediate reduction of the internal revenue from war taxes in the sum of \$30,000,000 a year. In discussing the foreign relations of his Government President McKinley alludes to the Alaskan boundary question and the *modus vivendi* established a year ago which, he says, has worked without friction, but is at best an unsatisfactory makeshift which should not be suffered to delay the speedy and complete establishment of the international line. The President also refers to the

need of definitely marking the Alaskan boundary where it follows the 141st meridian. To this end he contemplates negotiating a new convention for a joint determination of the meridian by telegraphic observations.

The British Parliament. The opening of the first session of the fifteenth Parliament of the present reign took place on the 3rd instant quietly and without any unusual circumstances. Mr. Gully was re-elected to the speakership of the House of Commons. The Speech from the Throne leaves nothing to be desired in point of brevity. It is as follows:

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN: It has become necessary to make further provision for the expenses incurred by the operations of my armies in South Africa and China. I have summoned you to hold a special session in order that you may give your sanction to the enactments required for this purpose. You will not enter into other public matters requiring your attention until the ordinary meeting of the Parliament in the spring."

The debate on the address has assumed a lively character in both chambers, and especially in the House of Commons there has been severe criticism of the Government's policy in respect to the South African war, China and its causing a dissolution of Parliament when it did, etc., and fierce attacks were made upon Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman going so far as to accuse the Colonial Secretary of conduct which, if resorted to by a gentleman in private life, would exclude him from the society of all honorable men and ostracise him for life. Mr. Chamberlain, on his part, repelled the attacks with great warmth, indignantly denying many of the accusations made against him. In the House of Lords, Lord Rosebery dealt severely with Mr. Chamberlain. While deprecating over-credulity in respect to the charges made against the Colonial Secretary, he said that it was evident that the head of the Cabinet had failed in supervision, and that the pride of England in the purity of its public men had suffered.

Kaiser Wilhelm Not at Home to Mr. Kruger. The decisive intimation to Mr. Kruger on the part of the German Government that the Emperor would not be able to receive him has had a depressing effect upon the Boer cause in Europe and has pretty thoroughly shattered any hope of European intervention that Mr. Kruger and his friends may have cherished. The action of the German Emperor in the matter is generally regarded as an indication and a fruit of the more friendly relations now existing between the British and the German Governments. At the same time it is said that outside of the newspapers more immediately under Government influence, there is quite a general expression on the part of the German press of disapproval of the Government's action and of sympathy with the Boer cause. It is reported that Austria is following the example of Germany so far that in response to a confidential note of enquiry as to whether Mr. Kruger would be welcome at Vienna a polite note was returned to the effect that the Emperor had made other arrangements for the next few weeks. There appears also to be no prospect of Mr. Kruger receiving a welcome at the Russian court. All this is little more agreeable to France than it is to Mr. Kruger.

—Late despatches from Lord Kitchener to the war office in London indicate that the Boer General DeWet was being hard pressed by General Knox in the southern part of the Orange State. He had failed in an attempt to cross over into Cape Colony and was moving northward, having abandoned some 500 horses and many carts. On the other hand it is reported that the Boers have captured seventeen thousand sheep and a small detachment of British troops in the vicinity of Krugersdorp in the Transvaal. Lord Roberts arrived at Cape Town on Saturday and was accorded a splendid reception. The Mayor, Councillors and Citizen's Committee with thousands of sight-seers met the distinguished general at the dock and escorted him to the Government House.