

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LXI.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR
VOLUME L.

Vol. XV.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 1899.

No. 26

The Scott Act in Brome. A great deal of interest was aroused in connection with the election held last Tuesday in the County of Brome, Quebec, on the question of the repeal of the Scott Act. The result is a surprise and a disappointment to the temperance people of the county and province. Brome has been regarded as a banner temperance county. It adopted the Scott Act in 1885 by a majority of 485, and later, by a smaller but still considerable majority, it refused to repeal the Act. Before the adoption of the Scott Act, Brome had local option under the Dunkin Act, and it is nearly a quarter of a century since the liquor traffic had enjoyed a legal status in the county. Last year, in the Plebisite election, Brome voted for prohibition by a majority of 525. But, in spite of all this, the county has now voted for the repeal of the Scott Act by a majority of 529. What is the explanation of this apparently great change in public opinion? There can be no doubt that the liquor men of Quebec and Ontario considered it a great object to defeat the Scott Act in Brome, and they laid out their strength without stint in order to win the battle. All that could be done by the circulation of anti-temperance and anti-prohibition literature, and by the work of able debaters on the platform to influence public opinion against the Scott Act was done. The temperance people appear to have fought a good fight, being especially active in public discussion, and if the liquor men had confined themselves to the methods above mentioned the temperance people might have won the fight. But the money of the liquor party, used of course unscrupulously, was a kind of argument which the defenders of the Scott Act could not successfully meet. Discussing the result of the vote, the 'Montreal Witness' says: "Recognizing the strategic importance of this old prohibition stronghold, and knowing that Brome was as amenable to the blandishments of money as other counties, the liquor interest concentrated its energies upon it. The public meeting campaign of the liquor men was a failure, unless its object was to divert attention from other tactics. The fact is that in many of our counties there is a large purchasable element among the electors, who refuse to treat their votes as other than a marketable commodity. Whoever has most money carries these, and they are frequently sufficient in number to carry an election. We are not prepared to say that either political party is free from what is, according to the greatest moral authority, the most Satanic of all iniquities—the offence of corrupting these voters. Men who have once been led to sell their votes are thenceforth no longer citizens, but public enemies—traitors who openly sell their country for ten dollars or two, according as they can get it. That this element exists in Brome both parties openly proclaim; and that this element voted whole for the liquor trade may be assumed without the shadow of a doubt."

France. In France, during the past week, the political sky has worn a threatening aspect. The atmosphere seems to be heavily charged with electricity and there is much speculation as to what the outcome of present conditions will be. M. Poincaré and M. Waldeck-Rousseau have both in turn failed in the attempt to construct a cabinet and at present writing the man with the ability to succeed in the matter is apparently not in sight. Meanwhile the position of President Loubet becomes embarrassing, since M. Dupuy, the late Premier, is pressing to be relieved of all responsibility connected with the affairs of government. The difficulties of the situation are

no doubt intimately connected with the Dreyfus case, the position which many of the leading men—the "cabinet timber" of the nation—have taken in reference to the case rendering them impossible as members of the cabinet. There is said to be a good deal of excitement over the expected arrival of Dreyfus, and arrangements have been made with great care to prevent demonstrations on the occasion of his arrival at Brest or his removal from there to Rennes, where his retrial by Court-martial is announced to begin on July 17. Meanwhile a certain class of journalists in France are leaving no stone unturned in their efforts to prejudice the court.

The Transvaal. The condition of affairs in the Transvaal continues to be a subject of keen interest to the British people. The outlook is still warlike. The publication of a despatch from Sir Alfred Milner, British High Commissioner in South Africa, indicates that the Government is quite willing that the public sentiment of Great Britain should be fully aroused upon the subject. Sir Alfred Milner is recognized as being not only a man of great ability and experience in public affairs but one whose prudence and caution cause any representation which he makes of the condition of affairs in the Transvaal to be received with profound respect. The scrupulously cautious attitude which the High Commissioner had maintained in respect to the complaints of the Uitlanders gives to his words the more weight now that he declares that the facts are such as to make the case for intervention on the part of the British Government overwhelmingly strong, and when he says that "the spectacle of thousands of British subjects kept permanently in the position of helots, constantly chafing under undoubted grievances and calling vainly to Her Majesty's Government for redress, does steadily undermine the influence and reputation of Great Britain and the respect for the British Government within the Queen's dominions." The situation is so serious that it would seem that only important concessions on the part of President Kruger and his Government as to the status of the Uitlanders in the Transvaal could avert war. But it appears to be the opinion of those best informed that war will be averted. This is based partly upon the fact that President Kruger has shown some disposition to make concessions and the probability that he will go farther in that direction rather than push matters to the issue of war. Of course President Kruger knows, as well as Lord Salisbury or Mr. Chamberlain, that war with the Boers would be a very serious and expensive business for Great Britain. Such a war would indeed be so serious and the contingencies as to what it would involve in South Africa and elsewhere are so important, that the British Government is likely to avoid extreme measures if possible, and this especially in view of the fact that the strength of the Transvaal Government is vested principally in the person of one old man, and that when Mr. Kruger shall cease to be a vital force in South African politics the whole situation is likely to be materially changed, and reforms which could now be secured only at the expense of a terribly bloody war may become comparatively easy of accomplishment.

The Peace Conference. Whether or not the Peace Conference at The Hague is making progress toward agreements which shall be of value for the restraining of war and the establishments of peace among the nations, is not easy to gather from the despatches. So far as proposals looking toward disarmament are concerned

there seems to be little ground for hope that anything of a radical character will be accomplished, though it is possible that there may be agreements reached in reference to methods and weapons, which would have some influence in ameliorating the horrors of warfare among civilized nations should war occur. The Russian proposals for naval disarmament are said to have involved that the building of warships should cease, that most of those now in service should be retired and that rams and sub-marine craft should be absolutely prohibited. This would doubtless be a highly satisfactory arrangement for Russia whose forces are of the land and not sea, but it is so far from acceptable to Great Britain that even Mr. Stead is forced to admit the necessity to England of maintaining her mastery of the seas. "It is a cruel necessity," he says, "Without it the Empire would inevitably fall to pieces, with universal war as a sequel." There appears to be ground for hope that the Conference may reach some results of value in the direction of Arbitration, though for the present there is some doubt of this, owing to the hesitation if not the opposition of Germany to the proposals which are before the Arbitration Committee. As matters now stand, it is said, the proposal nearest to general acceptance is the creation at The Hague of an international arbitration bureau under the control of a permanent body consisting of all the foreign ministers at The Hague. Even if Germany stand aloof, it is thought the establishment of such a permanent bureau will be effected, and it is considered by its advocates as more important than the permanent tribunal which had been proposed, since a permanent tribunal could deal with one question only at a time, while the permanent bureau provides for as many tribunals as may be required by difficulties and disputes calling for settlement by arbitration.

The Filipino War. A few weeks ago the news from the Philippines was of a character to lead to the conclusion that the Filipinos were prepared to make terms with the United States and that the conflict was virtually at an end. Since then, however, the war has certainly obtained a new lease of life and hostilities have been carried on by the Filipinos with greater vigor than ever. Whether this is due simply to the unwillingness of the Filipino leaders to accept such terms of peace as were offered them or whether the main purpose in their negotiations was to gain time in view of the approach of the rainy season, when the climate of the country would become a more formidable enemy to the Americans than the soldiers of Aguinaldo and Luna, it is hard to say, but certainly the war has raged with increased violence, and although the Filipinos have been everywhere repulsed and beaten, their defeats have probably been scarcely more exhausting to them than victory, under existing conditions, has been to the American army. The report that General Luna, one of the two most prominent military leaders of the Filipinos, is dead, appears to be confirmed. According to reports there had been much bad feeling between the two, which came to an open rupture when Aguinaldo curtly refused to furnish Luna with copies of documents which he had sent forth, containing secret orders to the provincial governments. Luna is said to have declared that Aguinaldo should die, and, soon afterwards, in attempting to enter the house of the latter contrary to his orders, Luna was killed by the guards. How much of this is true one cannot say. If Luna is really dead, it may have some considerable effect on the course of the war, as he had given proofs of personal courage and is said to have been abler as a military leader than Aguinaldo. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the removal of the rival of Aguinaldo will tend to unify the forces of the country in the hands of the latter and to that extent make the subjugation of the country the more difficult for the Americans. It is said that the war is costing the United States a million dollars a day. This is probably an exaggerated estimate, but the cost of the war is a serious matter even for so rich a country. The blood that is being shed is largely that of the Filipinos, but the American loss is not inconsiderable, and if the war is to be brought to an end within any reasonable period, the American army in Luzon must have large reinforcements without delay.