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# Messenger and Visitor.

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ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, 1898.

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**Britain and Russia in China.** It will be a great triumph of diplomacy over the methods by which international difficulties and disputes were wont formerly to be settled if the relations between European nations disturbed by the crumbling to pieces of the Chinese empire shall be readjusted on anything like a stable and satisfactory basis without an appeal to the stern tribunal of war. The tension in the relations of Great Britain and Russia is just now very great, and different opinions are expressed in high quarters as to whether the issue will be war or peace. Russia's policy of territorial aggrandizement is necessarily opposed to Britain's policy of an open door for trade in China. It seems certain, too, that Russian diplomacy has so far prevailed in China that the Court at Peking, with Li Hung Chang as its representative, is largely, if not completely, under Russian control. The cause of the indignation now so strongly expressed in England against Russia is the interference of the latter in the matter of the Niu-Chwang railway. This railway is projected to run between the two treaty ports of Tien-Tsin and Niu-Chwang. The Chinese government had negotiated a loan for the building of this road with the Hong-Kong and Shang-Hai Bank which in this matter is understood to be backed by the British government. But Russia, through its minister at Peking, M. Pavloff, has objected to the loan and has warned China not to proceed with it on pain of incurring Russia's displeasure. As opposing this move on the part of Russia, Lord Salisbury has offered China Great Britain's guarantee against interference on the part of any foreign power. But the Peking correspondent of the London Times states that the Tsung Li Yamen (the Chinese Foreign Office) has given formal assent to all the conditions imposed by the Russian Minister regarding the contract for the Niu-Chwang Railway extension loan, these conditions being in direct conflict with the terms of the signed contract and designed to block the completion of the final contract. Dealing with the subject in the House of Commons on Thursday, Mr. Balfour took ground which seemed a virtual acceptance of the conditions thus dictated by Russia. Mr. Balfour contended that there was no evidence of preference having been given to foreign manufacturers or traders in China, nor of an intention to put up barriers against British subjects. He argued that the question of equal facilities of trade was distinct from the question of concessions and intimated that the government's critics were expecting impossibilities. This evidently looks too much like a backdown in the face of Russian aggression to be reassuring to those who have been led to fear that British prestige among the nations and British interests in the East are suffering through a lamentable lack of firmness in Lord Salisbury's foreign policy.

**Hooley and Hooleyism.** Investigations in the British Bankruptcy Court into the affairs of the bankrupt promoter, Hooley, have brought to light matters of a sensational character. Hooley, it appears, was accustomed to pay large commissions to titled personages in consideration for the use of their names and influence in forwarding his schemes. "He testifies once a week," says a well known London correspondent, "and then for seven days there are denials, disclaimers and explanations from Peers of the realm and leaders of fashion. . . . One duke has resigned his directorship, two Earls have offered to turn over the gratuities received from Hooley to the Registrar, and another Earl is seriously ill; but the shareholders who have been dazzled by the great names and lost their money do not appear to have any real redress under the English law. . . . Whatever happens to Hooley and his Earls as the outcome of this Panama of smart London, there will be no end of moralizing. Already journals like 'Vanity Fair'

treat Hooleyism as one of the many sides of social degradation and explain how common it is for smart people to receive commissions for chaperoning girls in circles above their station or introducing nobodies into exclusive sets or for arranging marriages between heiresses and sons of Peers. Hooley may become the Luther of a social Reformation if he persists in nailing his thesis to the doors of the Bankruptcy Court."

**Uncle Sam and Cuba.** Punch has a cartoon which represents a Cuban insurgent gorging himself at the expense of the United States commissariat, while "Uncle Sam," in military accoutrements, stands by and addresses the Cuban as follows: "See here! if I'd known what a durn'd, worthless, ill-conditioned skunk you are, I wouldn't ha' lifted a hand for you! But—now I'm here—guess I'm going to stay and lick you into shape!" This hits off the Cuban situation with humor that is strongly flavored with truth. "Uncle Sam" is naturally a good deal disgusted, and complains that he was fed on lies about Cuba. But it seems rather unaccountable that an old gentleman so astute and intelligent should have put so much confidence in the declarations of Cuban leaders, jingo politicians and other interested parties. A few thousand dollars judiciously spent in getting trustworthy information might possibly have saved more than as many millions now dissipated in war, not to speak of the bloodshed and the suffering. But, right or wrong, "Uncle Sam" is in Cuba, and it certainly looks as if he must feel obliged to stay there, until by some means he shall get the affairs of the country into some kind of respectable shape, even if that shall involve "licking" the Cubans whom he started out to put in full charge of the country. The problem which the United States government has now on its hands in the West Indies is one of great difficulty. The outcome will probably be the annexation of Cuba as well as Porto Rico. The intention of annexing Cuba was, of course, distinctly disclaimed by the United States when entering upon the war, and the policy of annexation is likely to meet with much opposition in that country. It is to be expected that on the part of the insurgent population in Cuba there will be strong opposition to annexation, though it is said that some of the more intelligent leaders are now disposed to regard it with favor, recognizing, probably, the hopelessness of securing stable government on any other basis. Spain, and the Spanish population of Cuba, will probably much prefer that the island be annexed to the United States than that an independent Cuban government should be placed in power. All things considered, therefore, the issue is likely to be annexation. But the task of establishing a stable form of government of any kind in Cuba is evidently not an easy one. To control the insurgent population, to protect the lives of Spanish population, to garrison the towns, as they are vacated by the Spaniards, with forces sufficient to maintain peace and order, to relieve the necessities of a million famished people, to deal with the race prejudice between whites and negroes, which is said to be quite as strong in Cuba as in the Southern States, and so to lay necessary foundations for permanent government, forms a task of no little magnitude, and every philanthropic principle prompts the hope that the United States may prove equal to so important an undertaking.

**Peace.** The war between the United States and Spain, after lasting nearly four months, is now virtually at an end. On Friday afternoon a protocol which will form the

basis of a treaty of peace was signed at Washington by Secretary Day, on the part of the United States, and M. Cambon, the French Ambassador, on behalf of Spain. The terms of the protocol are as follows:

1. That Spain will relinquish all claim of sovereignty and title to Cuba.
2. That Porto Rico and other Spanish islands in the West Indies, and an island in the Ladrone, to be selected by the United States, shall be ceded to the latter.
3. That the United States will occupy and hold the city, bay and harbor of Manila, pending the conclusion of a treaty of peace which shall determine the control, disposition and government of the Philippines.
4. That Cuba, Porto Rico and other Spanish islands in the West Indies shall be immediately evacuated and that commissioners, to be appointed within ten days, shall, within thirty days from the signing of the protocol, meet at Havana and San Juan respectively, to arrange and execute the details of the evacuation.
5. That the United States and Spain will each appoint not more than five commissioners to negotiate and conclude a treaty of peace. The commissioners are to meet at Paris not later than the first of October.
6. On the signing of the protocol, hostilities will be suspended, and notice to that effect will be given as soon as possible by each government to the commanders of its military and naval forces.

In accordance with the stipulations of the protocol, President McKinley has proclaimed a suspension of hostilities and the necessary orders to this effect have been given through the proper channels to the commanders of the military and naval forces of the nation. France has lent a friendly hand to Spain in her extremity, and Spain has done wisely to accept her neighbor's good offices and make peace with her powerful antagonist. The terms are, of course, humiliating to Spanish pride, but they are as easy as could be expected under the circumstances. It cannot be said that the United States has taken an undue advantage of its opportunity. It acquires Porto Rico and one of the Ladrone islands. It will also annex Cuba if it so desires, and probably will find it difficult to avoid doing so. It can probably have the Philippines also if it chooses. Whether the acquisition of these islands will add to the strength and prosperity of the nation is a question. There is no question, however, as to their adding to its responsibilities and difficulties.

**Wheat.** The Toronto Globe of Wednesday last published an interview with a prominent Ontario miller, bearing on the prospective price of wheat. The miller quoted, professes to believe that the price now being quoted for wheat in Ontario, 65 cents, is too low, and that farmers will not be wise to sell at that figure. The reasons given for this opinion are that the quality of Ontario wheat this year is very superior, that on account of prevailing short crops for some years the world's supply of wheat had been nearly exhausted, and that the crop of the present year is exaggerated in the estimates being made. Millers who are manufacturing flour out of high priced wheat will not, of course, wish to see a sudden fall in the price of wheat, which must proportionately effect the price of flour. But there seems to be no doubt that the wheat crop of the present year is a very large one, and the strong probability is that the price must decline. The New York Tribune considers the estimates trustworthy which place the wheat crop of the United States for the year at 700,000,000 bushels. Of this it is estimated that not much over 400,000,000 bushels will be required for food and seed. With poor crops in other countries, there might be a demand for 200,000,000 bushels of the surplus in Europe, but with the prevailing good crops abroad, it is probable that not more than one hundred, or at most one hundred and fifty, millions of the United States crop will be called for in Europe. The corn crop will be something below the average, and this will make the consumption of wheat somewhat larger than it would otherwise be, but it seems probable that the United States will have this year from 100 to 150 million bushels of wheat more than can be consumed in the country or marketed abroad. The Tribune thinks it would not be surprising if the price of wheat should fall this year to 35 cents per bushel.