

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LXIV.

Vol. XVIII.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1902.

{ THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR
VOLUME LIII.

No. 3.

Provincial Prohibition.

As previously noted in these columns the decision of the Imperial Privy Council, sustaining the validity of the Manitoba Prohibitory Liquor Law, has naturally had the effect of bringing the question of Prohibition to the front. Since the decision of the Privy Council both declares the validity of the Manitoba Act, and also affirms the principle of Provincial jurisdiction in respect to the prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors within Provincial boundaries, it seems to be established beyond further question that each Province of the Dominion has a clear legal right to prohibit the liquor traffic within its own territory. Their lordships of the Privy Council went even a little beyond this and intimated that there might be conditions in which a Provincial Legislature would have a right to prohibit importation, as well as the sale of liquors within its territories, but as the range of questions submitted to them did not cover that point, their lordships considered it out of place for them to volunteer anything in the nature of a judgment upon it. Whatever larger measure of power in the way of prohibition the Provinces may hereafter be shown to possess, it appears to be clearly determined that each Provincial Legislature has now full jurisdiction so far as the liquor traffic within the Province is concerned.

The Practical Question.

It becomes therefore a very practical question to ask what course the several Provinces of the Dominion will take in reference to the exercise of the powers of prohibition assured to them by the decision of the court of final authority. Two of the Provinces, as is well known, have already enacted prohibitory laws. In P. E. Island the law came into operation some months ago. In Manitoba the date when the law should be declared was left in the discretion of the Government. Although prohibition was a distinct plank in the Government party's platform in the last general election, and the Manitoba law was a Government measure, Premier Roblin hesitates to declare the law in force and has intimated that it will be submitted to the people by a referendum. The position taken by the Premier is subjecting him to vigorous criticism. In Ontario the situation is a very interesting one. The general temperance sentiment of the Province is strong. When Sir Oliver Mowat was Premier, in recognition of the demand for prohibition, he promised that, if Provincial jurisdiction should be established, a prohibitory law should be introduced, embodying the fullest powers of the Legislature in the matter. This declaration is said to have had the assent at the time of Sir Oliver's colleague—Hon. Mr. Ross, now Premier of the Province. At all events, Mr. Ross has the reputation of being a thorough-going temperance man and a declared prohibitionist, and it is to be expected that if he considers it practicable to enact and administer a prohibitory law for Ontario, he will not fail to do so. The liquor interest is, however, very strongly entrenched in the Province, and in view of this fact it is thought probable that if a prohibitory law be enacted, it will be submitted to the people by referendum before being declared in force. As to Quebec, probably no one expects that Province to move at present in the direction of a prohibitory law, and the same may be said of British Columbia. Then there is the question in which we are more immediately interested—What will Nova Scotia and New Brunswick do in reference to the matter of Provincial Prohibition? The plebiscites which have been taken in recent years, as well as much other evidence, go to show that there is in both Provinces a strong popular sentiment in favor of prohibition. It is to be said, however, that generally when the people have expressed their sentiment in regard to this matter, whether by plebiscite or otherwise, it has been a general prohibitory law for the whole Dominion, and one that should prohibit the manufacture as well as the sale of liquor that was had in view. It is well known that there are some who have declared themselves strongly in favor of a general prohibitory law, who have also declared that they had little or no faith in the value of provincial prohibition. To what extent this view of the subject may prevail, we do not know, but it

is a point that deserves to be taken account of in considering the practical issues as to Provincial prohibition. As our readers know a Convention has been called on the initiative of a Committee of the Sons of Temperance, to meet at Truro this week, with a view to urging upon the Government of Nova Scotia the importance of a prohibitory liquor law for that Province. The matter can hardly fail to receive the very careful consideration of the Government. We believe that both among the people and in the Legislature of that Province, temperance sentiment is as strong as in any other portion of the Dominion, and Nova Scotia is not likely to lag behind other Provinces in the adoption of measures adapted to promote this great reform. Whether or not that end can be best promoted by the immediate enactment of a prohibitory law for the Province is a question that is not to be determined without the most careful enquiry and consideration. The end to be steadily sought in every Province is the suppression of the liquor business, as a thing only and continually evil. Nothing short of that can be accepted as an ideal and a goal, and whatever way will lead most surely to that end is the way that should be taken.

Britain and Germany.

The German Chancellor Count Von Buelow made some remarks in the Reichstag a few days ago in reference to a speech delivered by the Hon. Joseph Chamberlain some weeks ago in Edinburgh, in which, by way of reply to foreign criticisms upon the conduct of the South African war by the British, he referred, among other things, to Germany's conduct of the Franco-German war. The speech aroused much resentment in Germany and served to intensify the ill-feeling, already too prevalent, between the people of the two nations. There seemed to be no sufficient reason why Mr. Chamberlain's allusion to Germany should have caused so much irritation in that country, and there is perhaps no reason why Count Von Buelow's remarks should have excited so much feeling as they appear to have done in England. The resentment expressed toward the Chancellor in England is indeed not so much on account of what he said as on account of what he left unsaid in what is felt to be his mild and qualified condemnation of a most violent anti-British harangue delivered by another member of the Reichstag. It is much to be regretted in every way that bad feeling should be aroused and perpetuated between the two peoples. Some explanation however, may perhaps be found of the present ill-feeling and the readiness to take offence at small things in the generally irritable condition of the two countries. The temper of the British people has been severely tried by the terribly expensive and seemingly interminable war in South Africa, and by the anti-British feeling which the war has served to nourish among almost all the European nations, and the German people are in a bad temper because of the industrial depression which is causing a good deal of perplexity and distress in that country. The Emperor is credited with a sincere desire to maintain friendly relations with Great Britain, but he has evidently failed to influence his people strongly in that direction.

The Year's Operations in South Africa.

A review—said to be based upon official reports—of military operations in South Africa has lately been published, and the summing up must be considered a pretty formidable one for the record of a war which was supposed to have been practically ended a year ago. The review says that the total reduction of the Boer forces, in killed, wounded, taken prisoner and surrendered, amounts to 18,320 men. Out of this total only 7,995 rifles were secured. The captures of Boer ammunition amount to 2,300,000 cartridges. British columns are supposed to have secured all the Boer artillery, amounting to 27 guns, exclusive of the two captured by Gen. De Wet at Zeefontein. The captures of Boer stock have been enormous, considering the great hauls made during the earlier years of the war. During the last year a total of 29,882 horses were captured, while of other stock, such as cattle, oxen and sheep, 366,821 head were captured. The British casualties from actual fighting amount to only half of those sustained by the

Boers, namely, 9,113 men, of which number 1,513 were taken prisoners and have since been released. During the last year 4,090 men died of disease, 15 officers and 392 men were killed accidentally, and 25,800 men were invalided home.

Kipling's New Poem.

Rudyard Kipling's new poem, "The Islanders," is decidedly not that kind of literature which has to wait for a generation until the world wakes up to the consciousness that it has been written. It has not fallen upon the ears of the English people, gently as a summer rain or silently as the distilling of the dew, but has burst upon them like a northwestern blizzard and is as little to be ignored. From such extracts from the poem as have been published in newspaper despatches, it appears to be throughout a stern rebuke of Englishmen for their indifference to the duty of military training and the resulting inefficiency of the army, inviting disaster. He lashes and goads his countrymen on account of their devotion to sport and their willingness to shoulder their military responsibilities upon street boys and the men of the colonies. The style and temper of the poem may be judged from the following stanzas:

"Fenced by your careful fathers,
Ringed by your leaden seas,
Long did ye wake in quiet,
And long lie down at ease.

"Till ye said of strife, What is it?
Of the sword, It is far from our ken,
Till ye made a sport of your shrunken hosts
And a toy of your armed men.

"And ye vaunted your fathomless power,
And ye flaunted your iron pride,
Ere ye fawned on the younger nations
For the men who could shoot and ride.

"Then ye returned to your trinkets;
Then ye contented your souls,
With the flannelled fools at the wickets
Or the muddled oafs at the goals.

"Given to strong delusion,
Wholly believing a lie,
Ye saw that the land lay fenceless
And yet let the mouths go by—

"Waiting some easy wonder,
Hoping some saving sign,
Idle, openly idle,
In the lee of the forespent line—

"Idle, except for your boasting,
And what is your boasting worth,
If ye grudge a year of service
To the lordliest line on earth?

"Ancient, effortless, ordered,
Cycle on cycle set,
Life so long untroubled,
That ye who inherit forget

For England was not the work of chance or moments.

"It was not made with the mountains;
It is not one with the deep,
Men, not gods, devised it;
Men, not gods, must keep."

The poet seems to recognize invasion as a possibility for England and asks:

"Do ye wait for spattered shrapnell
Ere ye learn how a gun is laid?"

Will the rabbit war with England's foes, or "the red deer horn them for hire?"

"Will ye rise and dethrone your rulers,
Because ye were idle, both
Pride by insolence chastened,
Indolence purged by sloth?"

No, he continues, the salvation of England is to be found in her men, trained to the use of arms, and he demands of the people that they remain active and alert, until, 'each man born in the island be broke to the matter of war,' then fear of foes will have subsided in the growing consciousness of actual might. The race will be regenerated 'when men, not children and servants, shall be tempered and taught to the end':

"Cleansed of servile panic,
Slow to dread or despise,
Humble, because of knowledge,
Mighty by sacrifice."