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The United States in the West Indies. The end of the war between Spain and the United States over the government of Cuba appears now to be at hand, but issues connected more or less directly with the war must inevitably occupy the earnest attention of the United States government for some time to come. Our neighbors may pride themselves on avoiding "entangling alliances" with old world powers, but they are probably in the way to discover that a good deal of entanglement is possible without such alliances. Spain has not made a more vigorous resistance than she might reasonably have been expected to make, but to banish the Spanish flag from the West Indies has cost the United States a very considerable effort. This result of the war may indeed be worth much more than it has cost, but it is quite certain that if it is to be of any real value the United States must do much more for Cuba and Porto Rico than to drive out the Spaniards. While Spain will now be freed from responsibility for these islands, so far as their future government is concerned, a corresponding responsibility will now rest upon the United States. It might have been well for all concerned, if the government and Congress of that country, before instituting war against Spain, had used much greater diligence in securing information as to the real condition of affairs in Cuba, and especially as to the fitness of the insurgent population for self-government. It appears now to be generally acknowledged that the insurgent government which the United States Senate voted to recognize is not, and never was, anything worthy of the name of a government. The military forces supposed to be under the control of that "government" are of a character, in the judgment of the American general, to make it necessary in the interests of humanity that they be excluded from the conquered city of Santiago, and there is no reason to believe that the insurgent forces in other parts of the island are in any respect superior to those of Santiago province. The United States demands as a condition of peace that the Spanish forces shall be at once withdrawn from the West Indies, but just as soon as the Spanish troops are withdrawn from Cuba their places must be taken by American troops. That such occupation of the country is absolutely necessary to save the towns from pillage, to protect the lives and property of the people, and to save the whole island from anarchy and ruin seems to admit of no doubt. But when the United States government shall have established a protectorate in Cuba, it is not easy to predict when it will be able to withdraw its hand and declare the island independent. Sending American troops into Cuba at this season of the year, even when there are not Mauser rifles in the hands of Spanish soldiers to be encountered, is a very serious business. If any doubt on this point existed, it is plainly demonstrated by the present condition of things in Santiago, where General Shafter is said to have 5,000 or 6,000 sick soldiers upon his hands. It will hardly be a matter of regret, therefore, if the Spaniards do not find it convenient to leave Cuba before the first of October, when conditions become more tolerable for the unacclimated, and United States troops can, with a measure of safety, take the place of the Spanish soldiers.

Postage Stamps and Postal Notes. The policy of redeeming postage stamps at a slight discount, which has for some time been followed by the Post Office Department, has led to some undesirable results, and it is announced from Ottawa that the Department has decided not to redeem any stamps after the first of October. Some of the postmasters, it appears, are paid a commission

on the business they do instead of a salary, the commission being in some cases as much as forty-five per cent. on the business done, making it a considerable object for the postmaster to use as many stamps as possible. In this way postage stamps have in some cases been employed to a considerable extent instead of money or money orders. Thus if a man wished to pay for his newspaper, he could pay the amount of his subscription to the postmaster, who would forward the amount in stamps to the publisher who for the sake of obliging his subscriber was generally willing to submit to the inconvenience in such cases of being paid in stamps. The Post Office Department, finding that a large amount of business was thus being done in stamps, undertook to check the irregularity by raising the rate of discount from one to five per cent. But of course creditors are hardly disposed to accept payment for their bills in postage stamps when it means a discount of five per cent. on the amount due besides the trouble of getting the stamps redeemed. It has been decided accordingly to discontinue the redemption of postage stamps, and, for the convenience of those who find it necessary to transmit small sums through the mails, postal notes will be supplied. The Post Office Department is now issuing to all accounting postmasters postal notes of three denominations, 25, 50 and 75 cents, and larger denominations are to be issued so soon as they are received from the printers. The postal note is about the size and shape of a dollar bill.

Peace. While, at present writing, there has been no official announcement at Washington in reference to the acceptance by Spain of the terms of peace proposed by the United States, despatches from Madrid state that the Spanish Cabinet has completely approved the reply to the United States, which is said to accept the American conditions and that the assent of the Queen regent has been secured to the general lines of the reply. It is expected, therefore, that early in the present week there will be a deliverance from the Washington government in reference to the reply from Madrid. It appears to be the general expectation at Washington that Spain's answer will be an unconditional acceptance of the terms proposed by the United States, and that it will lead at once to a cessation of hostilities and to the negotiation of a treaty of peace. It is hoped, therefore, that, although General Miles is still prosecuting military operations in Porto Rico, the war is now virtually at an end.

—It is surely a righteous indignation which is expressed at the treatment accorded to sick and wounded United States soldiers connected with the Santiago expedition. All accounts agree as to the indomitable courage displayed by the American troops under most discouraging conditions. They served their country faithfully on the battlefield and surely had the right to expect that, when stricken down with wounds or disease, they should receive that attention which a nation marching in the forefront of nineteenth century civilization was able to give. Such expectations were cruelly disappointed. The U. S. War Department seems to have acted upon the supposition that neither the climate of Cuba nor well-armed troops in strongly garrisoned towns were capable of inflicting any serious injuries upon American soldiers. The needless suffering of the wounded after the battle of Santiago, because of the lack of shelter and of proper surgical and medical attention, is terrible to read of, while the conditions under which wounded soldiers were transferred to the United States suggests those of an old

time African slave ship rather than the conditions which a great and civilized nation would be expected to provide for its disabled and suffering soldiers. War is a terrible trade, and yet in a sense war is a trade, and to carry it on properly it has to be learned like other businesses. It is not to the discredit of the United States that the nation is an amateur rather than a professional in the art of war. But it is doubtless true that if the nation had had more experience in war it would have made better provision for its sick and wounded soldiers.

New Books.

Companions of the Sorrowful Way. By John Watson (Ian Maclaren). Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company. Price 75 cents.

This little book concerns itself with the last hours of Jesus before the Crucifixion, and especially with those who are seen in friendly relation with him during his passion. There are "The three intimates," belonging to the inner circle of his disciples—Peter, James and John; "The Owner of Gethsemane," supposed to be the young man with a linen cloth wound about his body, whom the author is inclined also to identify with Lazarus of Bethany; "The Bearer of the Cross"—Simon, the Cyrenian; "A Noble Lady," the wife of Pilate; "The Daughters of Jerusalem," "A Malefactor," the dying thief; "A Roman Officer," the Centurion. The book has the charm which belongs to all Ian Maclaren's writings. He deals tenderly and reverently with his subject, and yet poetically, his imaginative mind leads him in some instances to construct a complete personality from the hints given in the gospel narratives. The book will find many grateful readers; for "The church will ever make her pious pilgrimage to the garden of the Lord's passion, and under the shadow of the Olives she will ever learn the secret of sacrifice, for the Lord has not yet abandoned Gethsemane. . . . The far distant heaven does not dull his ear to the crying of his kinsfolk. . . . Into his heart is all sorrow poured, in virtue of his holy incarnation and eternal priesthood."

The making of the Canadian Northwest. By Rev. R. G. MacBeth, M. A. Toronto: William Briggs.

The favorable reception of an earlier volume by the same hand, entitled, "The Selkirk Settlers in Real Life," and the apparent demand for a narration of the beginning of history in our Canadian west by one who was a witness of the change from the old life to the new encouraged the author to undertake the work embodied in the volume before us. The book is perhaps hardly what one would expect from its title, considering the significance of similar titles in other connections. As a complete history of that part of Canada now embraced in the Province of Manitoba and the N. W. Territories, Mr. MacBeth's book must of course be regarded as very defective and unsatisfactory. But he had not set himself so large a task. His aim has been to write a life history of the country in which he was born, and in which so far he has spent his life, and he has written of men and events as he has known them. To use his own words he "has simply gone back and lived through the past again, seeing the faces and hearing the voices of other days," and what he had seen and heard he has written. Mr. MacBeth—whose father was a farmer of Kildonan, in the neighborhood of Port Garry—was a lad of ten summers at the time that the Northwest became a part of the Dominion of Canada. He has a boy's vivid memory of events connected with Riel's first rebellion. He was a law student in Winnipeg when the second rebellion occurred and took active part in the suppression of it as a member of the regiment known as the Winnipeg Light Infantry, and first as a private and afterwards a Lieutenant in the Kildonan Company. It is very possible that the careful student of history will find reason to differ from some of Mr. MacBeth's opinions as to events and the men who took part in them during the making of the Canadian Northwest. But our author has written of events and men as they appeared to him and as he took part in and with them. The volume of 230 pages which he has given us is one of lively interest throughout; there is not a dull page in it, and it deserves to find many readers. The mechanical work is excellent and the numerous illustrations form an attractive and valuable feature of the book.

Faces that Follow. By Mrs. E. M. Mason, Author of "Things I Remember," etc. Toronto: William Briggs.

This volume of 200 pages is written from the standpoint—real or supposed—of a minister's wife. The book is well written, sketchy and entertaining, revealing lights and shadows. It teaches both by precept and suggestion. The large type, good paper and embellished covers—products of the publisher's art—combine to give Mrs. Mason's work an appropriately attractive setting.