

# Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,  
VOLUME LXV.

Vol. XIX.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR  
VOLUME LIV

No. 24.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 1903.

**British Statesmen Oppose a Preferential Movement.** Hardly anyone possessing even a slight acquaintance with the general attitude of the English people toward questions of trade could have supposed that Mr. Chamberlain's scheme for a preferential tariff within the Empire would prove immediately acceptable to a majority of the people of the United Kingdom. The most that even the most ardent Imperial Federationist could have hoped for was that the people might gradually be educated to the acceptance of a protective policy for the sake of the advantages that an Imperial Zollverein might confer. But probably no one was quite prepared for the fierce outburst of opposition which the preferential tariff proposition met with when it came up for discussion in the House of Commons last Tuesday through an amendment moved by Mr. Chaplin, opposing the remission of the duty of the tax on wheat. The opposition to any movement in the direction of a protective tariff was most determined, and was not by any means confined to the opponents of the Government, but Liberals and Conservatives vied with each other in the vigor of the language in which they denounced the idea of any departure from free-trade principles. Although the Colonial Secretary's scheme for preferential trade within the Empire is understood to have the sympathy of Premier Balfour, it is evident from the debate of Tuesday that it is very far from commanding the support of the Government as a whole. Among the Conservatives who declared their opposition to any such scheme are—Mr. Ritchie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Sir John Gorst and Hon. Arthur Elliott, who is also a member of the Government. Indeed all the members of the Government who participated in the debate seem to have declared themselves vigorously as free traders and frankly opposed Mr. Chamberlain's proposals. Former members of cabinets and private members protested against any interference with Great Britain's fiscal policy, Unionists vying with Liberals in declaring themselves out and out free-traders.

**Incidents of the Debate.** Sir Michael Hicks-Beach led the revolt of the Conservative members to the Colonial Secretary's programme. His speech is characterized as "oil and vitriol," eulogizing Mr. Chamberlain's virtues, but vigorously condemning his scheme for a preferential tariff. Afterward Mr. Ritchie the present Chancellor of the Exchequer had declared his opposition to Mr. Chamberlain's innovations. Some of the Unionist members who spoke lauded the Chancellor for his refusal to pander to the spirit of protection, and all demanded that Mr. Balfour enlighten them in regard to the Government's position on the subject. Sir Henry Fowler, Liberal, in an exceptionally able speech, emphasized the right of the people to know the decision of the Government respecting a question of so vital importance to the Empire. Sir John Gorst (Conservative) whose speech is characterized as a bitter attack on any tampering with free trade, declared that a great portion of the rising generation in the United Kingdom was already so degenerate and poverty-stricken that anything tending to increase the price of food would threaten a national disaster. Mr. James Bryce, Liberal, pointed out the erroneousness of arguing from American prosperity in favor of a protection system, as much as the prosperity of the United States is due greatly to the cheapness of food under a system of free trade prevailing among all the States of the Union. Hon. Arthur Elliott, of the Treasury, was not less pronounced than other members of the Government who had spoken, in his opposition to protection and pre-

ferential tariffs. He held that the policy of the Government was represented by its proposal to revoke the corn-tax, and he asked the House seriously to consider what the country has to gain by giving up its position of being a country of cheap imports. He expressed the conviction that the more the people inquired into the subject the more they would be convinced that their interests demanded the perpetuation of the policy of free trade.

**Mr. Balfour's Speech.** In answer to many appeals and demands from both sides of the House, Mr. Balfour discussed the situation in a clever speech on Wednesday. The Premier was non-committal and conciliatory. He explained that the reason for the imposition of the corn tax was that the Government at that time wanted money, and it was now proposed to remove the tax because it was no longer necessary for revenue purposes. Mr. Balfour professed himself a free-trader, but with an open mind in reference to any alteration in a fiscal system founded to meet conditions of fifty years ago, and he would not compel his colleagues in the administration to conform to a standard of opinion upon which he himself maintained an open mind. He admitted that difference of opinion existed within the Cabinet, but these were not serious enough to cause the resignation of any members. He did not believe that the country would ever return to the old protection system, but they were confronted by three great phenomena in the world of trade,—high tariff walls against the United Kingdom, the growth of trusts, and the desire of the Colonies for closer fiscal union with the Mother Country. It would be folly to interfere with the free trade system without the most careful examination, but at the same time they could not ignore those new problems which the everchanging face of industrial life presented for the decision and action of statesmen. Mr. Balfour's speech, while it is an intimation that the question of a change of fiscal policy in Great Britain is shelved for the present, has probably, as it was intended to do, relieved the tension in the Cabinet and made it possible for Mr. Chamberlain to continue as a member of the Government.

**Assassination and Revolution in Servia.** Belgrade, the capital of Servia, was, on the night of the 10th inst., the scene of a political tragedy in which royal blood was shed. Both King Alexander and his Queen Draga were slain. Since the King's last suspension of the Servian constitution, it is said, the army has entertained hostile feelings toward him, and it would appear that leaders in the army have acted in co-operation with the Ministers of Justice and of Finance in the Servian Government to bring about a revolution. Matters came to a crisis on Wednesday night, when Colonel Naumovics, the Adjutant of the King, accompanied by other officers of the army, burst in the door of the royal apartments, the palace guard having been previously overpowered, and presented to the King a form of abdication for his signature. The document is said to have contained the statement that by marrying a "public prostitute" the King had degraded Servia and that therefore he must abdicate. The King's answer was to draw a revolver and kill Naumovics on the spot. The assassination of the King and Queen followed. Afterwards the Queen's two brothers were slain, and a number of other persons, including the Premier of the Servian Government, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister for War, shared a similar fate. The streets of Belgrade were meantime occupied by soldiery in the interest of the revolutionary party, and an attempt to support the dynasty by the Danube division of

the army was unsuccessful, its commander being killed. Other accounts differ considerably in detail from that above given and made the attack upon the King and Queen appear even more savage and revolting. The Servian army has proclaimed as King Prince Karageorgevitch, who has been living in Geneva since 1891. He is said to be 53 years old. His wife, who is dead, was a member of the Montenegrin royal family. A new ministry has been formed with M. Akaumovics as Premier. The ministry announces that at a sitting to be held on June 15 the national representatives will elect a sovereign and assume control of the situation. Servia is a small kingdom of 2,500,000 people, separated from Austro-Hungary by the Danube. Its political condition for some time has been disturbed and unhappy, but whether the violent means which have now been taken to better conditions will be successful is at least doubtful.

**Good Crop Prospects in the Northwest.** It is too early yet of course to forecast with any certainty the character of the harvest in the Northwest. Even at a considerably later date favorable anticipations may be disappointed, but it is gratifying to learn that the present outlook for the harvest is highly encouraging. The weather, especially in the Territories, it is said, has been all that could be desired, and the farmers are jubilant. A considerably increased acreage has been placed under wheat this year, and it is estimated that, with a continuance of good weather, there will be a wheat crop of more than 125,000,000 bushels in the Northwest this year.

**The United States Steel Corporation.** EDITOR MESSENGER AND VISITOR: DEAR SIR:—In your issue of last week, among the interesting articles on first page, I noticed one concerning large corporations. If I read this correctly, you state that the United States Steel Corporation pays its dividends from sales of stock. It would not occur to you, probably, that this is serious misstatement of fact—one that would be used unfairly by a number of people who are inclined to condemn all investments in joint stock companies. We respectfully call your attention to the above, believing that you will make correction if the same seems of sufficient importance.

Very truly,  
A. H. CHIPMAN.

The statements to which our correspondent refers and to which he takes exception are as follows (See MESSENGER AND VISITOR June 3, page 1, last paragraph):

"The great success of the recent large combinations of capital, such as the oil and steel corporations, has created a craze for centralization. In the steel corporation, a total amount of \$25,000,000 was pledged, but only \$25,000,000 was paid in cash; \$5,000,000 will have been distributed in dividends, as soon as the last of one of \$10,000,000 now declared, shall have been paid. This enormous profit of 250 per cent. has not been made by a reduction of operating expenses, nor by the profits of regular business, but only by the sale of stock many times in excess of the value of the plants incorporated in the combination. In the steel corporation this plan has been a success, because of the prosperity of the business."

This information upon which these statements were made was gathered from what we have every reason to suppose were trustworthy sources, and we are not aware that there has been any "misstatement of fact." It will be observed that the statement made was not that the Steel Corporation pays its dividends from sales of stock, but that the Steel Corporation paid its enormous dividends of 250 per cent. during the short period that it has been in operation "chiefly by the sale of stock many times in excess of the value of the plants included in the combination." And further that the Steel Corporation has been able to do this successfully because it was engaged in a business so prosperous and of such volume as to warrant, at least for the time being, the great expansion of its stock.