

Messenger and Visitor

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LXVI.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,
VOLUME LV.

Vol. XX.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1904.

No. 5

The Harwick

Mine Explosion.

One of those terrible disasters which are incidental to the work of coal mining occurred on January 25th in the Harwick mine, Pittsburg, Pa. The disaster which resulted from an explosion of gas in the mine has caused the death of about 180 miners who were killed by the after-damp following the explosion. The cause of the explosion will probably never be certainly known. The most probable supposition is that it was caused by a careless miner who struck a match to light his pipe, or by the flame of a broken safety lamp coming in contact with the gas with which the mine in certain portions of it was known to be heavily charged. Another theory is that the explosion was caused by a heavy blast whereby a new pocket of gas was struck and exploded. The work of exploring the mine and removing the bodies of the dead is being proceeded with under great difficulties. Something of the terrible effect of the disaster upon the mining community may be understood from the statement that it has made about a hundred women widows and some 400 children are left fatherless.

The End of

Whitaker Wright.

The death of Whitaker Wright on Tuesday last in London, less than an hour after he had been sentenced by Judge Bigham to seven years penal servitude for fraud in connection with the London and Globe corporation constitutes a sensational ending of a remarkable career. The name of Whitaker Wright has become notorious of late in connection with certain vast financial operations which he had promoted, the failure of which had also involved a number of persons of high standing in England, including the late Lord Dufferin, in transactions which resulted not only in great financial loss to them but also in serious damage to their reputations. No doubt in the case of Lord Dufferin, and probably in others, the wrong that was done was done unwittingly, resulting from an unwise and unjustifiable confidence in the representations of a schemer. Even Wright may have justified his course to himself on the ground that in floating vast schemes on a wholly inadequate capital he was doing only what was being done by many other men who have not been called to account for their doings. When the sentence was passed upon him Wright is reported to have said: "All I can say is that I am as innocent of any intention to deceive as anyone in this room." Shortly after he had passed from the court room to a small room adjoining he suddenly fell back and in short time was dead. A post mortem examination has shown that his death was due to poison. Judge Bigham's charge to the jury was strongly against the accused. In the course of his long experience, the Judge said, he had never heard of anything like the transactions which preceded the hopeless bankruptcy of the London and Globe financial corporation. In passing sentence Judge Bigham said he could see nothing to excuse the crime of which Wright had been convicted, and he could not conceive a worse case. With all the pity one may feel at the sad and tragic ending of such a career as that of Whitaker Wright, there must be a feeling of satisfaction at the evidence, which the verdict and the sentence in this case affords that in a British court of law swindling is not regarded as any the less criminal because it is practised on a colossal scale.

Mr. Foster on

the Chamberlain

Policy.

The address delivered by the Hon. Geo. E. Foster in York Theatre, St. John, on Tuesday evening last, is worthy of note. It is pretty generally acknowledged that in oratorical gifts and effectiveness as a speaker Mr. Foster has scarcely a superior in Canada, and as it was understood that he would discuss the Chamberlain tariff policy from a non-partisan standpoint, the audience which filled the house was of a general character, embracing many of the more intelligent of both political parties. It would be well for the country if our public men would more frequently address themselves to a discussion of great public questions from a non-partisan point of view. Mr. Foster's treatment of his subject was largely historical and expository. He traced the origin of the preferential trade idea to the Colonies. In the first national conference, which was held at Ottawa in 1894, and at which delegates were in attendance from all parts of

the empire, Lord Jersey representing the Home Government, all matters connected with the securing of preferential trade arrangements were discussed and a resolution, drawn up and moved by Mr. Foster himself, was adopted; affirming the advisability of preferential arrangements between the mother country and the colonies and between the different colonies themselves. In the canvass before the general elections in Canada in 1896 the leaders of both parties declared in favor of preferential trade, and in the first year after the Laurier Government came into power the preferential tariff was introduced. Then, in 1902, there was a conference between Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, and the Colonial Premiers, at which the subject of a mutual preference between the colonies and the mother country was considered and approved. Mr. Foster discussed at some length and in an instructive way the situation as between Mr. Chamberlain and his followers and the free-trade and free-food advocates in England, and while he recognizes that the forces opposed to Mr. Chamberlain are still very strong and the day of his victory may be delayed, he believes that the preferential trade policy is bound to triumph in the end. Mr. Foster is himself of course an ardent advocate of that policy, and one's desires are very apt to influence his conclusions. However, considering the apparent success so far of the campaign against free trade, it can scarcely be regarded as improbable from any standpoint that the time may not be very far distant when, for better or for worse, there will be a departure from Britain's time-honored free trade policy.

Ontario

Snow-bound.

This winter's storms in Ontario are said to be the most severe in the memory of the oldest railway official. There have indeed been in other winters heavier falls of snow over a limited area and lasting only for a short time, but this winter's storms have been general over the whole length of the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific lines in the Province, and have lasted for almost six weeks. As the area affected is so wide, it is impossible for the companies to draw on their reserve staff or equipment in any place or district to help operate or clear the road in the most seriously blockaded places. The result has been a serious demoralization of the train service in many parts of the Province. In the Toronto or Ontario division of the Canadian Pacific there were last week at least 500 extra men at work, many of them farmers and rural workmen, all engaged in the endeavor to clear the lines and keep them clear. The Grand Trunk, with its greater extent of mileage in Ontario, has had more trouble with the snow blockade than the C. P. R. Over a thousand extra men were employed last week trying to get the blocked-up lines cleared and to keep the main lines in a passable condition. Practically all the lines west and north of Guelph were blocked and it was very difficult to get through on several other branch lines. The expense to the companies in the endeavor to keep their lines clear is of course very heavy and the inconvenience caused to the public is serious.

United States

West and the

Canadian West.

The assertion is frequently made on United States platforms and in United States newspapers that the farmers now moving in so large numbers from the Western States into the Canadian Territories are likely to constitute a strong influence to draw Canada into annexation to the United States. It probably does not occur to those who speak or write in this vein to consider that it is quite possible that these immigrants may find in this country a system of government and administration quite as much to their liking as that which they have left behind. The following from the *Philadelphia Ledger* indicates, however, that in some quarters, even in the United States, it is quite well understood that a comparison of the Canadian West with the United States West is by no means unfavorable to Canadian rule. The *Ledger* says: Many Americans have been surprised, perhaps a little chagrined, to hear from time to time, and from Americans, too, that Canadian administration of the law in the new Northwest Territory would furnish a good model for the United States to study and follow. The new territories have but recently been invaded by settlers in large bodies; there are many Indians and half-breeds; the nationalities from every part of Europe are rushing

into the country. Peace, law and order prevail, the law is honestly and most efficiently administered, there is no talk nor suspicion of "graft," "pull" or inefficiency, and the Americans who go to the new land are among those who are ready to admit that Canadian rule is admirable. The famous Northwest Mounted Police are model officers chosen for their "moral record" as well as for their bravery and energy; they enforce the law, lynching, rioting, and whitecapping, with which we are afflicted, are unknown. That is an admission, to be sure, they order these things better in Canada than with us; but there is another side to the story. The Canadians of the Northwest have no tramps to deal with; no roving negro criminals; no mines with the scum of the earth which frequent the new camps. The settlers are the picked of the earth. They comprised last year nearly 50,000 American farmers from our own Northwest and the settlers from England, Germany, Scandinavian, like the American settlers, are the genuine homesteaders who build commonwealths. So much is to be said in defence of our lawless Montana and Colorado, and yet the fact remains, worth pondering, that Canada knows how to enforce the law.

Corn and Wool.

Mr. Chamberlain strenuously contends that his proposal in favor of preferential trade with the Colonies does not involve a tax on the raw materials of the British manufacturers. He proposes a tax on corn only, and that a small tax, the disadvantage of which would be more than offset by the advantages which, he holds, his scheme would secure. It is contended, however, by some of Mr. Chamberlain's opponents that to discriminate thus in favor of one class of Colonial producers would be impossible without stirring up endless dissatisfaction and jealousy between different classes of producers. Thus Mr. Asquith, one of the ablest of the young Liberal statesmen, says: The South African wool grower will want a preference equal to the Canadian corn grower, and unless he gets it at once, between the positions of Canada and South Africa there would be invidious discrimination under which, if material bonds are needed to unite the colony and the mother country, South Africa would have cause to say, You are giving a material bond to Canada and you withhold one from me.

East Atlantic

Service.

The Royal Transportation Commission has recently visited the principal seaports of the Maritime Provinces, and the people of each of the places visited have of course embraced the opportunity of placing before the Commission, in as favorable a point of view as possible, the special advantages of their particular port. At Sydney, C. B., it was forcibly pointed out to the Commission that the shortest and quickest route from Great Britain to Montreal and other western points was by steamer to Sydney and thence by rail to the desired destination. It was maintained that a twenty-three knot steamer could make the passage from Galway to Sydney in three days and fourteen hours, or nearly two days less time than it would take going to Montreal. To demonstrate the feasibility of this proposition, it is stated that a movement has been started in Sydney with a view to asking the British Admiralty, through the Dominion Government, to make an experiment with one of the British navy's fast cruisers during the coming summer. The scheme proposed is to have the cruiser receive the British mails at Galway and proceed immediately to Sydney. There a train will be in waiting, with as clear a road as possible, and the mails will be carried over the Intercolonial to Montreal with a possible speed. An effort will also be made, it is said, to have rapid transmission of mails over the Canadian Pacific to the West and through to the Orient as a part of the experiment.

In the Far East.

Russia's reply to Japan has not yet been issued. According to the latest despatch it is not expected that the Russian note will be submitted to the Czar before Tuesday or Wednesday of this week. There were reports at the end of last week that Russia's reply had been sent and that it was of a character likely to prove satisfactory to Japan. But the report proved to be premature and it remains to be seen whether it was any nearer the mark in respect to the attitude of Russia which the note was supposed to indicate. So far as the world is informed, matters as between Russia and Japan remain about as they were a week ago. Russian diplomacy is being tested to the utmost in order to present such conditions as will induce Japan to call off her dogs of war and at the same time avoid Japan's demand for the recognition of the integrity of the Chinese Empire.