

Secretary Blaine is wont to refer to the States of South America collectively as Latin America, and the term is not inapplicable. Latin America has within it great possibilities and must within a few decades show great development. Its people have long been comparatively isolated from the rest of the world, and they have, so to speak, been out of the rut of modern civilization. This cannot last long. The era of railway building in South America has now fairly commenced, and as the continent has in proportion a greater extent of fertile country than any other portion of the globe its possibilities are simply beyond calculation.

To those who know of the big trees of California only by hearsay it seems almost incredible that from the trunk of a tree is to be carved out a complete railway car, with the exception only of the trucks, for exhibition at the World's Fair. The tree used will be about twenty-eight feet in diameter, and something over four hundred feet long. It will be sawed by hand to the required length, and hollowed out and polished inside, leaving the roof of the natural bark of the tree. This car made from one piece of wood will be unique, but we do not see how warping is to be avoided as it dries. Doubtless those who are preparing the exhibit know what they are about.

It is probable that St. John, N. B., will have a recount of its people, in order to see if the Dominion census in that city was correct or not. From all accounts the census of St. John must have been inaccurate either at the enumeration of 1881 or that of this year, and the Board of Trade of that city has asked the City Council to undertake a new count. Our readers are aware that we have never been satisfied with the census report of the population of Halifax, but although there are many who are one with us in this, no move has yet been made to test the accuracy of the count here. Our friends in St. John will most likely have their recount, and then if they find that the census figures erred by giving too small a population our city fathers will awaken to the necessity of looking after our standing among Canadian cities.

The Czar of Russia has at present a very large contract upon his hands, and if the Empire comes out of it intact it will be due more to external than to internal circumstances. The wholesale expulsion of the Jews, who were the money-lenders of Russia, has deprived the farmers of the wherewithal to harvest and ship their grain, and this added to a short crop has created the terrible famine of which we are now receiving but meagre reports. With his starving subjects in rebellion, his Jewish policy discredited and his foreign relations greatly strained, the Czar is obliged to float a heavy national loan, and is not a little disturbed to find that Russian credit is slowly but surely approaching zero. Russia has within itself the elements of a great empire, but until its people have an opportunity for self-government its national stability will be uncertain, and its influence running counter to the civilization of the age.

The suicide of General Boulanger on the grave of his mistress was a sad but fitting close to a career in which greed and power were the strong incentives. General Boulanger was married to a good and true wife, but his ambition for power and his unscrupulous use of public position stunted his manhood, dwarfed his patriotism and blighted his married life. Boulanger was carried into power by the people who fancied they had in him a military genius who would be able to lead France to victory and wipe out the disgrace of the Sedan; but Boulanger loved power rather than France, and from the moment of securing it used his utmost endeavors to further his own interests. Millions of francs were obtained by him from his mistresses, and millions more were secretly secured from the public treasury, all of which was expended corruptly to bring popularity and to advance Boulanger. And now this idol of the French people—this pretended hero and patriot—has sought in his exile the cowardly resort of a suicide, and has fallen upon his mistress' grave a victim to his own ambition, cupidity, immorality and cowardice.

For the past few years there has been a widespread agitation in the United States for an extension of the currency, in order to meet the demands of trade. It appears that in the United States the gold issue is almost six hundred million dollars, while the silver and note issue is fifty per cent greater, and yet only eight per cent of the entire business of the country is transacted in current coins or notes, the balance being done by cheques, drafts, etc. An increased issue of current coins or notes involves increased banking facilities, and Hon. M. D. Harter in the October number of the *Forum* deals with this vexed question very successfully. He proposes that the present Banking Act of the United States be extended so as to enable banks to deposit as security for their note circulation the bonds issued by states, counties, cities and railway corporations, as well as those already issued by the United States Government. In the event of banks offering these bonds they are to be allowed to issue notes to the extent of ninety per cent of their face value, the law providing that the bonds must be of five years standing, must be quoted in one or more exchanges at a premium of five per cent, and the interest upon them must have been paid promptly. When a bond depreciates or the interest is not paid, then the bank will be called upon by the comptroller of the treasury to replace the security in accordance with the law. If Mr. Harter's suggestions are adopted the cry of the silver kings for a dual standard of value will be forever hushed, and the banking system of the United States will have about it an element of stability, elasticity and permanence which at present it does not possess.

The Sultan of Turkey has long occupied an interesting position in European diplomacy, but just at present diplomatic interest is more than ever centered in him. As an offset to the triple alliance of Austria, Germany and Italy, Russia and France have made a compact for mutual defence, and the Sultan suddenly awakens to find that French and Russian diplomats take a lively interest in the affairs of the Turkish Empire, while the representatives of the triple alliance are equally anxious to secure the co-operation of His Imperial Majesty. The cause for this undue concern is not far to seek. Turkey has an army of 400,000 men, well equipped for war, and in the event of an appeal to arms Turkish co-operation with one side or the other might decide the result. Meanwhile the Sultan, fully alive to the importance of his position, accepts the blandishments of the diplomats, but for the present declines to take any definite action.

The forward movement of Methodism in the great city of London is now attracting world-wide interest. Finding that some of the methods of the Salvation Army were exceedingly attractive to the masses, and realizing the immense field which London offered for the work of evangelists, Messrs. Hewes and Piers have labored unceasingly to gain the ears and touch the hearts of London's "submerged tenth." Their success has been phenomenal. They have now eighty active male assistants and a band of eleven hundred lady volunteers, many of whom are the wives or daughters of wealthy London merchants. Thirteen large halls and chapels have been opened, and on Saturday evenings and Sundays standing room in these is difficult to obtain. In each of these places, one of which is Piccadilly, a fine band and large choir are in attendance, and the services are heartily taken part in by the congregation. The results of the forward movement are said to be almost miraculous, especially in the terrorized Whitechapel district, where a wholesale reformation has been accomplished.

When people make up their minds to pursue a certain course of action why cannot they be open and honest as to their motives and reasons for doing so. For instance, when a minister has a call to a larger congregation and salary than he has been enjoying, why does he consider it necessary to talk of greater opportunities for good, a wider sphere of usefulness, and the various phrases we all have heard so many times, when he would actually rise in the estimation of his friends by giving the real reason for making a change, which in most cases is the need or the wish for more money and a larger share of this world's comforts than he had been in receipt of before. A clergyman can marry; he usually does so, and has a family, which it is his duty to do his best for. Who then is to say a clergyman has no right to look at a call from a business as well as a spiritual point of view, only service should be first and payment second in his estimation. Other things being equal he has every moral right to obtain the best remuneration he can for his time, but we always like to hear a clergyman speak out fearlessly on such a subject, and not veil his motives with the transparent excuses so frequently made. A minister will doubtless regret parting from a congregation in which he has labored for a long time, but surely if he feels it his duty to his family to leave for a place where better payment can be procured he need only tell the truth about it. There might as well be an end to any hypocrisy in the matter, for if the move be made from base motives people will easily find it out. Honesty is the best policy in this as in many other affairs in life.

The Manitoba School Act passed in 1890 for the purpose of abolishing separate schools, by making everybody, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, liable to assessment for the maintenance of Public Schools, was, on October 28th, declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada. The history of the case is in brief as follows:—After the passing of the Act, the city of Winnipeg passed bye laws enforcing the assessment, and against this assessment a Roman Catholic ratepayer named Barrett appealed. The appeal came before Mr. Justice Killam, who sustained the bye-laws. From this decision an appeal was made to the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba, where Judge Killam's decision was upheld, with one Judge dissenting. The case was then taken ostensibly by Barrett, but really by the Dominion Government to the Supreme Court, which resulted in the decision stated at the beginning of this paragraph. Chief Justice Ritchie gave lengthy reasons for the decision, with which all the Judges agreed. They held that the clause in the B. N. A. Act protecting the rights and privileges established by law in respect of denominational schools at the time of Confederation, was amended on being transcribed into the Manitoba Act of Union in 1871 by inserting the words "or practice" after the words "established by law," and that as there was a system of denominational schools established by practice in Manitoba at the time of the Union, the Act of 1890, compelling Roman Catholics to contribute to the support of Public Schools, and at the same time find the means of educating their children according to the religious belief, prejudiced and injuriously affected the privileges Catholics enjoyed by practice before the union with Canada, and is therefore *ultra vires*. The decision has been hailed with joy by Catholics, who fully expected this result, but the Government of Manitoba is determined to stand by the Act to the last, and will appeal to a higher tribunal. The Imperial Privy Council will be called upon to finally decide the matter at as early a day as possible, when it will be seen whether Manitoba is to have one school system or a troublesome religious division to deal with. It appears unlikely that the judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada will be reversed, for those words "or practice" appear to settle the matter. It is a question not of equity but of law.

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