

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LXII.

{ THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR
VOLUME LI.

Vol. XVI.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 1900.

No. 30.

Rain in India. From India there comes the welcome news that fairly abundant rains have fallen in the famine-stricken districts. The Viceroy, Baron Curzon, states that rains have been general in Berar and the central provinces of Hyderabad. In Rajputana the rainfall was good and sufficient for special needs. In Central India there has been moderate general rains. The sowing of crops has commenced. The Monsoon was heavy in Surat and there were good falls in Kattywar and Thana. In the Punjab there has been sufficient rain for dry land sowing. The rains materially improve the prospect for the future but of course give no immediate help, and no diminution of the relief work is possible. On the contrary the need has continued to grow greater. The condition of the surviving cattle in Western India is said to be deplorable. Famine is being followed by pestilence. The Governor of Bombay has reported that for the week ending July 7 there were 9,928 cases of cholera in the famine districts, of which 6,474 were fatal, and that in the native States there were 9,526 cases, of which 5,892 were fatal. The large proportional fatality is doubtless due to the fact that, the vitality of the people having been weakened by starvation, they fall an easy prey to the disease.

Cuba. In the course of a speech at the inauguration of Senator Rodriguez, the new mayor of Havana, General Wood, the Governor of Cuba, assured his audience that it had always been and still was the intention of the United States to give independence to Cuba, and that the only people who could prevent independence was the Cubans themselves. That is to say that Cuba will become independent whenever, in the judgment of the government and people of the United States, it shall have reached a degree of development which would make it safe for itself and its neighbors that the reins of government should be committed to its hands. The time when that condition will be reached is hardly within sight, and it is a fair question whether, if Cuba should attain to the capacity for self-government, her probable destiny is independence or annexation to the United States. However that may be, there appear to be indications that Cuba under American tutelage is making gratifying progress toward better conditions. It will doubtless take time to make a good citizen out of the average Cuban, and if the United States is both able and willing to carry on the work of education, there is reason to rejoice in it, whether the destiny of the island is to become an independent commonwealth or to become absorbed in the great Republic. Not all the new influences brought to bear on Cuba are of the most wholesome character, but in the main they are no doubt making for the development of a higher type of character in the people. What is being done during the present summer for the school teachers of Cuba is specially worthy of note, and seems equally worthy of commendation. Several hundreds of these teachers, representing it is said a hundred and twenty Cuban towns, have been brought over to the United States. They are now, we believe, at Cambridge, Mass., enjoying certain privileges secured to them through the generosity of the authorities and the students of Harvard University and other friends of education in the country. Courses have been provided in the summer school of the University with particular reference to the needs of these Cuban teachers, and they will enjoy other privileges which will be of a highly educative character.

The Session Closed. The Parliament of Canada was prorogued on Wednesday of last week after a session covering nearly half a year, the longest, we believe, with one exception, in the

history of Canadian Parliaments. It is generally understood that the session just concluded is the last of the present Parliament. This fact has doubtless had much to do with determining the length of the session. Probably three months would have amply sufficed for the transaction of all the business which Parliament has had before it in its recent session, allowing time for a pertinent and reasonably full discussion of all matters of legislation. But it is evident to anyone who has followed the course of discussion that our legislators have not been actuated by any common purpose to despatch the business of the country promptly and reach the end of the session. Parliament has been used as a manufactory of campaign literature, and probably it is not unfair to say that on the whole less attention and effort have been given to the transaction of the legitimate parliamentary business of the country than to an attempt on the part of each party to discredit the other before the electorate and to promote its own interests in the coming elections. The Government has not suffered for lack of criticism at the hands of its opponents, and if the friends of the Government have been inclined to think that much of the criticism was of a factious and unreasonable character, it is well for them to remember that no administration is likely to be found so able and so pure that it will not bear watching, and that, in such a political system as we have, next to a good Government, an able and vigilant Opposition is to be desired as a safeguard of the country's interests. There is much in connection with the working of our present political system to cause good men to grieve. Among its worst features is the intense and narrow partizanship which it develops. The men who try to see both sides of a question in current politics are a comparatively small number. The question with most is not what is true, what is right? but what is the policy and position of the party? At the same time it must be confessed that it is far easier to point out the evils of the system which we have than to find or invent a better one.

The Situation in China. The attention of the civilized world continues to be painfully attracted to the Chinese Capital, and though the cabled message of United States Minister Conger at Peking, received at Washington on the 20th inst., would seem to encourage hope that, two days before that date, the members of the legations were still living, though closely besieged in the British legation and in imminent danger of destruction, yet there is at least some ground for suspicion that the Conger despatch was not genuine, and even if it were genuine and correctly represented the condition of affairs on Wednesday last, it is quite uncertain what has since taken place. The Conger despatch appears to have been obtained in response to pressure brought to bear upon the Chinese Foreign Office by the United States Government. Chinese officials at foreign Capitals had been declaring on the evidence of information received by them from the authorities at Peking that there had been no general massacre of the legations there. Naturally these assertions were doubted, since, if the Chinese Minister at Washington or elsewhere could receive news from Peking, there seemed no good reason why the Foreign Ministers in the Chinese Capital could not communicate with their own governments. Accordingly, as a confirmation of the assertion of the Chinese Minister that there had been no general massacre of foreigners at Peking, the Conger despatch was received on Friday. The despatch, which was sent in cipher, was as follows: "In British legation, under shot and shell from Chinese troops. Quick relief only can prevent general massacre." The despatch, which was undated, but was supposed to have been sent on the 18th, is generally regarded in Washington as worthy of credence, while in London there is more disposition to discredit its genuineness, or at least to believe that it was not of so late a date as it was represented to be, and a similar view seems to be taken at Berlin. . . . While the situation at Peking and the fate of

the legations is therefore still uncertain, there is definite news from Tien Tsin that on July 14 the native quarter of that city was taken after hard fighting, in which the losses of the allied forces in killed and wounded were more than 1,000. The loss on the Chinese side was very great. A large part of the native city is said to have been burned, and the Chinese are reported to have killed great numbers of their women to prevent their falling into the hands of the Russians, who are accused of barbarous conduct towards their Chinese captives. . . . Li Hung Chang has left Canton to go to Peking, on the request, as is asserted, of the Dowager Empress and the Emperor, Kwang Su, with a view to suppressing the Boxer agitation and restoring order. As to the general character and present purpose of this distinguished Chinaman, there are very diverse opinions. Some believe that he is to be trusted and that his present intentions are favorable to the foreigners. Others strongly suspect that, like the Empress Dowager, Li Hung Chang at heart desires the destruction, or at least the expulsion, of the foreigners from China, and are therefore disposed to place little confidence in his professions of friendship toward the foreigners and his professed desire for pacification. Very much depends upon the attitude which the southern provinces shall assume toward the Boxer insurrection, and the rumors of the past few days have been of a disquieting character, as indicating a disturbed condition and a disposition to sympathize with the anti-foreign spirit. There has been no recent movement of the allied forces toward Peking, and it is said that none will be attempted before the middle of August, although, if the Conger despatch is credited, it should have the effect of stimulating such a movement if at all possible. It is to be feared, however, that the allied forces now in China are not strong enough to attempt such a movement with any prospect of success.

South Africa. At the opening of the Cape Colony Legislature on the 20th inst., the Governor, Sir Alfred Milner, in his speech prophesied an early close of the war, and subsequently a united and prosperous South Africa. It is devoutly to be hoped that this forecast may be realized. The war, however, still drags on in a desultory way, and to judge from the military despatches, it can scarcely be said that the end is yet well within sight. During the past week the Boers have not scored any important successes—except the success of breaking through the British cordon, by which it was intended to enclose and capture certain of their forces in the Orange State. They have, however, forced the British to do some rather hard fighting, and Canada has had her share in the losses sustained. The news of the death of Lieut. Borden, of the Canadian Mounted Infantry, which occurred on the 16th inst., in a hard-fought battle not far from Pretoria, has been received with deep and general regret. Lieut. Borden, the only son of Hon. Dr. Borden, the Minister of Militia, was a young man of great promise, and had twice received from Lord Roberts special mention for gallant conduct. Much sympathy has been expressed for Hon. Dr. Borden and his family in their sad loss. Another brave Canadian officer, Lieut. Birch, of the 2nd Dragoons, whose headquarters are at St. Catharines, Ont., fell in the same fight. Lord Roberts' despatch says: "The two young men were killed while gallantly leading their men in a counter attack on the enemy's flank at a critical juncture of an assault upon our position." The British forces have come in contact with the Boers near Lindley in the Orange State and at Heideberg in the Transvaal, the Boers being repulsed in both instances. There is also rumor of a battle taking place on Saturday, at Middleberg, which is supposed to be a stronghold of the Boers, but nothing reported during the week indicates that any engagement of a decisive character has taken place. A despatch received since the above was written, brings the unpleasant news that Lord Roberts' communications have been cut by Gen. De Wett, and that a hundred Highlanders and a supply train have fallen into the hands of the Boers.