

Messenger and Visitor

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S. MCC. BLACK EDITOR.
85 Germain Street, St. John, N. B.

Address all communications and make all payments to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR.

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Wealth and its Perils.

The century which has just closed has been marked, among many other characteristics, by a vast increase in the world's wealth. While wars have been less frequent than of old, the minds and the hands of men have been constantly active in peaceful pursuits. In industrial labor the field of human activity has been greatly enlarged, and through discoveries and inventions the productiveness of labor has been marvellously increased. Countries of vast area and resources have been opened up to civilized settlement, trade and commerce have been immensely enlarged, and the material wealth of the world has been multiplied almost beyond the power of the human mind to comprehend. Nowhere has this process of transmuting natural resources into actual wealth been more active than on this North American Continent. The United States with only a century and a quarter of history behind it, and in spite of a civil war of almost unparalleled destructiveness, has outstripped, in respect to the acquisition of national wealth, all the countries of the old world. Canada is as yet a comparatively poor country. But with the steady development of its great natural resources there is a corresponding increase of wealth, and if the country shall be preserved from war its wealth will doubtless go on accumulating at an increasing ratio. And in spite of the fact that, whether by fair means or otherwise, a great proportion of the fruit of the wealth-producing forces of the world finds its way into the hands of a comparatively few individuals, it is true also that luxuries which in former generations were the possession only of the very wealthy are now much more widely distributed, and also that there are an increasing number of persons to whom the acquisition of wealth is a possibility.

Speaking generally, the people of this age place a very high value upon material possessions. A haste to be rich, induced by the thirst for the power, the sense of superiority which the possession of wealth gives, and for the luxurious, fashionable life to which wealth ministers, is generally more characteristic of the present age than any the world has seen. In what are called Christian countries Mammon worship exercises a widely corrupting and withering influence upon the Christian life. It is not only over those who are in possession of wealth, that this influence makes itself felt, but over countless thousands of those whose desire and determination to be rich, or at least to live as if they were rich, leads them to sacrifice to the god of this world the things which are of supreme value. Whether the worshipper of Mammon does or does not obtain the answer to his prayer, and acquire the wealth which he makes the supreme object of his desire, is, so far as the moral aspect of the matter is concerned, a matter of comparative indifference. The thing of terrible significance consists in a man's being a worshipper of Mammon.

Wealth is not indeed to be regarded as in itself an evil. It is not the possession, or the use, but the love of money that the Scriptures condemn. Wealth is often a gift of Providence, and it may be so used as to promote the glory of God and the welfare of humanity. As the gold, the silver and the brass, the costly stones and timber, which David and Solomon gathered, went to build a house for the God of Israel, so also, in these days, the wealth which men gather by the blessing of Heaven may be used to promote the glory of God in enterprises still greater and more beneficent than the building of that holy temple in Jerusalem. But connected with the getting (or the attempt to get) and the use of wealth, there are great temptations. The haste to be rich involves moral ruin for many. It prompts the desire and the determination to acquire wealth

by means which God cannot sanction, and sooner or later the penalty connected with the breaking of His laws must be paid. There are also temptations, perhaps still stronger and more subtle, that come with the possession of wealth,—temptations to pride, arrogance, indolence, luxury, and all that vanity of fashionable society which tends to overgrow and to smother the diviner life within the souls of men. And thus, too frequently, a man's wealth, instead of being in his hands an instrument for the service of God, becomes enshrined as an idol in his heart, before which he bows himself to the degradation of his manhood and the destruction of his soul.

China.

A meeting took place between the representatives of the foreign legations in Peking and the Chinese plenipotentiaries, Prince Ching and Li Hung Chang, on February 5th, and according to a Peking despatch the result of the meeting was somewhat encouraging in reference to an adjustment of existing difficulties between China and the Powers interested. Li Hung Chang is said to be still very weak, as a result of his recent illness, so that he is still unable to walk, but his mind seemed as clear as ever. Respecting the names of twelve persons, submitted by the representatives of the Powers for punishment, the Chinese plenipotentiaries are said to have given assurance that it was China's earnest desire to carry out in full the demands of the Powers in that respect. Two of the persons named are however reported to be already dead, and in the case of certain persons nearly connected with the throne, the plenipotentiaries held that the punishment should be banishment and not death. It was agreed however, that the foreign envoys should draw up a full list of all accused officials, both national and provincial, with indictments specifying the guilt of each and the nature of the punishment required, which list should be presented to the plenipotentiaries for definite action. To the question of Prince Ching whether, if China manifested a disposition by every means in her power to carry out the terms of the joint note, the foreign troops would leave Peking, the envoys replied that they could not discuss this matter beyond saying that, if everything were satisfactory, they believed the Powers would begin to withdraw the troops in the spring. The plenipotentiaries also desired to be informed in respect to the places where it was proposed that foreign guards should be placed for the purpose of maintaining connection with the legations at Peking and the sea, also as to whether it would be considered necessary to destroy the forts, and what provision would be made to control the foreign guards in Peking and prevent their creating disturbance. To the first and second questions the envoys were not prepared to give definite answers, but as to the last the plenipotentiaries were assured that the guards would certainly not be allowed to interfere with any avocations of the Chinese, but would be merely kept to guard the legations in case of necessity, and as to their conduct in the city, would be required to conform to such regulations as might be agreed upon, under heavy penalties.

Editorial Notes.

—Dr. Joseph Parker of London recalls that the first time he saw the Queen was in his twenties. The State procession was in full progress and his resolution was firm not to take any part in the public shouting. "I was then," he says, "a stern Republican. Democracy culminated in my obstinacy. On came the cheering procession; shout after shout rent the air. Then the Queen! And where at that moment was my Republicanism? Gone! Evaporated! No man of my size and years shouted more lustily. To hear about Her Majesty was one thing; to see her and to see that sweetest of all smiles was another. Her Majesty had such a way of looking—such a broad and generous way—that every man was firmly convinced that she was looking at him only, and went home and told his family so."

—In the Independent, Bishop Potter of New York says: "Nothing so impressed me in Ceylon, Burma and the British Colonies in China as the love of the people for the Queen. I do not mean among the British residents of those countries, I mean among the natives. These Oriental peoples are much more intelligent than we of the Occident generally credit them with being. They read, study, think and draw their own conclusions. Their deep affection for the Queen could not fail to strike anyone who entered their houses, saw her pictures in the honored places there and heard them speak of her. One of the mightiest sources of Great Britain's power among these peoples lay in the absolute faith that

on the throne of the Empire was one who possessed all the virtues of a good woman—wise; loving, kind, compassionate, merciful—who would protect the weak, who would right the wrong, who would prevent injustice. They had a great sense of pride in her."

—The Christian people of Great Britain are in some degree at least alive to the tremendous evils connected with the prevalent use of intoxicating liquors by the people and the menace therein involved to the nation's virtue and strength. The simultaneous evangelistic work now in progress among the Evangelical churches is to be followed by a Temperance Crusade. This, the Baptist Times says, is to be emphatically a religious movement. The Established Church too, it is said, is arranging for a similar crusade. The State Church and the Free Churches have their differences, but it is well if they can provoke one another to good works in this great and very necessary reform. In our opinion, more of religious effort and instruction is greatly to be desired in connection with the temperance cause in our own country. "Vote as you pray" is a motto often heard in this connection, but if there were on the part of Christians that measure of prayer and of prayerful effort to get men to take the high moral ground of Christian doctrine on this subject the result would be seen in the voting. If a man does not vote as he prays, there is likely something wrong with his praying.

—Recent despatches tell of some bloody engagements in South Africa. Lord Kitchener reports that on February 6th the Boer Commandant, Louis Botha, with 2000 men attacked General Smith-Dorrien at Orange Camp, Bothwell, but was repulsed after severe fighting, in which the British loss amounted to 24 killed and 53 wounded. The Boers had their General Spruit and two field cornets killed, General Randmeyer severely wounded, and left 20 dead and many severely wounded in the hands of the British. Between Bloemfontein and Small-deel, Major Crewe with seven hundred men was ambushed by the Boers, but succeeded in rescuing his force after severe fighting and considerable loss, winning praise from Lord Kitchener for his achievement. There are indications that the Boers are being severely pressed. A despatch of General Kitchener's of the 9th inst. says: "Our movement to the east is reported to have thoroughly upset all the enemy's calculations and created a regular panic in the district." The temper of Commandant Christian De Wet continues, it is said, to be very stubborn and bitter. A letter from Piet De Wet, a member of the peace commission, to his brother, the commandant, in which he expostulates with his brother on account of the folly and madness of his continued resistance to British authority, has been recently published in a Pretoria newspaper. The British Government is sending large reinforcements to South Africa, and it is intimated that there is to be no relaxation of the efforts to bring the Boers to submission.

—The Halifax Morning Chronicle quotes the MESSENGER AND VISITOR's remarks in reference to Mrs. Nation's smashing of saloons in Kansas, and states that it indicates "evident approval of Mrs. Nation and her hatchetade." We think the Chronicle displays a wonderful agility in reaching its conclusions. Our remarks were not intended to express any approval of Mrs. Nation's methods of accomplishing her purpose, nor do they. But there is a distinction between method and purpose, and in this one a very important one. Mrs. Nation's purpose is the very proper one of securing the enforcement of the prohibitory law against the liquor saloons, but her method is bad, because she has no right to appoint herself an executor of the law or of the popular will. At the same time it should be remembered that the people of Kansas have pronounced the legal doom of the liquor saloons in the enactment of a prohibitory law. The saloon has no legal right of existence in the state, and if the officers appointed and sworn to carry out the law will not enforce it, the people of Kansas have a moral right, in the interests of law and order, to smash every saloon in the state. The reason that Mrs. Nation has not that right is not that the saloons of Kansas ought not to be smashed, but that she is not the people of Kansas. We do not see that the Chronicle illuminates the subject or the minds of its readers by asking whether it would be "an edifying and profitable show" if "such a woman" were to engage in a similar crusade in St. John? In our opinion it would be both edifying and profitable if the St. John liquor saloons were annihilated beyond all possibility of restoration. But for the present they can claim the protection of the law, which is just what they cannot do in Kansas.

—The congregation of the Carleton church reoccupied the main audience room of their house of worship last Sunday, after having it closed several weeks for repairs. Special services appropriate to the occasion were held. In the morning Rev. Alexander White, of the Main St. church, was the preacher; in the afternoon Rev. A. T. Dykeman, of Fairville, addressed the people, and in the evening Pastor Nobles preached, being assisted in the service by Rev. J. H. Hughes. The congregations were large, that of the evening taxing to the full the seating capacity of the house. The repairs which the house has received are of quite an extensive character, involving an expenditure of about twelve hundred dollars. The inside has been greatly improved. The walls and ceiling have been covered with steel sheathing, with an under sheathing of wood, electric lights have been put in sufficient in number and power to make the church one of the best lighted rooms in the city, and the audience room has been repainted and recarpeted. The general effect of these changes is to give the church a very bright and attractive appearance. Besides the noted improvements, heating apparatus has been introduced in connection with the water supply to the baptistery to give the desired temperature for baptismal purposes. The outside of the building is also to be painted. The contributions received on Sunday amounted to about \$500, and other considerable sums are promised. Pastor Nobles and his fellow-workers are to be congratulated on the completion of these improvements, and we trust that to pastor and people the future may bring experience in keeping with the now bright and cheerful appearance of their house of worship. Pastor Nobles, we regret to say, has been suffering for a few weeks past with some affection of the throat, which is causing him some trouble but which it is hoped will prove but temporary.

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