

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH.

The News sincerely greets General Booth, the famous leader of the Salvation Army, and hopes his visit to the city of the Saints will be pleasant himself and beneficial to those who look to him for counsel and spiritual guidance.

At the meeting to the Tabernacle the "general" will present his "social scheme," and the building should be filled to its utmost capacity, not merely on account of the celebrity the speaker has acquired in the cause to which he has devoted his life, but because the subject is one in which every intelligent man and woman must feel deeply interested, and because the veteran in the crusade against sin is entitled to a fair hearing. The Latter-day Saints particularly, whose religion embraces all that is good and true and noble, from whatever source it may come, and who recognize in every champion of righteousness a brother, in the true sense of the word, will be delighted to listen to and intelligently consider any suggestions made for the liberation of the human family from its chains of darkness, misery and sufferings.

William Booth is a unique figure to the religious world, such as the Almighty raises up at intervals for the performance of special missions. His work has been to extend a religious influence to a class of people not commonly reached by the churches of the world. Impressed in his early youth with the principles of Wesleyanism, he gave himself enthusiastically to the work of converting his fellow men. But the church soon became too narrow for his broad conception of his duties, and he labored under disadvantages as did David when trying to march in the armor of Saul. Luther had to be expelled from his church before he could start in earnest the work of reformation, and Booth also had to be liberated from ecclesiastical bonds in order that his work might be carried out. The growth of this work then became phenomenal. To contemplate its history from the time the young expelled Methodist minister and his gifted wife, practically alone and without means, struggled for the redemption of the fallen in the slums of London, pleading their cause among the more fortunate in the wealthier portions of the city, to the present time, when millions have enlisted under the "banner of blood and fire," the "soldiers" now "invading" almost every land under the sun, is all that is needed to form an idea of the genius that has led the movement and the need of mankind of something more and better than conventional Christianity.

The methods of the Salvation Army have always been questioned, and there certainly is room for difference of opinion on that subject. No one in particular seems, however, to be responsible for those methods. They grew with the organization and were gradually accepted by the leaders as circumstances seemed to suggest. But whatever may be said of the peculi-

arities alluded to, no one questions the fact that the "army" has accomplished much good. If the "general," however, finds that its influential power in Salt Lake City, as in some other American cities, is much less than the energetic efforts of his followers and the success in other parts of the world might lead to expect, the reason of this is to be found in the fact that the conditions here are vastly different from those in the large cities of the old world. The majority of the people here are sincere believers in the Gospel and are constantly reminded of their duties to their fellow men. Still, there may be a field for an "army corps," and in so far as its members devote themselves to the redemption of the fallen, they merit and should receive the sympathy and good wishes of the best element of the community.

THE CANADIAN PREMIER.

The Dominion of Canada has been deprived of its prime minister in a summary and unexpected manner. That official, Sir John David Sparrow Thompson, apparently in the best of health and spirits on the morning of December 12, was stricken down by heart disease early in the afternoon, just after he had attended a meeting of the British privy council, at which he had been sworn in as a member. From all appearances the deceased premier might have been classed as in the prime of a vigorous manhood. He recently passed his fiftieth birthday—November 14. During the greater part of his life he has held leading official positions, having been appointed a queen's counsel when he was twenty-four years of age. At one time he acted as counsel on behalf of the United States government before the fishery commission at Halifax under the Washington treaty. In consideration of his services as a member of the British commission which arranged the fishery treaty with the United States in 1888, he was knighted by Queen Victoria. Twelve years ago he was made premier of Nova Scotia, and recently attained a similar position in the Dominion government.

In the death of Sir John, Great Britain loses one of her ablest and most influential advocates of imperial control on this side of the Atlantic. A native of Nova Scotia, and descended from Irish ancestry, he was a typical Britisher in urging, as the first duty of Canada, allegiance to the British throne. Unification of the colonies comprised in British North America was the chief aim of his public policy, and to him perhaps more than to any other man is due the credit for results achieved in this direction, and for stemming the rising tide in favor of Canadian annexation to the United States. He aroused the sentiment of self-interest throughout the Dominion to a high pitch, and gained practically undivided support to the policy of subsidies for improved mail service, closer traffic communication between the colonies and with the Old World,

and other enterprises of a general character.

While the demise of the prime minister is not an occasion of apprehensiveness to Canada or to any nation, it is a question whether his place can be filled by as powerful an advocate of the imperial federation. The methods he followed in public affairs may be continued with greater or less vigor for a time, but with the loss of his leadership it would not be a matter of surprise if the Dominion experienced another and greater development of the desire to break from the mother country and either ally its fortunes with the United States or operate as an independent republic.

THE NICARAGUA CANAL.

In the Senate this week the debate on the subject of the Nicaragua canal has been of a preliminary character, and suggestive of an early attempt to bring the matter directly before the legislators for some definite action. The promoters of the scheme for the United States government to guarantee bonus, and thus enable the construction of the canal to be pushed forward to completion, are performing herculean labors in behalf of the measure, and are sanguine of favorable results. Their opponents are no less vigorous in resisting the suggested action, and are equally confident of success.

There is no question that the Nicaragua canal is the grandest project of the kind known to financiering or engineering in modern times. It is as far ahead of the Suez canal as that stupendous enterprise was in advance of any other artificial waterway at the time it was constructed; and its friends assert that its advantages to international commerce will be of proportionately greater importance. Some of those who oppose the United States government giving aid to the Nicaragua canal urge that it is not a necessity for the world's commerce at present or in the near future, and that when constructed its value, financial and otherwise, will be by no means commensurate with the expenditure necessary to bring it into existence. Arguments of a similar nature were brought against the Suez scheme, but their fallacy having been shown by experience, they are not accorded much weight in the later case; therefore it appears to be generally conceded that the canal would be beneficial to the world at large in its commercial relations, by greatly shortening the time of water transit between the North Atlantic and North Pacific oceans, avoiding the long and perilous journey around Cape Horn, and at the same time, by direct competition, reducing transcontinental railway freights.

A specific inquiry with this country is whether the United States wants the canal bad enough to guarantee funds to the amount of \$70,000,000 or more. If this were answered in the affirmative, as the friends of the canal insist that it should be, there still remains the question of how that guaranty shall be made to operate. Vigorous opponents of the measure point out that the present proposed plan is merely "a job," by which the present possessors of the practically