

# Messenger and Visitor.

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**Railways in the Sudan.** In the overthrow of Mahodism the railway has been a prime factor. During the railway journey of 1800 miles from Alexandria at the Nile's mouth to Khartoum, the traveller will see many convincing proofs of what England has done for Egypt, of which perhaps the most important is the great storage dam at Assouan. But nothing has done more for the country through which it passes than the railway itself. It has proven such a benefactor and civilizer to the ten millions of inhabitants of the Sudan that two other lines are in process of construction. The first follows the river hundreds of miles further south to Fashoda, a town rendered memorable by a little unpleasantness which in other days might have led to a Franco-English war. Then eastward from Khartoum, another and longer road will reach to Kassala, close to the Italian boundary and thence northward will go to Suakim on the Red Sea. Another road is projected to the west from Khartoum to the State of Wadal, with its half-civilized population of two millions, and then if possible to Lake Tchad. The construction of this western line may be opposed, but if so, Britain will have her hands full in completing the roads east and west from Khartoum. These will do much towards the development of the country which under thirteen years of Mahdi rule was lost to civilization. A new era should dawn upon that great country in the near future.

**The Finns.** When Finland came under Russian rule, she was guaranteed a complete system of self-government. As far as can be learned there is no evidence that these privileges were abused. For some reason the Russian government has determined upon a course of action which will practically destroy the liberties of these brave people, and violate most solemn obligations. The new ordinances provide for compulsory service in the Russian army for five years, require that the Russian language must be introduced in all the official departments and public offices, place the Finnish Senate under the direct supervision of the Russian Governor General, gives the Governor General and Senate authority to dismiss without trial any official who has not been appointed directly by the Czar, and also arbitrarily to dismiss judges, and finally provide that no official from the Governor General down can be brought to trial on any charge without the consent of his superiors. This means the practical destruction of Finnish autonomy and the country brought under the personal rule of the Czar. As a consequence of this arbitrary act on the part of Russia, large numbers of this industrious, intelligent and moral people will emigrate and seek that freedom in other lands which they have so long enjoyed in their own. They would be a welcome addition to the population of Canada.

**Trouble in Macedonia.** Macedonia is one of the storm centres of Europe and every few years there are heard at Constantinople and other European capitals the mutterings of a coming tempest. The Bulgarians recently celebrated a series of fetes commemorating the throwing off of Turkish rule a quarter of a century ago, and the Macedonians have apparently caught the same spirit, and seem ready to follow their example. That the Turkish authorities are alarmed is shown by the prompt mobilization of an army of 40,000 men. It looks as if they were determined to forestall any attempt at insurrection, by decisive measures. The time is coming when Macedonia will strike for freedom—this both Turks and Macedonians see. It is only a question of time and opportunity. But these involve several things

—preparation on the part of Macedonia, unreadiness of Turkey, neutrality of Russia and the other Great Powers. Neither the Macedonians nor the Turks know what these powers would do in case of an active insurrection, and other complications are almost inevitable from the fact that the Great Powers have no idea what course Russia would pursue. She will not show her hand until ready to strike. There have been armed collisions and there are disturbing reports from the Macedonian frontier, but as yet there have been no bloodshed. There are so many unknown elements in the situation that no one can predict what may happen to-morrow in Macedonia nor what effect an uprising there might have upon the rest of Europe.

**Smallland.** This is the easternmost projection of Africa, washed by the Gulf of Aden on the north, and by the Indian Ocean on the southeast; while the western boundary is described by a line drawn from Zeyla, in the Gulf of Aden through Harar to the river Juba. The country is not well known. Under suitable conditions there are found luxuriant grasses, acacias, gum-bearing trees, palms, sycamore, cactus, aloe and other plants. Game is abundant, and wild animals, such as elephants, lions, leopards, antelopes, crocodiles, ostriches, storks, etc., are plentiful. There is supposed to be a population of about half a million, and the people are pastoral. They have numerous herds, consisting of camels, sheep and oxen. They also keep horses and goats. They have not been friendly neighbors, largely on account of their jealousy of everything foreign. It is said that they are of Hamite extraction with an admixture of Arab blood. In religion they are Mohammedan. And Abdullah, one of their chiefs, better known as the Mad Mullah, has acquired great influence over them. The set back which Col. Swagne, at the head of an expedition has received according to recent despatches, invest this people with an increasing interest just now, and further information is awaited with some anxiety, since it is known that the force under his command is small.

It is gratifying to learn that since the above was written the British forces have reached a place of safety. With re-inforcements that are expected from India in a few days, offensive operations will be resumed, and the country cleared of these turbulent tribesmen.

**Hon. J. I. Tarte.** It is not always that the unexpected happens. The expected comes along quite as often. The return of Sir Wilfred Laurier has led the Hon. Mr. Tarte to resign his portfolio as minister of public works. This was expected in certain quarters, as it could not well be seen how a member of the government could pursue a course, which must have been embarrassing to the cabinet as a whole, and remain a member. Whatever may be said of the politics of the late minister, all will admit his ability and force of character. What the future has in store for him it is difficult to predict but to repress such a man, with two papers under his control will be no easy task. Probably it will not be tried. The Government will survive the loss, and Mr. Tarte will give his undivided attention to newspaper work which affords a fine field for a man of his instincts.

**The coal question** The differences between the miners and operators are to come before a Board of arbitration for adjustment. The personnel of the board is all that could be desired by both parties. In the selection of the men the President has shown his usual good judgment. And now what? Will the Commission confine its work merely to stating

its conclusions respecting the wages to be paid and the proper conditions that ought to prevail in the Pennsylvania coal fields? It is to be hoped that in the interest of the parties concerned in this great industrial conflict the commission will not limit its investigation. There are questions which it might well consider and give some deliverance. The general public have some rights which ought not to be overlooked. Can the interests of capitalists and laborers be harmonized so as to avoid the peril of these recurring wars? Can the government, State or Federal, do anything to prevent such wars, involving ruin and suffering to many of its citizens, impossible, or at most very infrequent?

**Coal Supply.** Is it inexhaustible? Some tell us that the quantity is rapidly diminishing. The question is up for consideration just now with quickened interest. Great Britain is supposed to have an abundant supply. A Royal Commission appointed to look into this question reported, that there were probably 146 billions of tons yet to be mined. It is said that the output of the coal mines of Britain from 1870 to 1900, thirty-one years, was 5,025,000,000 tons. This means that during the last thirty years of the 19th century one thirtieth of Britain's coal capital was consumed. If this rate of increase should be kept up for the next one hundred years, then the 20th century would witness the complete exhaustion of the visible supply of coal in the United Kingdom. But we need not worry, because this will not take place in our day. And it may be some consolation to know, that if Britain's home supply should fail at any time, there are 65,000 square miles of coal areas in Canada east of the Rockies 35,488 square miles in British India, and 24,000 square miles in New South Wales, besides the coal fields of New Zealand, Victoria, South Africa and Tasmania. By the time these coal belts are exhausted other methods for heating our homes and driving our machinery will be discovered. Seed time and harvest have been promised, heat and light will no doubt be given as long as men need to do the work assigned them by a beneficent God.

**The Education Bill and the Baptists.** At the Autumnal session of the Baptist Union held in Birmingham, Mr. Chamberlain's constituency, a very strong resolution was carried with great unanimity and much enthusiasm against the passage of the Education Bill now under discussion in the House of Commons, in which they "declare their solemn determination not to submit to this measure if it becomes law and to render it unworkable by every lawful measure in their power." One is reminded of the days of Hampden and Cromwell in this attitude of the Baptists. They have given no uncertain sound as to their convictions on this great question. The agitation in England on this educational bill is arousing the keenest interest on the part of both political parties. A great fight is now on.

**Sir Michael Henry Herbert** The new British Ambassador to the United States, successor to Lord Pauncefoot after the recall of Lord Sackville-West in '88 became charge d'affairs in the British Embassy, and during his incumbency of that office was married to Miss Lila Wilson of New York, and sister of Mrs. Ogdon Golet and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, jr. The Herberts have maintained close relations socially in the United States and will be very warmly welcomed. His reception by the President was very cordial and Sir Michael's presentation address was most happily conceived. Sir Michael has held various posts in Europe since his retirement from Washington, the last and most important from which he now comes, being that of Secretary and Minister plenipotentiary of Paris, a unique title in diplomatic service. His many years of experience and past relations to the great country to which he comes as the accredited ambassador of Great Britain, eminently fit him for the important post he now fills, and augur well for the continuance of the happy relations which exist between the two foremost nations of the world.