

# Messenger and Visitor

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## Railway

### Accidents.

The attention of the public is frequently called to the great number of casualties and the large loss of life occurring in connection with the running of railway trains in the United States. Serious disasters appear to have been more than usually frequent during the past month or two, but the published official records do not cover the last four months. The Accident bulletin of the Interstate Commerce Commission for April, May and June has been published, and shows that 23 passengers and 144 employees were killed, while 1,134 passengers and 1,244 employees were injured, making in all 167 persons killed and 2,378 persons injured in train accidents in the United States during those three months. Other accidents to employees and passengers, not the result of a collision or a derailment, bring the total casualties up to 12,095—677 killed and 11,418 injured. The total number of train accidents was 2,418, of which 1,180 were collisions and 1,238 derailments. Of these 176 collisions and 144 derailments affected passenger trains. The damage to cars, engines, and roadway by these accidents amounted to \$2,015,252. Although this record is large enough to be startling, it shows an increase of 242 killed and 1,026 injured as compared with the preceding three months. Not only is there a decrease in the total number of killed in train accidents, both of passengers and of employees, but the same is true of employees both in train accidents and in other classes. The total number of employees killed in coupling and uncoupling cars during this quarter was sixty, being a decrease of ten from those reported for the preceding three months. The bulletin completes the publication of accidents for the year ended June 30, 1904, during which period there were 55,130 casualties—3,787 killed and 51,343 injured—an increase, compared with the previous year, of 5,599 casualties—233 killed and 5,366 injured. These figures do not include casualties at highway crossings, to trespassers or persons walking along the track, in shops remote from the railroad, or to employees not actually on duty; nor accidents to employees which did not prevent them from performing their accustomed service for more than three days, in the aggregate, during the ten days immediately following the accidents. It is to be expected that with the best regulations possible and the utmost care and faithfulness on the part of railway officials and employees, there will occasionally be accidents and loss of life. But it seems very certain that accidents are unnecessarily frequent and the sacrifice of life and limb much larger than it need be. Accidents and fatalities are comparatively less numerous on Canadian than on United States railways, but railway travel and traffic in this country are far from being as safe for passengers and for employees as could be desired. Greater safety in railway travelling and operation would perhaps have to be purchased at the expense of somewhat increased rates of travel and traffic to the patrons of the railways or of diminishing the dividends reaped by the corporations. But at all it would seem that persons who travel by rail as well as those who are employed in connection with the running of trains, are entitled to a greater guarantee of safety than is now possible.

## Church and State in France

The result has shown that Mr. Combes, the French Premier, in counting upon the support of Parliament in breaking off the diplomatic relation with the Vatican, did not miscalculate. By a decision vote of 325 to 227 the chamber of Deputies has approved the course of the Government. The vote was taken after a boisterous session, in the course of which Deputy Beaury d'Asson called Prime Minister Combes a "brigand," and was restrained with difficulty from personally assaulting the Premier. In his speech M. Combes replied to the criticisms made during the two days' debate in the Chamber. He said the rupture showed the impossibility of continuing the present concordat between the Church and the State. The Vatican had sought to discipline the Bishop of Laval before an ecclesiastical court which the French laws did not recognize. The Royalist had charged the Bishop with frequenting a Carmelite convent and writing love letters to the nuns. Premier Combes professed to believe that this charge against the Bishop was an invention and declared that the real reason for the prosecution of the Bishop was that the latter respected the laws of France and refused

to recognize the preponderance of ecclesiastical over civil power. "In the light of such incidents," said the Prime Minister, "the separation of Church and State has become inevitable. Those who advise a revision of the concordat are dupes who would condemn the Government to final humiliation. I am in favor of a free church, but with the same freedom as our other institutions have. In reality it is the Pope who wants separation. He was not to enslave the State as he enslaved the church. Let those who will perform penance before Popes. I have neither the age nor the taste for such practices."

## Divorce and Re-marriage.

The Episcopal Triennial Convention, lately in session in Boston, devoted much time and attention to the subject of divorce and particularly the remarriage of divorced persons. The subject was brought before the House of Deputies by way of a majority report of a special committee making the following recommendation: "No minister shall solemnize a marriage between any two persons unless by enquiry he shall have satisfied himself that neither person has been or is the husband or wife of any other person then living from whom he or she has been divorced for any cause arising after marriage." This, it will be seen, would refuse the sanction of the church to the remarriage of any divorced person without respect to the innocence or guilt of the person seeking marriage. It is said that the House of Bishops was known to be almost unanimously in favor of the proposed regulation, and it developed in connection with the debate and the vote that followed in the House of Deputies that a considerable majority of its members were ready to give it their support. But when the Convention came to vote upon the proposed canon by dioceses, it was lost by a majority of one diocese in the clerical and five in the lay order. On the part of the Deputies who voted in the negative there was indeed no disposition to ignore or minimize the evils connected with divorce, but it was held that the desired reform should not be sought by treating the innocent and the guilty alike and disregarding the exception which Christ himself had allowed. This seems to us to be a position supported alike by the highest Scriptural authority and the dictates of common justice. We do not believe that any body, civil or clerical, has the right to refuse marriage to the innocent party, to a divorce secured on the grounds of adultery. At a later stage in the Convention a canon having somewhat of a compromise character was adopted. This measure, like the old law, permits the remarriage of an innocent person in a divorce for the cause of infidelity, but provides that no remarriage shall be allowed within one year after the divorce is granted by a civil court, and then although satisfactory proofs of innocence have been furnished, a clergyman may refuse to perform the marriage ceremony without subjecting himself to censure or discipline.

## Practical Uses of Radium.

The *Electrical Review* mentions some practical uses of radium which have been established by experiment. "Botanists have a way of investigating the structure of things by imbedding them in paraffine and then cutting the material into very thin sections. The act of cutting frequently electrifies the sections, causing them to adhere to the knife, to fold up or to make themselves in other ways difficult to handle. This trouble has been overcome by this practical scientist by placing a small tube of a radium salt near the knife, the effect of which is to dissipate the electric charges imparted to the sections as they are cut. Another use of radium, hardly as vulgar as the one just mentioned, is suggested in a paper read before the Royal Society by Sir William Crookes. Sir William was investigating the character of the coating which radium salts impart to Diamonds exposed to their action. The surface of a diamond thus exposed for some time becomes more or less smoky. To determine the character of this action two diamonds were secured which, incidentally, had a pale yellow tint, technically known as 'off color,' an effect which decreases the value of the gem and probably is the reason they were selected for this experiment. One of these diamonds was exposed to a radium salt until it acquired a smoky coating. Upon removing this it was found that the original yellow color had given way to a bluish tint, showing that radium affects not only the surface of a diamond, but in some way acts upon the whole mass of the stone."

## The War.

Despatches from the East indicate that there has been during the past week some sharp fighting at different points, but nothing in the way of a general engagement. The Japanese claim to have secured some advantages. It is reported from Tokio that on Thursday they captured Wai-tao-Shaw after hard fighting, compelling the Russians to retreat and capturing two guns. The Japanese lost 170 men in killed and wounded. The Russian casualties are estimated at 200. A late dispatch from Shanghai indicates that the condition of the Russian garrison is becoming desperate, and the reports from St. Petersburg in reference to Port Arthur are of a rather a pessimistic character.

## War Happily Averted.

running of railway trains in the United States. Serious disasters appear to have been more than usually frequent during the past week it seemed doubtful whether the resources of diplomacy would prove sufficient for the settlement of a difficulty which had suddenly arisen between Great Britain and Russia. The trouble arose in connection with the Russian Baltic fleet which lately started for the Far East. About 200 miles off Spurn Head, on the night of Oct. 21st, or early in the morning of Oct. 22nd, the Russian fleet passed the place where the Hull fishing fleet was engaged in its peaceful occupation. According to the statement of Thomas Carr, "admiral" of the fishing fleet, one Russian squadron passed by on the lee side of the fishing fleet. "The remainder, consisting of four battle ships passed just across our head, throwing searchlights over our fleet. As soon as they got to windward they began firing upon us, their projectiles passing all around and across our decks for a full quarter of an hour." The result of the astounding action on the part of the Russians was that one at least of the fishing vessels named the *Crane*, was sunk, its skipper and one of the men killed and several others wounded. Three other vessels of the fleet sustained damage from the Russian shots and possibly others were sunk. Some of the trawlers hastened to Hull and told their strange story which at first seemed incredible; but the evidence furnished was convincing, and soon all England was sharing the indignation of the fishermen who had been so wantonly and mercilessly attacked. Very soon the matter was occupying the attention of the authorities. A note of vigorous protest was addressed by King Edward to the Russian Government, and the Czar sent a despatch to the King expressing his deep regret at what had occurred and his sympathy with the families of the killed and wounded fishermen. Those formal demands for apology and reparation were made through the ordinary diplomatic channels, and as there was some delay in Russia's assurance that these demands would be conceded the temper of the British public grew more threatening. Admiral Rojestvensky, the commander of the Russian fleet, when he undertook to explain why he had fired on the English fishing vessels, told of having seen two torpedo boats whose intention was evidently to attack his ships. He said that he had fired on these hostile torpedo boats and expressed regret at the injury unintentionally inflicted on the fishermen. This story obtains little credence in England, where it is generally believed that the Russians having been alarmed by reports that the Japanese intended to attack their fleet by torpedo boats, were thrown into a panic by the sight of the fishing vessels which in their excitement they mistook for torpedo boats. The public temper in England, as expressed through the press and otherwise, and the disposition of the Government, as evinced by the activity in the navy, made it plain to Russia and to the world that her choice lay between a settlement of the matter satisfactory to Britain and war. The settlement of the matter actually reached, provides it is understood, that the questions of fact in regard to the North Sea incident shall be determined by an international Commission of enquiry, and that if the facts are found to be as alleged by Britain, Russia will make ample reparation. This may not satisfy some jingo spirits in England who would have gladly seized what seemed a favorable opportunity for dealing Russia a stunning blow, but it will satisfy the heart of the nation and the settlement reached will stand to Great Britain's credit before the world. It is understood that, pending the investigation, Admiral Rojestvensky and his four warships now at Vigo, Spain, will be held from proceeding to the East until the result is declared. Whatever may prove to be the real explanation of the rash and most unwarrantable action of the Russian fleet, the Russian Government has shown a disposition to act honorably in the matter, and for this it should have due credit.