

# Messenger and Visitor.

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**Dreyfus.** In the quiet French town of Rennes the retrial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus by Court-martial began on Monday of last week. Five years ago Captain Dreyfus was tried upon the charge of having delivered to the agents of a foreign power documents of an important character bearing upon the defences of France. He strenuously protested his innocence but was convicted, degraded from the service and sentenced to imprisonment for life in an island fortress. By the confession of certain witnesses in the former trial and by facts made public in the civil court and through the press, it has come to be the general opinion of unprejudiced persons that Captain Dreyfus was unjustly condemned by means of forged documents and perjured testimony. A keen interest in the case has been aroused all over the civilized world, or at least wherever newspapers are read. It is indeed a most remarkable thing that in spite of the most determined efforts on the part of many men of the highest influence in the army and the State to prevent a re-opening of the case. Dreyfus has been delivered from his lonely prison-house on Devil's Island, brought back to France, and is now being accorded a new trial under conditions favorable to the vindication of his character, if, as the world generally believes, he is really innocent of the offences alleged against him. A despatch gives the following description of Dreyfus' entrance to the court room at Rennes on Monday last: "Captain Alfred Dreyfus, preceded and followed by a gendarme, emerged into the court room. His features were deadly pale and his teeth were set with a determined but not defiant bearing. He walked quickly, with almost an elastic step, and ascended the three steps leading to the platform in front of the judges. There he drew himself up erect, brought his right hand sharply to the peak of his kepi, or military cap, giving the military salute. The prisoner then removed his kepi and took the seat placed for him, facing the judges, just in front of his counsels' table, and with his back to the audience. Behind him sat a gendarme holding a sheathed sabre in his hand. Dreyfus, in a new uniform of captain of artillery, dark blue with red facings, fixedly regarded the judges, with immovable features and without stirring hand or foot, scarcely even moving his head."

**A Strange Rumor.** The 'London Times' recently published a strange story contained in a letter of its Paris correspondent, M. deBlowitz. It is to the effect that the Czar Nicholas is disappointed and tired of his throne. The absence of a male heir excites his superstitious feelings and he connects himself with a Russian legend according to which an heirless Czar is to be succeeded by a Czar Michael predestined to occupy Constantinople. The death of the Czarewitch and the failure of the Conference at The Hague, it is said, have led him to decide to abdicate, on the occasion of his coming visit to Darmstadt. This remarkable statement is given by way of explaining a hasty visit to St. Petersburg of M. Delcasse, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, who, it is said, was sent for the purpose of persuading the Czar against carrying his purpose into effect. The appearance of this rumor in the 'Times' has won for it attention which otherwise it would not have secured. The story appears to have produced a very mild sensation in London, and is generally regarded as being without foundation in fact.

**Ireland.** It is refreshing to read so optimistic views in reference to the present and prospective condition of Ireland as those

of Professor Hamill published in a recent issue of the 'Montreal Witness.' Rev. Dr. Hamill is professor in the Assembly's College, Belfast, and is now in this country upon a threefold mission,—to attend the Pan Presbyterian Council which meets in Washington in September; to lecture upon theology in the Manitoba College, Winnipeg, and to gather information concerning the colonial missions of his church. Prof. Hamill says the country is prosperous. The farmers are not making a great deal of money, but they are comfortable, the more especially as the landlord no longer looms before the vision as a bogey. The landlord has dwindled enormously during the last twenty years. He is, as the professor remarks, merely a rent-charger now, and, in many cases, the tenant is sole owner, as he hastaken advantage of the purchase clause in the land acts of recent years. Even when he pays rent he has the latter fixed for him by law, and the landlord has really little, if any, power over him. Belfast, the capital of the North, has doubled its population during the last quarter of a century. Of the religious conditions of the country Dr. Hamill speaks encouragingly. Presbyterianism has grown steadily during the last fifteen years and over a dozen churches have been erected in the City of Belfast and environs. Methodism, too, has prospered greatly, and Anglicanism in a somewhat smaller degree. The Protestant and Roman Catholic elements get along pretty well as neighbors for the most part. But when there are big processions then there is liable to be rioting. The lower elements in the population get excited, there is stone throwing and the police have to be called in to quell the disturbance. For the excitement of party spirit, Prof. Hamill admitted certain ecclesiastical firebrands may be in part responsible, but the rioting is due rather to the instinct of certain classes who have no religion of any kind. Of the new County Council law a favorable opinion is expressed. In the South and West the question under the new law is a national and religious question. It is politics and the church. In the North it is different: Under the old system the landlord paid half the county rates and the tenant the other half; but the latter had no say in the disbursement. Now the tenant is exalted. He participates in affairs from which he had been excluded. Prof. Hamill does not think that the County Council law is tending in the direction of Home Rule as embodied in Mr. Gladstone's Bill. On the other hand, it might develop into a greater thing than it looks to be at present. It might mean a council sitting at Dublin and legislating for the whole country, with restricted powers—powers which would deal simply with administration, and not legislation, as, for instance, the building of railways, which cannot be commenced at present until a bill is passed through the Imperial House, the building of bridges, public buildings, and the like.

#### They Seek Recognition.

The Filipinos have appealed to the powers for recognition of their independence in a document dated from Tarlac, July 27. This document has been received by all the foreign consuls in Manila, with a request that they forward it to their respective Governments. The Filipinos argue that, before the signing of the treaty of Paris, they had conquered from Spain the sovereignty of the Philippines and that therefore Spain was in no position to cede them to the United States. They hold that the possession of seven thousand Spanish prisoners, captured with their arms while fighting against the Filipinos, is eloquent proof of the nullity of Spanish

sovereignty, since, when these troops surrendered, Spain's hold was irrevocably lost. Replying to the Spanish Commission's request to release the prisoners because Spain no longer has political interests in the island, the Filipinos say: "We asked for a treaty of peace and friendship between Spain and the Filipinos whereby the prisoners would be released. But the commissioners refused because it would mean recognition of our independence. This is equivalent to saying that the prisoners must stay in our hands indefinitely because their possession is our most efficacious method to adjust our account with Spain and obtain from her recognition of our independence." The Filipinos claim that they conquered all the country except Manila, and that they co-operated in securing the latter's capitulation by surrounding it at the cost of thousands of lives. They also aver that they conquered the country unassisted, except for sixty guns that Admiral Dewey gave Aguinaldo, and that Admiral Dewey and the British and Belgian consuls recognize the Filipinos' sovereignty by asking for passes to visit the country. They repeat the claim that they have letters from American consuls and generals recognizing their sovereignty and promising that the Americans would recognize their independence, "which was at the disposition of the powers." Finally the Filipinos appeal to the powers to influence the United States to bring to an end "the unjust war which is devastating the country."

**The Transvaal Situation.** The tone of recent London despatches has been much less hopeful of a peaceful settlement of the Transvaal troubles. It is reported (though Mr. Chamberlain said the other day in the House of Commons that no official confirmation of the report had been received) that the Transvaal had declined the proposal of Her Majesty's Government for a joint commission to enquire into the effect which the projected franchise reforms will have in reference to the Uitlanders. Mr. Chamberlain's statements in reply to questions would seem to indicate that the Government is not very hopeful that satisfactory concessions will be made by the Boers, and is therefore continuing active preparations for extreme measures. Several regiments were about being despatched to South Africa for the defence of Natal and in response to the request of the Government of that colony. While the question was serious the course which matters would take remained doubtful. He hoped the Transvaal would yet accept the proposal for a joint enquiry, and he deprecated any re-opening of the debate on the situation, intimating that there had been sufficient demonstration that Parliament and the country were united in support of the Government in its South African policy. "We fully recognize," Mr. Chamberlain said, "the grievances of the Uitlanders and have said that these grievances are not merely themselves a serious cause for interposition, but are a source of danger to the whole of South Africa. We say our predominance is menaced by the action of the Transvaal in refusing to redress the grievances or give consideration to requests hitherto put in the most moderate language of a suzerain power. We say that this state of things cannot be tolerated. We have put our hands to the plough and won't draw back. With that statement I propose to rest content."

—A Winnipeg despatch of August 12th says: Wheat-cutting has commenced at Gretna, Pilot Mound, Morden, Stockton and other Manitoba points, and if the weather is favorable will be general in about a week. The weather for the past few days has been cool and cloudy and too wet in some localities for harvesting. A week of warm, dry weather is needed to rush the ripening of the wheat. Reports gathered at Edmonton from the Sturgeon district, Stony Plain, St. Albert, Agricola, Clover Bay, Fort Saskatchewan and as far east as Edna, an area covering many hundred square miles, show the crop prospects to be of the brightest.