

Messenger and Visitor.

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Coal Oil. The subject of the duty on coal oil was brought up for discussion in the Dominion Parliament last week by Mr. Davis, (Liberal) member for Saskatchewan. The duty on oil has been reduced slightly under the present Government, but illuminating oil still pays five cents per gallon. In supporting his resolution in favor of free oil, Mr. Davis charged that the oil business of Canada is now largely in the hands of the Standard Oil Company, which also holds a monopoly of the oil business of the United States, and that the heavy duty accordingly results in a very large amount of money being transferred from the pockets of the Canadian consumer to the treasury of the American Company. Members representing the constituencies in which the Canadian oil region is included of course defended the tax on oil and showed how necessary it was as a protection of the Canadian industry. The coal oil business is without doubt of very considerable importance to a section of Ontario, but it would certainly appear that the nursing of this industry is a pretty expensive business to the country at large. Probably a low duty upon illuminating oil should not be considered objectionable, since it constitutes a tax which falls pretty evenly upon a very large proportion of the population, but as oil is used everywhere by the poorer people and is used but little by the wealthy classes in the cities, it would seem that the present duty, which amounts to about two-thirds of the first cost of the article, is excessive. Mr. Davis' resolution was not put to the House. Hon. Mr. Fielding, the Finance Minister, opposed action on this matter apart from the consideration of the tariff as a whole and the House accepted his motion to adjourn the debate.

Art Unions and Lotteries. We observe that the Dominion Parliament is being petitioned to remedy certain abuses which are said to exist under the operation of the Art Unions in Canada. Whatever may have been the intention in exempting these Unions from certain provisions of the Canadian law against lotteries, it seems quite certain that the result has not been to promote the interests of art but rather the reverse, since it seems likely to bring the Unions seriously into disrepute because of their association with a gigantic evil. It seems strange indeed that there should be people who could be willing, or could think it possible, to serve the cause of art by appealing to and cultivating a degrading popular passion. It is only less comprehensible than the idea that the cause of religion is to be served by like means. Strange indeed that, under the laws of Canada, it should be in the sacred names of art and religion that it is permitted to hold lotteries and to appeal to a passion which is among the most degrading to which human nature is subject. But it is now declared, and doubtless quite truly, that the provision which exempts Art Unions from the application of law against lotteries has become a mere cloak for gambling and financial gain. The petition on this subject presented to Parliament by Mr. Robert Harris, president of the Royal Canadian Academy, points out that the exemption referred to has been taken advantage of for the carrying on of lotteries in the city of Montreal by incorporated companies whose object is the acquisition of gain by the selling and drawing of tickets and other modes of chance. We have been surprised to perceive that newspapers, otherwise highly respectable, have been willing, by advertising this business, to lend their patronage to an influence so potent for evil. Mr. Harris protests against the present abuse and requests that it be declared illegal. He also states that the Royal Canadian Academy would approve such a change in the law as would render it impossible to carry on games of chance under the guise of art.

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South Africa. Attention is being called again to affairs in South Africa. The trouble which has long been brewing in the Transvaal seems to be rapidly reaching a condition which will necessitate either reform or revolution. It is possible that hostilities between the British in South Africa and the Boers may be averted, but it is certain that both are taking measures to place themselves in readiness for war. The Uitlanders in the Transvaal have long complained bitterly of the treatment which they receive at the hands of the Boer Government, and a petition signed by twenty-one thousand Uitlanders in the Transvaal, praying the Queen by virtue of her authority as *sovereign* to intervene to secure redress of their grievances, having been forwarded to the High Commissioner at Cape Town, Sir Alfred Milner, has been accepted by him and sent to the Colonial office in London. This indicates that Sir Alfred Milner, who is regarded as a very able and cautious man, is of opinion that the time has come for Great Britain to intervene in some way in the affairs of the Transvaal, and the Government's probable action in the matter is being eagerly canvassed in England. It is clear that President Kruger and his little Boer republic stand in the way of British Imperialism in South Africa and if the Imperialists have there any means will be taken to remove the obstruction.

The Plebiscite and the Government. The drink problem is one of the gravest and most perplexing with which a nation can have to deal. At the present time, for reasons well known to all, there is in this country more than the usual amount of feeling and discussion in reference to this subject. Keen disappointment and not a little indignation have been expressed in many quarters because of the action which the Government has taken, or rather because of its refusal to take action, in view of the majority recorded for prohibition in the recent plebiscite. With a great many, we have no doubt, the feeling against the Government is not so much because it has declined to accept the result of the plebiscite as being an indication of the popular will sufficient to justify the introduction of a general prohibitory law, as because the Government has appeared anxious to drop the subject entirely and has seemed disposed to do nothing to advance the interests of a reform in which so large a proportion of the people of Canada are very deeply interested. Much may be said, no doubt, in defence of the Government's declining, under the circumstances, to introduce a general prohibitory law. Reasonable men will be generally disposed to admit that the result of the plebiscite was not a popular mandate of so plain and emphatic a character as any Government contemplating the establishment of such a reform would desire to have. The enactment of a general prohibitory law, under the circumstances, could, we think, be expected only of a Government composed of men having a profound personal faith in the principle of prohibition as applied to the liquor traffic. But there is a feeling, which, in view of the facts, seems not unnatural, that the Government has manifested a disposition to ignore the whole subject of temperance reform and has treated the representatives of the prohibitionist sentiment of the country with but scant courtesy. There has been, we think, a pretty general feeling among the temperance people of the country that, if the circumstances did not demand, or perhaps did not justify, the introduction of prohibitory legislation of a general character, they did justify and demand something more than a mere refusal to act. It was reasonable to expect that the majority in favor of prohibition given all over Canada, except in one Province, would call forth from the Government some expression of interest in the cause of temperance reform and some disposition to give effect to the will of the people of the six provinces which had voted for prohibition. The Government has decided that, under the circumstances, it cannot undertake to bring in a general prohibitory law, and while we are not inclined to denounce it in such terms as it is being denounced in some quarters for that decision, we think it will be a matter for the Government's consideration whether it can afford to ignore or to

antagonize the temperance sentiment of the country by treating with indifference a subject upon which a large and influential element of the people of the country are so deeply in earnest.

Marriage in High Life. Very great popular interest was excited in London by the marriage the other day of Lady Peggy Primrose, Lord Rosebery's daughter, to Earl Crewe. A royal wedding, it is said, could scarcely have called forth a greater demonstration of public interest. Crowds lined the streets all the way from Berkeley Square to the Abbey; cabmen sported white favors on their whips, and thousands of bystanders wore primroses and marguerites in their button holes. The newspapers too were filled with detailed descriptions of every feature of this grand event in the social life of the Metropolis. In some quarters these unusual demonstrations are interpreted as an indication of the personal popularity of Lord Rosebery and as foreshadowing his return to the leadership of the Liberal party which is now showing evidence, it is said, of renewed activity and vigor. The London correspondent of the New York 'Tribune' does not however endorse this view as to the significance of the event. Mr. Ford writes: "Political morals after a wedding are as untimely as funeral baked meats. There is a good deal of human nature centred within a radius of thirty miles of Charing Cross; the lovely, happy bride in Westminster Abbey, with ten bridesmaids attending her and two princes of the Royal house to sign the register, was certain to carry all hearts with her without the adventitious aid of politics. The Abbey, while not a good place for witnessing a beautiful wedding spectacle, is an ideal scene for a social function which will interest everybody in England. This wedding was perfectly ordered, and it was carried out without a trace of snobbishness or vulgar ostentation. It has left a pleasant impression upon the public mind, but Lord Rosebery's political prospects have not been affected by it. If the general electorate could be wooed by so charming a proxy as a bride with her father's colors, weddings in the Abbey would soon cease to be a novelty."

With Tongue and Pen. The men who command the warships of the United States have won a fine reputation for their bravery and their ability in naval warfare, but when they come to write letters to their relatives at home or to make after-dinner speeches in the company of convivial and admiring friends, some of them create quite as much of a sensation with the tongue or with the pen as they do with their big guns in a naval engagement. In the course of an after-dinner speech the other day in New York, Captain Coghlan, of the war-ship Raleigh, lately returned from the Philippines, spoke with great freedom respecting the friction which has occurred between the United States and German naval commanders at Manila during the naval operations there a year ago. According to Captain Coghlan, Admiral Dewey, incensed by the course pursued by the German Admiral Von Diederich, had dealt with him in a very peremptory manner, informing him that, if his Government wanted war with the United States, it could have it in five minutes, and "after that the Germans did not care to breathe more than four times in succession without consulting Admiral Dewey." Another instance is that of Rear-Admiral Kautz, commander of the United States naval forces at Samoa. Admiral Kautz wrote to a lady friend a letter in which, in guileless language, he described himself as "boss of the ranch" and a kind of king-maker in Samoa, with the German Consul as "a very silent partner." He confided to his relative that the Germans did not like him, but that he was "all right with the English and hoped to pull through with them." Doubtless it was the last thing in the Admiral's mind that his letter would find its way into the newspapers. But his admiring cousin evidently had ideas of her own on that point, and accordingly this undiplomatic epistle was soon the common property of all news readers. These rather remarkable utterances have naturally caused some little consternation in Washington and some irritation in Berlin. But, as they are evidently not utterances to which official responsibility attaches, they are not likely to occasion any serious trouble between the two Governments.