

# Messenger and Visitor

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## Famous Diamonds.

According to a recent dispatch from Johannesburg, the largest diamond ever discovered has been found near Pretoria, and the find has caused great excitement in the Transvaal capital. The stone is said to weigh 3,032 carats and to be a pure white diamond of good quality. It is locally valued at \$3,500,000 or \$4,000,000. The famous Koh-i-nor weighs only 123 carats, though it is said to have weighed 900 before it was cut, and is valued at \$600,000. The largest rough diamond previously known was found in Brazil in the eighteenth century. It weighed 1,680 carats, of fourteen ounces, was sent to the Court of Portugal, to which nation Brazil then belonged, and was variously valued by experts away up in the millions, but it turned out to be worth only \$4,000,000 as it was not brilliant. The famous Koh-i-nor or "Mountain of Light," is a Crown jewel, and is always on exhibition in the Tower of London. This stone, interesting alike for its historical associations and for its intrinsic beauty, was according to Indian tradition, obtained before the Christian era from one of the mines of Golconda. From the Rajah of Oojein, who seems to have possessed it at the beginning of the Christian era, it passed to successive Sovereigns of Central India, and in the early part of the fourteenth century was added to the treasures of Delhi by the Patan monarch Aladdin. It remained in the possession of the ruling families of the empire until the eruption of the Persian conqueror, Nadir Shah who saw it glittering in the turban of the vanquished Mohammed Shah, and proposing an exchange of headress as a mark of friendship, bore it away with him, and gave it the name by which it is still known. After the assassination of Nadir it passed through the hands of Ahmed Shah of Cabool to Shah Shuja, who paid it as the price of his liberty to his conqueror, Runjet Singh, the "Lion of the Punjab," in 1813. On the annexation of the Punjab to the East Indian Company's territory in 1849 it was stipulated that the Koh-i-nor should be surrendered to the Queen of England, to whom it was accordingly delivered by the company July 3, 1850. At this period its weight was 186 carats. The diamond so long in the possession of the Sultan of Matan, of the Island of Borneo, is remarkable for its size and purity. It weighs 367 carats, and should be worth at least \$3,500,000. It is shaped like an egg, with an indented hollow in the smaller end. It was discovered at Landak. The Orloff diamond, purchased for the Empress Catherine II, of Russia, is about the size of a pigeon's egg, and weighs 195 carats. It is said to have formed the eye of a famous idol in a temple of Brahma at Pondicherry. A French deserter robbed the pagoda of this valuable stone. After passing through the hands of various purchasers it came into the possession of a Greek merchant who received for it from the Empress \$450,000, an annuity of \$20,000 and a title of nobility. The Austrian diamond is of a beautiful lemon color, and cut in rose; its weight is 139 carats. Its value is less than it would be but for its color and the form in which it is cut, ranking as worth \$500,000 instead of \$750,000.

It is announced that the British Parliament is to be convened on February 14. The session will be opened by the King personally with full state ceremony. The unusual lateness of the date of reopening is interpreted to mean that the Government does not propose to press any redistribution bill, but to give the aliens' bill which Premier Balfour has definitely promised the first place in its legislative programme. Recent speeches of Ministers confirm the belief in an early dissolution of Parliament, and it seems likely that, unless previously defeated, the Government will find a pretext for formally dissolving Parliament towards the end of March. The fiscal question continues to absorb attention. Right Hon. G. J. Goschen, speaking at Cambridge January 27, said he understood Mr. Balfour's fiscal policy, but he did not understand the method by which he would carry it out. It was necessary that the colonies and the mother country should stand together. He considered that the attitude of the colonies at the present juncture was most commendable. They showed no temper, no impatience, no signs of a threat, which ought never to have been made, that unless we made certain concessions the bonds between them and the mother country would be loosened. He asked his audience not to allow their judgment to be coerced by that kind of talk. Premier Balfour, speaking at Manchester made reference to

his proposed colonial conference. He said that any scheme decided upon will have to be referred not only to the electorate of the self-governing colonies but to the electorate of Great Britain, because unless there were some such appeal he doubted whether the people of the great colonies would leave their representatives at the conference entirely unlettered. He hoped the decision of the empire, when it came, would be a decision from which no single part would ever be tempted to withdraw, which would remain for all time to mark a step in the further consolidation of the King's dominions, without which it was quite impossible that such a vast collection of different communities should bear their full share in carrying forward civilization and the freedom of humanity.

## The Prospect in Russia.

Probably the best informed and wisest subjects of the Czar would hesitate to predict what a few months may bring forth in the social and political life of their country. How much more difficult must it be for foreigners and strangers to forecast Russia's immediate future! There appears however to be a pretty general conviction on the part of intelligent observers, inside and outside of Russia, that the present situation is pregnant with the gravest contingencies. The events which occurred in St. Petersburg on Sunday, January 22, and which have been paralleled on a smaller scale in Moscow and other cities of Russia, are regarded as events of no ordinary significance. An immediate revolution is not to be expected. The people are without arms, the season of the year is unfavorable to popular demonstrations, and the iron hand of military power is able for the present to suppress the insurrectionary outbreaks of the unarmed people. But it seems certain that the country is palpitating with revolutionary sentiment. The demand for political reforms has found voice as never before. The time has come when the people's cry for freedom can no longer be repressed and the attempt to silence the birth cries of this new democracy will mean the death of the hoary autocracy which enslaves 140,000,000 of people in the name of the Romanoffs. Nicholas II. may be a well meaning man who, if he had the necessary ability and courage, would in some sense be a father to his people. But it seems quite certain that he is a weak man, the slave and the tool of the bureaucracy, and scarcely more the real ruler of Russia than are the people who vainly cry to him for the redress of their grievances. So far as the strikes are concerned, they do not in themselves afford the rulers much cause for anxiety. It is only when the revolutionists unite with the strikers and take advantage of the situation to create a great popular demonstration, adding to the demand for the redress of industrial grievances an insurrectionary cry for political reforms, that the danger point is reached. It is said, whether truly or not we cannot tell, that the authorities in St. Petersburg, by timely action, might have repressed the agitation and prevented bloodshed, but that they deliberately permitted the outbreak to occur that they might severely punish the agitators and thus teach them what they held to be a needed lesson. Probably, by tempering severity with a measure of concession, the Government will be able for the present to suppress the outbreaks. The revolutionists, it may be expected will conclude that the time to strike has not yet arrived, and a measure of external calm may be restored. But the fires of revolution will continue to smoulder beneath the surface, and unless the Czar and his advisors shall heed the warnings of wisdom and grant substantial concessions in the direction of constitutional government, it is not unlikely that, within a few years at most, an upheaval will take place in Russia which will make itself felt far beyond the bounds of the Czar's dominions. The despatches from St. Petersburg are of so conflicting a character that it is difficult, if not impossible, to form any accurate idea of the existing situation as it relates to the attitude of the rulers toward the people, but if some reports are to be credited there is now some disposition on the part of the Government to recognize the reasonableness and the necessity of making substantial concessions to the demand for political reform.

## The Abstainers' Advantage.

Sir George White, V. C., famous as the hero of Ladysmith and now Governor of Gibraltar speaking at a temperance meeting not long since, gave some interesting facts and figures concerning temperance in the army. In seven regiments quartered in different parts of India and selected chiefly on account of the large number of total abstainers borne on their rolls, the fol-

lowing, Sir George said, were the average admissions to hospitals among abstainers and non-abstainers respectively per 1,000 per month:—

Regiment.	Abstainers.	Non Abstainers.
I.	33.33	96.38
II.	37.04	47.19
III.	84.32	126.63
IV.	86.73	152.60
V.	39.62	72.20
VI.	34.54	88.20
VII.	30.34	63.40

Taking the average of the seven regiments, the admissions per 1,000 were: abstainers, 49.53; non-abstainers, 92.37. The great differences among the numbers of admissions under both heads in different regiments may, Sir George explained, be accounted for by the great variations in the healthfulness of different stations in India. There is, however, one constant principle running through all—viz., the greater amount of sickness among non-abstainers than among abstainers. Among the speakers on the same occasion was Lord Charles Bressford, and this, among other things, the gallant admiral said: "When I was a young man I was an athlete. I used to box a great deal, ride steeplechases and races, play football, and go through a number of competitive sports and pastimes. When I put myself into training, which was a continual occurrence, I never drank any wine, spirits, or beer at all, for the simple reason that I felt I could get fit quicker without taking any stimulants; now I am an older man, and have a position of great responsibility, often entailing quick thought and determination and instant decision. I drink no wines, spirits, or beer, not because they do me harm, not because I think it wrong to drink, but simply because I am more ready for any work imposed upon me day or night; always fresh, always cheery, and in good temper. Had as intemperance in the service is now, there is, according to Lord Charles, a tremendous improvement on what it was some years ago. "In the fleet which I have the honor to command," he went on to say, "I let men go ashore on every possible occasion, and the privilege has been well repaid, as the leave-taking has been reduced almost to nil." The Governor and the civil authorities inform me that they hardly ever see a man intoxicated in the streets, and the improvement is most satisfactory."

## Gold Production in the Transvaal.

For the past two or three years there has been a rapid increase in the gold production in the Transvaal, and with the introduction of Chinese labor the returns for the past year have come well up to the highest mark reached before the war. The output for the year 1899 was £15,728,693. The following year the war reduced it to a million and a half sterling and in 1901 the gold product of the country amounted to only a little over a million. In 1902 the output had increased to seven and a quarter millions, and during the past year it has reached about sixteen millions. The importation of Chinese labor has, no doubt, contributed to the increase which the years record shows, as the Chinese are much more industrious and reliable as workers than the Kaffirs. There was much opposition both in South Africa and in England to the bringing in of the Chinese coolies, as it was felt that the agreement under which they are held by the mine-owners implies a condition differing little from slavery. And it now appears that from a business point of view the experiment has not been very satisfactory. Naturally the Kaffirs have not taken kindly to the introduction of the Mongolians, and the bad feeling between the natives and the imported workers has broken out in fierce and bloody riots. The result indeed has proved so unsatisfactory that it has been judged wise to suspend the bringing in of Chinese laborers.

## A Wonderful Record.

According to statistics which a correspondent of the Associated Press says that he obtained from the Chief Surgeon of General Oku's army, the record of the Japanese army in reference to general health and freedom from fatal disease is altogether remarkable. According to the statistics, we are told, there have been in the entire army, since the landing on May 6, only forty deaths from disease. Up to December 1, 24,642 cases of disease had been treated. Of these forty resulted fatally 18,578 patients recovered, 5,609 were sent to Japan, and the remainder were undergoing treatment when the figures were compiled. It is believed that such a record is without parallel in the history of warfare. There were only 193 cases of typhoid and 342 of dysentery, while of Beriberi there were 5,070. The other cases of disease were not serious. Sixteen per cent of the wounded died, nineteen recovered in the field, and sixtv-five per cent were sent to Japan. Eighty-five per cent of the wounds were inflicted by rifle shots, eight per cent by artillery and seven per cent by cold steel. The largest percentage of recovery was in the case of chest wounds. Most of the recoveries were due, it is said to the small calibre of the rifle bullets.