

# Messenger & Visitor.

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**The Formidable Rabbit.** Almost every kind of animal has its enemies which prey upon it and reduce its numbers, and thus, under natural conditions extending over a long period of years, "a balance of nature," as it is called, is established, by which the undue multiplication of any species is prevented. When, therefore, a species is removed from its natural habitat and transferred to a part of the world where different conditions obtain, the result from its increase in numbers is sometimes serious. An instance in point is the bringing of the English sparrow to America, and a still more remarkable instance is the introduction of the English wild rabbit into Australia. Delivered in that country from the assaults of the enemies which had preyed upon them in England, and favored by climatic conditions, the rabbits soon began to increase so rapidly as seriously to interfere with stock-raising and agriculture. They destroyed gardens and orchards, and consumed every green thing within their reach. It became necessary to wage against the little animals a war of extermination, and during three successive years, it is said, \$730,000, \$1,250,000 and \$2,500,000 were paid as bonuses to persons who killed them off. Some 35,000,000 of the animals were thus destroyed, but still the plague continued, and it was only through a severe drought in the summer of 1888, and the fencing off of the lakes and water courses from the rabbits that the people of Australia were able to get the upper hand of their enemy. More recently the Belgian hare, which is said to be essentially the same animal, has been introduced into California, and a San Francisco paper is calling attention to the danger that the experience of Australia may be repeated on the Pacific Coast. The Secretary of Agriculture of the State has also considered the matter of sufficient importance to call attention to it in his report.

**The Empress Frederick.** The death of the Dowager Empress of Germany, generally known as the Empress Frederick, occurred at Cronberg on the evening of Monday the 5th inst. The late Empress was the Princess Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa, eldest daughter of Queen Victoria. She was born in 1840 and was married at the age of seventeen to the Prince Frederick of Prussia, afterwards the Emperor Frederick III. She had six children of which the present Emperor of Germany is the eldest. The Empress Frederick was possessed of superior natural abilities, and her mind was highly cultivated. She was also a woman of much force of character, and some have spoken of her as the cleverest woman in Europe. The influence which she exerted in German affairs was very considerable, and would doubtless have been far greater had her husband continued at the head of the Empire, but his life was cut short after having reigned but a little more than three months. The earlier married life of the Empress was probably a very happy one. Her husband, whom she loved devotedly, was a man of noble character and the idol of the Prussian army. He was not at all however a man after the heart of the Iron Chancellor, and the influence of his wife probably did much to intensify his dislike and resistance to the Bismarckian policy. It was, it would seem, a triumph of her wifely ambition and womanly diplomacy when Frederick succeeded to the Imperial throne, for the great Chancellor would have excluded him on the ground of being afflicted with incurable disease. Had Frederick lived the Empress might have played an important part, and much might have been accomplished in the direction of more liberal government. But Death conspired with Bismarck against her. The present Emperor whose strong personality is of a type different from his mother, rejected the more democratic ideas of his father to follow in the steps of his grandfather, and though he discarded Bismarck he

adhered in a general way to the Bismarckian policy. Altogether, life must have had a good deal of pain and disappointment for the Empress Frederick, for however much she might appreciate the greatness of the Empire over which her son rules, or the strength with which he governs, the actual Germany is not the Germany of which she dreamed. Perhaps her dream was not altogether wise or possible of realization even had Frederick lived.—Shut out from participation in political affairs in which doubtless she had the ability and the ambition to play a part, the late Empress found a quieter sphere of activity and usefulness in promoting literature, science and art, and enterprises for the social improvement of the people, and though she never won favor with German statesmen, nor any very large place in the hearts of the German people, whose prejudice against her English origin and ideas seem to have been invincible, yet the influence of her strong and positive personality was large and healthful, and within the more limited sphere in which her later life was spent the Empress Dowager commanded admiration and the highest respect.

**The Northwest Grain Crop.** It is usually the case that the earlier reports in reference to the Northwest grain crops are more optimistic than the final facts warrant. That is very likely to be true this year, although there seems to be no doubt that the crop on the whole is an excellent one and the total result will probably be considerably greater than that of any past year. However one need not be surprised to hear that some of the more sanguine predictions as to the size of the crop are not likely to be fulfilled. There are some people who, whenever they get to estimating a rich man's wealth, or the damage of a big fire, or the amount of a good crop, seem to feel that it is impossible to make the figures too large. A Toronto despatch of Thursday last says that Mr. John W. Wheaton editor of The Farming World and an authority on matters pertaining to the grain output, has just returned from a tour of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories and brings back an opinion of this year's crop, which is decidedly at variance with previous and more optimistic reports from the Northwest. Mr. Wheaton places the probable yield per acre at from twenty to twenty-five bushels, and believes that the whole crop will not be more than forty-five million bushels. He states that before leaving, a prominent grain dealer informed him that hundreds of farmers would be disappointed in their crops as the grain was not heading out well. In a majority of the fields along the railway between Brandon and Winnipeg, the yield would not be more than ten or fifteen bushels per acre, this, however, being on unsatisfactory sections. Winnipeg despatches state that men to work in the harvest fields of the country were arriving there last week at the rate of 2,000 or 3,000 a day and that there was no doubt but that all would find employment.

**Canada's Trade With Great Britain.** Professor Robertson, the Dominion Commissioner for Agriculture and Dairying, has recently returned from Great Britain where, in company with Hon. Mr. Fisher, Minister of Agriculture, he had spent two months in the endeavor to promote trade in the agricultural products of Canada. Mr. Robertson speaks in very encouraging terms of the result of this mission. Public meetings were held which were well attended, and generously reported by the city press, and there were also conferences in which the Minister and Commissioner met the leading importers in various lines to get confidential information as to what in their opinion is needed in regard to packing, marking, shipping, etc., of Canadian food products to meet the wants of their customers. The information obtained, Prof. Robertson thinks, was of an extremely useful character, and will be passed on to Canadian producers and exporters for their benefit. As to present trade conditions in

Great Britain, Prof. Robertson says: "There is a more general recognition of Canadian food products in British markets, due to the improved quality and the larger volume of trade in them. For instance, in the year 1900 Canada's export of wheat flour to Britain was sixteen times greater than any year previously. Butter, sixty times, and bacon twenty times greater, while the export of cheese is twice as large. To put it another way—from sending only seven per cent. of the total food imports of Great Britain we are now sending sixteen per cent.—and I see no reason why we should not keep up that rate of increase and make it thirty per cent. in the next ten years." In ten years the value of other exports has advanced from twenty-four to seventy-two million dollars, and Prof. Robertson believes that in ten years more at a normal rate of increase it will have reached two hundred millions. In many lines of produce the exports from the United States to Britain have decreased, owing partly to the growing domestic demand. Already their cheese trade has almost disappeared, being down to twelve per cent. of Britain's total import, against our sixty per cent. Only fifteen years ago they sent twice as much cheese as we did. Another reason for this good showing is that the press of Great Britain, as I found it, is even more willing than ever to help us by placing statements showing the progress of Canada before the public.

**A Dane's View.** In connection with so much that is published in the way of criticism and denunciation of the course pursued by the British military authorities in the later stages of the South African war and the charges of unnecessary harshness and cruelty which are apparently so readily accepted by many people in England, it is of interest to note the opinion of a Dane, a resident of South Africa, as expressed in a letter not long since published in a Copenhagen newspaper. The writer of the letter, it is explained, has been for many years a resident of the Transvaal, where he married a Boer wife who brought him as dowry a farm which he cultivated. He was much respected by the people and held several local posts of responsibility such as were rarely entrusted to foreigners in the Transvaal. When the war broke out this Dane, took his place in the Boer army and fought the English in several battles. Being granted leave of absence to look after his affairs, he was at home at the time of the British march upon Pretoria, and surrendered with the rest of the population of his district. This man whose domestic and material interests were so intimately bound up with the Boers cannot be suspected of partiality toward the English, and what he has written in a private letter addressed to a sister in Copenhagen seems far more worthy of credence than much else that is so readily believed to the disadvantage of the British. It goes to show, what is undoubtedly true, that the destruction of property in the Transvaal and Orange State and the suffering of the people are the inevitable results of the insanely stubborn policy of resistance adopted and still maintained by the Boer leaders. Extracts from the letter alluded to are as follows:

"The British authorities are treating us well in every respect, and really are showing us extraordinary friendliness. The behaviour of the soldiers demands the highest praise; one never hears a word of any plundering or of violence of any description towards the people here. I do not know a single case of such a thing, and I have not heard the least complaint of the British soldiers being rude or rough to any of our population. I really therefore cannot see that there is the slightest excuse for the way in which so many Boers are taking up arms again and breaking their oath of neutrality. They had nothing to fear as long as they simply kept their oath, for the British authorities protected them in every respect. They might have formed a camp in which, with their families and cattle, they could have remained perfectly secure under British protection. Instead of doing that, the moment they could they have broken their oath, and have slunk round behind the British army. If the English have made any mistake in their treatment of the Boers, I can only say that, in my opinion, it has been in treating them with a great deal too much good nature and forbearance."