

Messenger and Visitor

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Dowie in Difficulty.

Dr. Alexander Dowie, the self-styled Elijah, has apparently failed at the point at which he was generally supposed to be strongest. Whatever might be thought of his claims as a prophet and healer, there was little question as to his possession of extraordinary ability as a financier. Accordingly the announcement that he is in very serious financial difficulty and that the result is not unlikely to be a complete collapse of the gigantic scheme which has its realization in Zion City has taken the world by surprise. The Courts, through receivers, have taken possession of all the property controlled by Dowie in Zion City. Judgments had been accumulating against him for several weeks past, and as there was every indication that he could not pay his debts the creditors sought protection for their interests in the bankruptcy courts. Dowie is known to have accumulated a large sum as the head of the "Christian Catholic Church." The assets of the organization, of which "the prophet" is the banker, have been estimated at between \$20,000,000 and \$30,000,000, but estimates in such a case are apt to be extravagant. There was a large outlay when Zion City was founded two years ago. Then, some of the industries started there have not proved to be paying investments and some legal disputes in which Dowie has been engaged have cost him a good deal of money. His liabilities altogether are said to total up \$750,000. Dowie has been making urgent appeals to his followers and making use of all his assumed prophetic authority to draw from them the funds necessary in the emergency. Hundreds of letters, it is said, have been sent to his followers in all parts of the country in which they are urged, almost commanded, to sell their farms, stores and everything else and come at once to Zion City and take up their work in the church. All who have money in the banks where they now live are asked to draw that money out of the local banks and send it for deposit at Zion City. What result these urgent appeals will have remains to be seen. It is reported, however, that the response from the saints in Zion City has not yet been enthusiastic. It is not impossible that the money necessary to deliver Dowie from his present embarrassment may be forthcoming. Much will depend for the ultimate outcome of the matter upon the question whether or not the Zion City enterprise is financially feasible. Naturally, under the circumstances, there are suspicions that some of Dowie's accumulated wealth may have gone across the seas in charge of his wife and son. But the suspicion may do him injustice.

Russia and Japan.

An Associated Press despatch is authority for the statement that Japan and Russia are on the verge of an amicable settlement of their differences. This settlement, it is said, will be the result of the negotiations which have been in progress for some time past and have been assisted by the friendly representations of France to Russia and of Great Britain to Japan. The two nations are said to have agreed practically upon a treaty, the basis of which is as follows: "Russia will accept the two agreements entered into by Japan with Korea dated 1896 and 1898 respectively, under which Japan secured various rights in Korea, including the maintenance of a garrison at Seoul. In exchange for this concession, Japan will accept Russia's treaty with China respecting Manchuria." It is believed, though this cannot be stated as positive, that Japan and Russia will reiterate their support of the principles of the "open door" and the integrity of China and of Korea.

The Expedition to Thibet.

A British military expedition into Thibet is in progress. Some time ago a mission under Colonel Younghusband went to Lhasa to discuss with the Thibetan authorities their failure to observe treaty stipulations and the consequent injury of the trade between India and Thibet. The mission accomplished nothing as the Dalai-Lama sent subordinates to meet the British representatives and refused to treat with them unless they retired into Indian territory. Colonel Younghusband thereupon fortified the camp and returned himself to report to the Viceroy. As a consequence he is now leading a considerable force of troops into Chumbi Valley which is the key to Thibet. Thence he is expected to advance on Gyantse, an important centre about 150 miles from Lhasa. This movement of a British

force into Thibet has, it appears, created some excitement in Russia. The St. Petersburg newspapers are reported as regarding it as an attempt to stir up a movement in China under cover of which the powers will increase their spheres of influence. The *Novoe Vremya*, a leading St. Petersburg paper, is quoted as saying that if the British succeed in carrying out their plans, Thibet will be in their hands, as they will always be in a position to threaten Lhasa, the sacred city of Thibet, and if they gain control of the Holy Land of Thibet, 500,000,000 of Buddhists will regard Great Britain as being the most powerful country in the world. The *Novoe Vremya* adds: "While it is impossible for the weak Thibetans to prevent the British crossing the Himalayas, it is quite possible for others to compel the British to stop by creating a slight diversion in some direction disagreeable to the British politicians." According to a late London despatch the British Government disclaims any intention of pushing the Younghusband expedition through to Lhasa or even of permanently occupying Gyantse. Whether or not the British expedition into Thibet has had any influence to promote the understanding which it is reported has been reached between Russia and Japan may be a question of some interest.

Radium.

The recently discovered substance, radium, is likely for some time to come to furnish very interesting matter for scientific investigation. The study of this substance has already led some learned investigators to think that the dream of the old alchemists, that one element might be transmitted into another and that consequently baser metals might by some means be turned into gold, is something more than a dream. Sir William Ramsay, a distinguished scientist and professor of Chemistry in London University, in a recent lecture made the startling announcement that his experiments with radium had shown that this mysterious element has the power, by some subtle process of changing into another element, namely, helium. He described how a long search into the question of what becomes of the minute particles which radium is always throwing off, was rewarded. Besides its other manifestations, radium constantly gives off an emanation which seems to be in all respects like a heavy gas. It can be collected in tiny flasks, measured, weighed, and used to display the characteristic properties of radium, but it is not permanent. In about a month it entirely disappears. The question is what becomes of it. Sir William has caught this emanation in the act of vanishing. He found that after it had been collected a couple of days its spectrum, which previously was entirely unlike any yet studied, began to display the typical yellow line of helium. In four or five days the helium was positively blazing in the hermetically sealed tubes that had been filled with pure emanations or gaseous output of radium. In other words one element had been literally seen to change into another. This realization of one of the oldest of human dreams was, said Professor Ramsay, very suggestive of transmutation. The problem might not be actually solved, but it was by no means absurd. Professor Ramsay calculated that if radium turned into helium, and nothing else, it would take two million years to dissolve into gas, but if helium is only one of the substances given off the transmutation would be proportionately shorter. He is now investigating to learn precisely how much helium was produced from the radium, what happened in the change, and how long it took.

British Parliamentarians in Paris.

A number of the members of the British Parliament with their wives and families have lately been in Paris returning the visit of French Deputies to London a few weeks before in connection with the arranging of the treaty of International Arbitration. Matters seem to have been made as pleasant for the British visitors in Paris as they had been for the French in London, and both visits will doubtless tend to promote friendship and good-will between the two nations. A feature of the visit was a reception at the Elysee when Baron d'Estournelles de Constant presented the M. Ps. and their ladies individually to the President and Madame Loubet. This was followed later by a banquet in honor of the visitors, at which Premier Combes made a great speech in praise of international arbitration. He declared that the treaty between France and Great Britain had been ratified by the public opinion of the two countries and de-

nied that the limitations of the treaty were such as to render it unimportant. He believed that the seed sown would grow to a mighty tree. He had no doubt that it would result in spreading faith in arbitration, and possibly the day was not far distant when both nations would agree to submit all differences, however unimportant, to arbitration. In concluding his speech M. Combes proposed the health of Edward VII, and said that the treaty was due to the king's influence.

Floods in Russia.

The great flood which lately occurred in St. Petersburg and adjacent regions of country is reported to be the most serious since 1874. It has caused great damage to property. The loss of life appears not to have been large, but the suffering resulting from turning 20,000 persons into the streets in St. Petersburg after winter had set in must be very great, and probably many deaths would result. At Cronstadt the destruction of property was especially heavy; the rafts and barges in the river being smashed and the live stock drowned. At one point a cemetery was invaded by the flood and coffins were washed out of graves and floated away.

The Springhill Strike.

One thousand Springhill miners are out on a strike, and according to the despatches in reference to the matter, which have appeared in the daily press, the prospect seems to be that some time may elapse before they return to work. The cause of the strike is said to be a difference between the management and the miners in respect to the method of measuring the coal. It appears that on account of the way in which the coal lies at Springhill it cannot all be sent out in boxes, but much of it is slid down long chutes which are sometimes at an angle of 45 degrees or more. At the head of these chutes there will sometimes be eighteen sets of men working. It is therefore impracticable to keep account of each man's coal separately at the bottom of the chute. But, according to the method which had been employed, the amount of coal to be credited to each pair of miners was arrived at by the number of cubic feet which was found when measured to have been taken out of the place where they were working, and as a box contains a certain number of cubic feet the number of boxes to be credited to each pair of miners was arrived at in this way. The management contends, however, that the number of boxes actually filled at the bottom of the chute does not equal the number of boxes which the measurement at the head of the chute gives as being mined, and has insisted that the miners shall be paid according to the box measurement at the bottom of the chute. It is against the installation of this new method of measurement that the miners have rebelled. Their leaders are said to be very strongly determined not to yield and very confident of their ability to hold out until the Company shall concede the point in dispute. On the other hand the management appears to be quite as determined not to yield to the demands of the miners. The prospect for an arbitration of the difficulty does not appear to be hopeful. It looks as if the end of the trouble might be some distance away. The strike, however, is an expensive business for both parties and for the town, as it means the stoppage of some \$20,000 in wages weekly.

Peary Will Try Again.

It is stated that Lieut. Peary has received three years leave of absence from the Navy department of the United States, in order to undertake another expedition with the hope of reaching the North Pole. Lieut. Peary's former expeditions, while they have failed of the grand purpose in view, have not been without geographical results of value, and if he should fail again, as he probably will, to reach the Pole, he may at least add something more to the sum of the world's knowledge concerning the northern polar regions. Peary's present plan is said to be to start next July, go direct to Whale Sound, establish a base at Cape Sabine and form an Eskimo camp there. Thence he will force his way northward to Grant Land where he hopes to establish winter quarters on the northern shore. As far as practicable he will establish caches along the route. The following February, with the earliest returning light, he will start due north over the polar pack with a small pioneering party, and followed by a large main party. Mr. Peary hopes to make the journey from Cape Sabine to the North Pole and back if conditions are good in a hundred days. If the conditions are bad, and he fails in the attempt, he will go into winter quarters and try again the next year.