

# Messenger and Visitor.

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**Mount Vesuvius.** According to late despatches the eruption of Mount Vesuvius has assumed such proportions as to cause much alarm and threaten great destruction. The flow of lava is very great, though since the opening of a number of new craters around the central crater there has been a marked cessation of the more violent belchings of fire and smoke. The meteorological observatory on the part of the volcano known as Mount Cataoni, is seriously threatened by the subsiding of the ground on which it is built. "One great lava stream now coming down certainly will overwhelm it unless it is diverted from its present course. This observatory, situated 2,200 feet above the sea level on the shoulder of a hill which divides the lava streams descending from the crater into great branches, was established many years ago for the purpose of putting a scientific watch upon the volcano and of giving warning to the surrounding country of impending dangerous eruptions. Many lives have been saved by notice from it to the inhabitants in time to flee. It was here that in the fearful outbreak of April, 1872, Director Holmeri bravely faced almost certain death to take note of the awful phenomena when fiery streams threatened to engulf his station. The lava torrent near the crater, which has a width of half a mile, is dividing into three principal streams, each 70 to 80 yards wide. These, as they pour down the mountain side, again sub-divide into numerous smaller streams. They advance at the rate of forty yards an hour, submerging everything in their path, searing the vegetation in the vicinity as though fire had passed over it. An enormous quantity of lava keeps pouring out of the crater. It has filled Vetrana Valley, a deep ravine, and ashes lie several inches thick for a long distance down the sides of the mountain and on the adjacent villages. The slope of the mountain is one of the most thickly populated districts in the world. The fertility of the soil is celebrated, and in the best part four crops a year are garnered. But one great aid to this fertility, the numerous wells, are beginning to dry up, and the farmers are in despair. Travellers from all parts of Europe are flocking here to see Vesuvius in eruption. The spectacle at night is one of indescribable grandeur. The faint palpitating glow that normally marks the great crater is now exchanged for a vivid tongue of light, colored at times almost like a rainbow, illuminating the heavens and deflected with exquisite effect in the waters of the bay. These manifestations are accompanied by deep rumblings and thunderous subterranean explosions, followed by great out-pourings of lava and ashes."

**The Dreyfus Case.** France continued to be greatly agitated over the Dreyfus case. Recent revelations go to show beyond question that a part, at least, of the documentary evidence was forged, and thereby of course serious doubt is cast upon the genuineness of all the evidence upon which the French soldier was condemned on the charge of having revealed the military secrets of his nation. A certain Colonel Henry of the French army had docketed a letter in the trial upon which much reliance was placed as proving the guilt of Dreyfus. A short time since, the suspicions of the government having been aroused as to the genuineness of this document, Col. Henry was arrested, and, after confessing that the letter was a forgery, committed suicide. This, with other evidence of a similar character, has led to a strenuous demand for a new trial, to which the government has so far yielded as to decide to submit to a committee to be selected by M. Sarrien, the Minister of Justice, all the documents in the case. This committee will advise whether or not the case should be re-opened, and the presumption is

that the government will be guided by the advice to be given. The action taken has, however, led to the resignation of M. Zurlinden, the Minister of War, and another member of the Cabinet. The case is still enveloped in the mystery which has attached to it from the first. The fact that certain evidence admitted in the case was forged does not, of course, prove the innocence of Dreyfus. It may have been that the real evidence was of such a character that the chiefs of the army could not venture to make it public. On the other hand, it may be that Dreyfus is innocent, but that, being a Jew, he has been made a scapegoat for the crime of persons in a high position. Whatever the facts are the case is one which very seriously affects the reputation of France in the eyes of the nations, and which, owing to the imperious stand taken by the chiefs of the army and the popular feeling thereby aroused, may lead to the most serious results for the French republic.

**Emperor William's Plans in Syria.** Attention is being strongly called to the German Emperor's prospective visit to the Holy Land, and speculation is rife as to the real purpose which it involves. It is stated that the Kaiser is to be attended on his pilgrimage, not only by a great staff of officials, but by some two hundred pastors of the Lutheran church. Lutheran missionaries have been active in Syria for many years past, and a great German-Arabic colony, under Lutheran influences, has been established in the mountainous parts of Syria, so that the interest of the Lutheran pastors in the country is natural enough. But a leading English paper expresses the opinion that the visit of the Emperor, with his ministers, ecclesiastical and civil, to Palestine, has more than a merely religious significance, that it indicates a plan in the mind of the Emperor to make Asia Minor a field for the expansion of German power, and that a rapid development of this plan may be expected, which will make south-western Asia as much a centre of general interest as the far east is at present. German activity in Asia Minor is said to be already very great and rapidly growing, German banking facilities have been introduced, a railroad is being built by a German company, which will ultimately connect Bagdad with the Mediterranean, and a large number of colonists have been settled in Syria. The Emperor is said, covets the district extending to the Tigris and Euphrates, not only for German rule, but for German trade. The friendly relations which William has cultivated with the Sultan are supposed to have an important bearing when considered in regard to the Emperor's plans in respect to Syria.

### Facts to be Remembered.

1. The Dominion Revenue from the liquor traffic averages \$7,101,537 (see Royal Commission Report, page 26). Last year the revenue was larger. The Finance Minister stated in Parliament that this was because a great deal of liquor was entered for duty in expectation of an increase in charges, and that it would mean less revenue later on. Some persons are unfairly concealing this statement of the Finance Minister, and quoting last year's excessive figures as the revenue that would be lost by prohibition. This is a deception.
2. Prohibition does not involve direct taxation. On February 8th last, in the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa Sir Wilfrid Laurier said to a deputation of prohibitionists that direct taxation is NOT a necessary consequence of prohibition, though more taxation must be secured in some other way, if the liquor revenue is discontinued.
3. The advocates of the liquor traffic are misrepresenting the revenue question, though careful statesmen have declared that it is not a reasonable argument against prohibition. The liquor traffic produces no revenue. It merely collects from the people a vast sum, and pays a

small amount of it to the Government. Under prohibition the people will keep the vast sum and pay the small amount themselves.

4. The great amount of capital invested in the liquor traffic, employs comparatively few men, and is thus kept out of other investments in which it would employ a great many people, pay vastly more wages, and benefit the people instead of making them poor.

5. Total prohibition is something far more comprehensive, far more effective, and far more easily enforced than the Scott Act, the Maine Law, or any other partial measure that has yet been tried. Many opponents of the Scott Act have declared that they would support total prohibition of manufacture, importation and sale, which prohibition they believe is the only kind that can be made really effective.

(6) It is not true that the liquor traffickers in Canada are strong enough to defy law, resist government, thwart the will of the people, and make prohibition a total failure. They cannot do it. The liquor traffic exists by permission of the people, and it can be suppressed by the will of the people. The people are responsible for the continuance of the traffic, and the fearful evils that attend it. They have now an opportunity to rid themselves of this awful responsibility.

(7) It is not true that a victory in the Plebiscite will not help the prohibition cause. Sir Wilfrid Laurier in promising prohibition if the people voted for it, was not trying to deceive the public. He may be relied upon to honorably keep his word. The friends of the traffic who represent the Premier and other members of Parliament, Conservatives and Reformers as dishonest tricksters, are simply slandering these gentlemen for their own selfish ends.

(8) The Plebiscite only affects the traffic in liquors "for use as beverages." It will not interfere with liquor used in sacrament or liquor honestly used in medicine or arts. It is not true that the prohibition mentioned in the Plebiscite would interfere with the manufacture of sweet cider, cider vinegar, or cider preserved without fermentation. This was made very clear in the debate on the Plebiscite Bill in the House of Commons. In explaining the word "Cider" as used in the Bill, the Minister of Agriculture said:—"The word 'Cider' means apple juice which having been treated in manufacture, has become an intoxicating drink, and it does not mean apple juice simply in its raw state."

9. There are two sides in this contest; the side that is seeking to uphold and strengthen the liquor-traffic, and the side that is seeking to uphold and strengthen the church, the law, the school, the home, and all that helps to make men nobler, happier, and better off. On which side should a Christian citizen be found?

10. The strongest opponents of prohibition are men who desire to grow rich at the people's expense, and men who would rather see others suffer than give up their personal indulgence. There are thousands of honorable and benevolent men who drink liquor now, but who will cheerfully support prohibition, and give up their own personal preference for the public good.

11. It is not right to be neutral or apathetic, when every vote will count for either the continuance of the bars, or the protection of our boys. No home is safe while the dangerous and alluring liquor-traffic continues.

12. A defeat in this contest would be a terrible disaster to the cause of temperance—a mighty triumph for the cause of so much sorrow and sin. We cannot afford it. We must do our duty to the full. Our only danger lies in the indifference of those who ought to be in earnest. The people are right. We have the votes. For the sake of all we love and cherish, let us see that every vote is polled.

—We publish this week on another page an article from the facile pen of Rev. C. K. Harrington, of Japan, entitled "Omachi and its Gods." The article is so graphically descriptive that the reader will almost feel as if he had himself paid a visit to the Sunrise Kingdom, and had seen the land, the people, and their modes of life. The article is pretty long, but we are sure that no one who appreciates instruction presented in an interesting form will find it too long. Two shorter articles will follow.