

Messenger and Visitor.

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Learning From Our Neighbors. Professor Robertson, the Dominion Commissioner of Agriculture, is on a trip to the Northwest with the purpose, among other matters, of consulting with the principal grain dealers at Calgary in regard to the shipment of oats to South Africa. It is stated that Prof. Robertson will return through Minnesota and Wisconsin, giving some special attention to agricultural developments in those States. In Wisconsin he is to drive with ex-Governor Hoard through Jefferson County in order to get first hand information respecting the co-operative system in agriculture which has been adopted in that section and, as it is reported, with remarkably good results, mortgages having been reduced on farms, the value of agricultural lands increased, stock and dairy products raised in quality and value and the yield of crops per acre very much enlarged. If such results of improved methods are being secured in Wisconsin, it is certainly worth while for Canadian farmers to learn how these results are achieved.

Divorce in the United States. Whatever tends to weaken or destroy the sanctity of marriage must have a degrading influence upon home life, and the degradation of the home life of a people must in no long time reflect itself strongly in the character of the nation. In view of this fact the remarkable increase in the number of divorces granted in recent years in many of the States of the American Union is a most serious and alarming consideration. 'The Standard' of Chicago states that the number of divorces granted in Ohio has increased nearly 50 per cent. in ten years or nearly three times as fast as the population, reaching 3,217 in 1899 or about one divorce to every ten marriages. In some other States it is even worse. In Indiana there were 4,699 divorces granted in 1900, or more than one divorce to every six marriages. Such figures indicate not only a lamentably lax morality in reference to the marriage relation, but they indicate also a grave peril to the nation, for nothing can more surely tend to the destruction of national virtue than that desecration and ruin of the home, which must result from any general disregard of the sanctity of marriage.

Underground Telegraphy. A new step in the development of the wireless method of telegraphy is the sending of the electrical current through the ground instead of through the air as in the Marconi system. Experiments recently made in England demonstrated the practicability of sending messages through the ground. At the transmitting station a spike bearing a telephoning apparatus was driven into the ground. In a field 400 yards away there was a similar apparatus, with no other connection with the former than the natural conditions afforded. An operator touched the button several times, and taps were given at the other station corresponding to the number of times the button was pressed. Through the same apparatus the human voice was heard. The ground was sodden with recent rain, and on that account apparently the apparatus did not work well. But, after some unintelligible muttering and buzzing, came the words repeated again and again, "Is it all right?" The inventor, Mr. Armstrong, has a plan, it is said, for varying the pitch or tone, so that messages sent at the same time might pass without conflicting with and destroying each other as would be the case when the messages were in the same tone. Other experiments gave wireless control to torpedoes from land 500 yards away. A development of this invention might render obsolete the finest fortifications, and the new submarines, need-

ing no crew, would be converted into torpedoes. Again Mr. Armstrong presses the button in the house and an unconnected lamp, two miles and a half away, instantly lights. When he presses the button again the light is extinguished. Unlike Tesla's experiments, Armstrong's feats are accomplished with very low voltage.

Sir Robert Bond and Mr. Jones. Premier Bond of Newfoundland was knighted by the Duke of Cornwall and York on the occasion of the recent visit of Their Royal Highnesses and party to Newfoundland. A similar honor was offered to Governor Jones of Nova Scotia and was respectfully declined. No one, we suppose, will be disposed to criticise Premier Bond severely for following the example of so many distinguished men in Canada in accepting from the Sovereign a title in recognition of his position and his public services. But if Mr. Bond has done well in this matter, Mr. Jones, according to our view of the matter, has done better. If by his ability and faithful public services a man has been honored by the people, he has received the reward which—apart from the consciousness of having done his duty—a large-souled man principally cares for. If the King wishes to say some word in endorsement of the word of the people and in recognition of a faithful subject's valuable services, that also may be well enough. But the bestowment and the acceptance of a title is another thing—a thing which in this new and democratic country is much to be deprecated. Why should our public men have dangled before their eyes as an object of ambition the ghostly shadow of an old aristocracy whose age and whose spirit is not ours, and which no sanely patriotic man could wish to see transplanted on Canadian soil. Our profound respects to Mr. Jones, Governor of Nova Scotia. He is a gentleman of the true democratic type, and we would commend his excellent example to other public men of this country who may be in danger of some day being tempted to become Sir Somebodies or Sir Nobodies. To our mind it is a sane and wholesome sentiment that makes a public man desire to live in close touch and sympathy with the plain people of the land, that he may in the fullest degree enjoy their confidence and serve their interests. And therefore he is to be commended who declines a paltry title or anything else that would even seem to set him apart as a member or a nucleus of a higher social caste, or in any way cut him off from the full and vital currents of the popular life. The real nobleman will not attest his nobility by the winning of a distinctive title which seems to say that he, his wife and his family are to be considered apart from the democracy at large; he will attest his nobility rather by the fullest recognition of his kinship and fellowship with his fellowmen, and, by the largest service he can render them, will seek to enthrone himself in their hearts and win the crown of their gratitude.

Mr. W. E. H. Massey. The announcement of the death last week of Mr. Walter E. H. Massey of Toronto, causes deep and wide-spread regret. His death, which has taken place at the comparatively early age of 38 years, came as the result of an attack of typhoid fever. Mr. Massey was the son of the late Hart A. Massey, the well-known philanthropist and man of business, and was at the time of his death president of the Massey Harris Company, one of the greatest, if not the greatest manufacturing concerns in Canada. The duties which devolved upon Mr. Massey, as the head of this great business, must have been very onerous, but he was also deeply and actively interested in many things which appeared to him as a Christian man and a public-spirit-

ed citizen. Mr. Massey was a most generous and methodical giver to religious, charitable and benevolent enterprises, and was a director of the National Sanitarium Association, and a trustee of the Massey Music Hall and Fred Victor Mission. He was a prominent member of the Methodist church, and most devoted to its interests. He was also a regent of Victoria University, and one of the Treasurers of the Twentieth Century Thanksgiving Fund of the Methodist Church, to which he contributed very liberally. Mr. Massey attended for some years the Central Methodist Church on Bloor street, of which he was a member and trustee, and was also leader of the Young Men's Bible League of that church, which office he held since its inception ten years ago. He was one of the executors of the large estate left by his father, and in this connection it was purely on a suggestion of his own, in keeping with his great interest in farmers and farming, that there is being erected at the present time the fine Massey Hall and Library, as a valuable adjunct to the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph.

The War in South Africa. Recent despatches from South Africa indicate that although the Boer forces are much broken up and the process of wearing out their patience and spirit by persistent fighting goes steadily on, they are nevertheless able at times so to concentrate their forces and deliver unexpected attacks as to inflict very serious loss upon the British columns. A despatch from Lord Kitchener of Oct. 28 reported important fighting four days earlier near Great Marico River, where Delarey and Kemp attacked a British force and were repulsed only after a fierce battle leaving 40 dead on the field, the British loss being 28 killed and 55 wounded. A still more serious battle is reported by a despatch of Nov. 1st, resulting in serious disasters to the British force under Col. Benson. The fighting in this instance occurred near Bethel, north-east of Standerton, in the Eastern Transvaal. The attack on Col. Benson's force was made, under cover of a thick mist, by a force of Boers reported to have been 1000 strong. The fighting was at close quarters and the loss on the British side at least was very heavy. Colonel Benson received wounds of which he afterwards died. The list of losses include seven other officers and fifty-four men killed and thirteen officers and one hundred and sixty men wounded. The Boers also captured two guns. Lord Kitchener believes the Boers also to have lost heavily, and supposes that the guns were retaken, but was unable at the time of sending his despatch to give definite information as to these matters. Col. Barter who had been sent to Col. Benson's relief reached his column early Friday morning. Lord Kitchener praises Col. Benson as a gallant and capable officer who invariably led his column with marked success and judgment. He surprised a Boer laager, Oct. 22, capturing 37 prisoners, and four days later repulsed a heavy attack on his rear guard of the Boer commandos under Grobelaar and Erasmus. As something in the way of an offset to the disaster suffered by Benson's command, it is reported that Col. Kekewick by a night surprise upon Von Albert's laager near Rustenburg (some 60 miles west of Pretoria) captured 78 Boers. Commandant General Botha is reported also to have very narrowly escaped capture in connection with a night surprise upon his camp by Col. Remington. Commandant Hans Botha, and former Lauderott Schutte were taken with other prisoners. Major Ross and the Canadian scouts are given credit for the capture of 17 Boers supposed to be train-wreckers—a large quantity of dynamite being found in their possession.—Further details of the fight near Bethel show that the attack upon Col. Benson's column was led by Commandant General Louis Botha in person. The fighting was fierce and prolonged. The Boers who were a thousand strong making desperate efforts to overwhelm the British force, charging repeatedly right up to the British lines, and being driven back each time with heavy loss. The British defence was stubbornly and successfully maintained for a day and a night until the arrival of Col. Barter and his force brought relief. The Boers are said to have lost from 300 to 400 men. The honor of the British arms appears to have been fully maintained in the engagement and the disaster of defeat averted, but the loss inflicted and the fact of the Boers being still in a position to deliver such an attack are very serious considerations, and will serve to fan the criticism of Lord Kitchener's management to a still fiercer flame.