

# Messenger and Visitor.

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**For the Adjustment of Difficulties.** Sir Louis Davies, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, went to Washington last week to take part in negotiations between the State Department of the Washington Government and the British Ambassador, Sir Julian Pauncefote, as a preliminary step toward a convention or treaty between the Governments of Great Britain and the United States, for the purpose of clearing up several long pending controversies in which Canada is especially interested. The attitude of Congress has heretofore been unfriendly to such a convention, and it is doubtful whether anything of great value will result from the attempt now being made, which, however, is understood to have the cordial support of President McKinley, and in view of the very general expression of friendly feeling between the two countries, the present is considered an opportune time to make another attempt to remove the causes of friction, so that in the future there may be as little as possible to disturb the good international feeling which now happily prevails. The more immediate object of the present negotiations is understood to be the revision of the regulations concerning pelagic sealing, which, in accordance with the finding of the Paris tribunal of 1893, must be revised every five years. It is expected that another member of the Canadian Government—probably Sir Richard Cartwright or possibly the Premier—will take part in the negotiations. It is stated that, after having organized at Washington, the Commission may adjourn to Ottawa.

**Better Without It.** It is becoming more and more clearly demonstrated, not only that alcoholic beverages are unnecessary to human health and well-being, but also that, if men would undertake arduous tasks under the most favorable conditions for success, they must let alcohol severely alone. To those who engage in important athletic contest and to those who set out upon polar expeditions and the like hazardous undertakings, in which so much depends upon men keeping their physical health up to the highest standard possible under the circumstances, alcoholic liquors are prohibited. Military commanders are also beginning to recognize alcohol as a hindrance rather than a help where arduous service is required and to act upon that principle. During the Soudan campaign, says the Montreal Witness, spirituous and malt liquors of all kinds have been prohibited. "The military authorities did not issue the order against these beverages on any abstract moral grounds, but simply because physical endurance and all soldierly qualities are found by experience in greater degree among those in the field who abstain from them than among those who drink. Even the enforcement of total abstinence under trying circumstances on those accustomed to drink is not found to be at all a source of danger. There is nothing new in this, but we still actually find very intelligent people telling us that prohibition is wrong, seeing that some alcoholic stimulus is necessary to health. Since Col. Wolseley's Red River campaign, in which alcoholic drinks were for the first time absolutely cut off from a British force, his regimen has been more and more daringly experimented upon with unvaryingly satisfactory results. In the present campaign spirituous liquor and beer have been absolutely cut off from officers and men alike. The result is seen in the perfection of discipline, in good health in one of the most trying climates in the earth, in coolness in action, steadiness on the march, stubborn endurance under heavy fatigue, and a 'morale' described by old war correspondents as far above anything ever before known in an army engaged in active service. From this simple statement of facts it is only reasonable to

conclude that what promotes physical prowess and moral stamina in soldiers would produce the same results in civil life. But, after all, this is only a re-statement of an old truism. Everybody can see for himself and can say whether those of his acquaintance who drink are healthier, better or happier than those who do not."

**Wheat.** A gentleman who has given much study to economic questions writes us that there was no reason outside the minds of speculators for the recent great advance in the price of wheat, and that, in view of the results of the recent harvest in the southern hemisphere and the prospects of the growing crop in the northern hemisphere, it seems certain that the price must come down to normal figures. In the Argentine Republic, where for two or three years past the wheat crop had been a failure, so that last year breadstuffs were being imported into the country, it is hoped this year to have 40,000,000 bushels to export. Chili and Australia, it is said, will also have wheat to export, and India's export crop is estimated at 37,000,000 bushels. If these estimates are correct, Europe may be able to obtain from 70,000,000 to 100,000,000 bushels from the southern hemisphere. The crop prospects in Europe are said to be good, and the outlook for the crop in North America is highly encouraging. As we remarked a few weeks ago there is no reason why a war between the United States and Spain should have any great effect upon the price of wheat, and, therefore, unless present probabilities shall be reversed, there is no reason to anticipate that the world's market will not be abundantly supplied with the great food staple during the coming year.

**Mr. Gladstone.** Mr. Gladstone's body is to rest in Westminster Abbey in "the Statesmen's Corner." The family are said to have hesitated to consent to a public funeral and the posthumous honor of burial among England's most famous dead, because of Mrs. Gladstone's desire that her body might at last rest beside her husband's at Hawarden. Her feeling in this matter is a very natural one and everyone must appreciate her desire that they whose lives had been so long and happily united might in death sleep side by side. Nothing seems more indicative of the nobility of Mr. Gladstone's personality than the effect which the announcement of his death has had upon both his former colleagues and his former opponents in Parliament. Writing on the 21st of May, the London correspondent of the New York Evening Post says: "Nowhere in English history can we find a parallel for the spectacle in the House of Commons yesterday. There was the scene of Mr. Gladstone's bitterest political conflicts. In every part of the House but one were those who had been his unbending foes, yet there was but one thought. England's deep and abiding loss was brought home to all parties as almost a personal grief. Nothing but Mr. Balfour's keen personal affection for Mr. Gladstone would have carried him through the ordeal, weak at heart and ill as he undoubtedly is. Sir William Harcourt, who followed, could not trust himself to speak of his personal relations with his dead chief. He spoke of them only to refute the story told by men who 'knew him not at all,' that Mr. Gladstone was overbearing in council. 'Of all chiefs,' he said emphatically, 'he was the most kind, the most tolerant, the most placable.' Then he passed to the passage from 'The Life of Pitt,' until he came to the words, 'No man was more beloved by his friends.' Here he completely broke down for a minute, says one who witnessed the scene. There was a pause which almost became

terrible. The House watched him in complete silence. There was a short struggle, and then in broken voice came the words, 'or more inspired those who had the happiness to live in his society.' Then, in a few softly spoken words, as if he scarcely dared to trust himself, Sir William brought his speech to an abrupt close. In the House of Lords, too, where Lord Rosebery made a passing reference to Mr. Gladstone's last letter, penned with almost dying hands, to Lady Salisbury, expressing his personal sympathy after the carriage accident to Lord Salisbury, the Premier himself, bowed with age and many burdens, wept like a child. As one newspaper says today, 'Such tears give salt to public life in England.'"

## New Books.

**The Standard Bearer;** By S. R. Crockett. Toronto: William Briggs.

The author in a "foreword" describes his book as "a book iron-grey and chill . . . the tale of times when the passions of men were still working like a yeast sea, after the storm of the Great Killing." It is a tale of the old Covenanter days which succeeded the death of Richard Cameron, when men who were of the same spirit were ready to fight for their faith and seal their testimony both with their own blood and the blood of their enemies. The book may be "iron-grey and chill" in some of its aspect, in sympathy with the men of the stern Cameronian spirit and the mountains and moss bogs of the country they loved. But there is no page of the book which is dull. It exhibits Scottish life in some of its ruder, sterner aspects, but it is life full of the strength of the indomitable Scotch character, softened by its homely sympathy and humor, hallowed by its stern piety and its love. For there is love in the story, of course. Not only between mother and son, and brother and sister, but between man and maiden. The story is as wholesome as it is interesting. The publisher has done his part well and given the story a handsome setting.

**A Lover in Homespun, and other stories;** By F. Clifford Smith. Toronto: William Briggs.

That Mr. Smith has had the rare good fortune to get the popular ear at his first venture in literature, is proved by the fact that a third edition of his first book, *A Lover in Homespun*, has just been issued. The book has received much favorable and well-merited praise from the Canadian press, and the London Literary World declares that Mr. Smith's stories "compare favorably with similar selections in which Scotch, Welsh and Irish rural life have been exploited." The author commands an easy, pleasing style and shows a good deal of imaginative and dramatic power. The picture which appears as a frontispiece of the latest edition of "A Lover in Homespun" shows Mr. Smith to be quite a young man. A young author who has done so well at his first venture is likely to be heard from again, and, judging from what he has done, we are inclined to think that very good things indeed may be expected from his pen.

**Short Stories of Familiar Bible Texts;** By Blackford Condit, D. D. Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company. Price \$1.00.

This book is divided into three parts. Part I. treats of familiar Bible texts which are misunderstood on account of being mistranslated; Part II., of texts which are misused on account of being misinterpreted, and Part III. of texts which are abused on account of being misquoted. The author's purpose may be said to be to save the Bible from its friends. Not unfrequently good people of much intelligence utter phrases under the impression that they are quoting from the sacred Scriptures, when, as a matter of fact, the words (and perhaps the sentiments) are not to be found within the lids of the Bible. "We are prone to sin as the sparks are to fly upward," "We roll sin under our tongue as a sweet morsel," "A merciful man is merciful to his beast" are instances. Another more serious error is the misapplication of passages because of a popular misconception as to their meaning. Again there are errors of translation which have led to misconception of certain passages. The author of the book has been at the pains to collate these different classes of passages and point out their erroneous use. It may be that his readers will not all agree with him in respect to every passage considered, but the book as a whole will be found helpful, and a general and careful reading of it would tend to promote a better understanding of many passages and save many persons from doing violence to the meaning of the Sacred Word.