

# Messenger and Visitor.

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## La Soufriere in Action.

The phenomena witnessed in connection with the recent eruptions of La Soufriere volcano on the island of St. Vincent, are described as having been exceedingly grand and wonderful in character. The Rev. James Darrell, a minister resident at Kingstown, the capital of St. Vincent, has written a graphic account of what he witnessed. We rowed, he says, within eight miles of the crater from which a vast column of steam, smoke and lava ascended to a prodigious elevation. This majestic volume of curling vapor, sublime beyond imagination, was about eight miles distant, but we judged that the top of this enormous awful pillar was fully eight miles high. The mighty bank of sulphurous vapor assumed the shape of a gigantic promontory, and then of a mass of revolving cloud-whirl, turning with incredible velocity, and efflorescing into beautiful flower shapes, some dark, some effulgent, others pearly white, and all brilliantly illuminated with electric flashes. The electric flashes were marvellously rapid and numerous beyond computation. These with the thundering noise of the mountain, the dismal roar of the lava, shocks of earth quake and falling stones and the enormous quantity of material ejected from the belching craters, produced a scene of incredible majesty and horror.

## British Politics.

Although for the present it may be fair sailing for the Salisbury administration, there are puffs of wind which seem to foretell the storm, and the Government ship is likely before long to find itself in rougher waters. In a parliamentary division upon a motion of the Opposition, antagonistic to the recently imposed tax on grain and flour, the Government was able to command a majority of more than a hundred, but there is plenty of evidence that the tax is extremely unpopular. In announcing the tax the Chancellor of the Exchequer argued that the small sum of three pence a hundred weight on grain would mean only the fraction of a farthing on the loaf, and therefore could not appreciably increase the price of bread. Sir Michael was no doubt right enough about the amount of increase in price so far as affects the grain dealers and bread-makers, but they would not split farthings or neglect the opportunity which an increase in the cost of grain afforded to add a percentage to their profits, and so it comes to pass that the poor man's loaf in England costs a half-penny more now than it did before the imposition of the tax. The Government could hardly put into the hands of the Opposition a more effective weapon, for there are few things that the English working-man will more promptly and emphatically resist than a tax on bread. The Government's School Bill, too, has awakened a fierce and, it would seem, an increasing storm of indignation among the Non-conformists of the country. It is doubtful whether, in the face of this resentment, the Government will venture to carry the Bill through, though of course quite able to command a sufficient majority in Parliament, and doubtless strongly urged to that course by the High Church party in the Establishment. The storm aroused by such action would, however, be so violent that the Government may well hesitate. No doubt the unpopularity of these measures, and especially that of the bread tax, have had much to do in determining the issue of the Bury by-election when a considerable Government majority was changed to a minority, and the Liberal candidate elected. A good deal may depend for the Government on the general price of grain. If wheat should decline, the loaf can be sold at the old price, notwithstanding the tax and the middleman's extra profits, but if wheat should advance, it will be so much the worse for the Government. In some quarters the present grain tax is regarded as a tentative

step in the direction of a protective tax on grain and other food products in the interests of an Imperial federation or Zollverein. Whether that is in the wind or not, it is pretty certain that the British taxpayer will not take kindly to such a proposition.

## The New Cuba.

The government of the republic of Cuba was installed on May 20th with such a measure of independence as the United States has been pleased to grant. Punctually at noon Senor Palma, the President of the new nation, affixed his signature to a document prepared by the United States War Department and read to him by General Wood, pledging the new administration to proclaim immediately the constitution, the Platt amendment contained in the appendix thereto, and to undertake all the obligations assumed by the United States in respect to Cuba by the Treaty of Paris. The New York Tribune says the United States did for Cuba the work which Spain had persistently neglected or refused to do. "It gave the island roads and schools and sanitation and sound administration. It led it on to the organization of national insular government of its own, acceptable to American standards. Now it withdraws from the island and leaves Cuba to be governed by Cubans." Nevertheless the Tribune does not feel greatly elated upon a consideration of all that the United States has done for Cuba. "There is," it says, "one fact that makes this day of rejoicing in Cuba a day of reproach to the United States. That is, that we have failed to meet Cuba upon the threshold of her nationality with justice, with honor, with redress for her wrongs and with an assurance of prosperity in the new life which is opening up before her. Do men try to evade the issue, saying that the future of Cuba is in Cuba's own hands? It is not so. We have retained it largely in our own hands by our dictation of addenda to the Cuban constitution and by our persistence in maintaining our traditional policy of a semi-protectorate over that island. We have righted the wrongs of Cuba—all save the one primary and fundamental wrong which was the cause of her woes and of her revolt. We have supplied her needs—all save the one supreme need upon which her welfare depends. We have redeemed her from Spanish commercial oppression—only to force her beneath our own commercial oppression: We have refused to the Cuban Republic the very self-same thing which we eagerly proffered to monarchical Spain; and today responsible statesmen and national lawmakers at Washington declare with unconscious cynicism that if for bread we fling Cuba a stone she will have to accept it, for she is unable to help herself—it is impossible for her to keep out of bankruptcy in any other way!"

## John W. Barss.

The death of Mr. John W. Barss of Wolfville, which occurred on Thursday last, has removed a man who for many years held a prominent and honorable place among the business men of Nova Scotia, and who was also a pillar of strength to the Baptist cause, not only in the community in which he resided but in respect to the denomination in these Provinces, with which for so many years he had been connected. His first ancestor on this side the Atlantic was Samuel Barss, who is said to have come from England to Massachusetts in the year 1730. About thirty years later the grandfather of J. W. Barss settled in Liverpool, N. S. There in September, 1812, Mr. Barss was born, and accordingly at the time of his death was in his ninetieth year. The earlier part of his life was spent principally at Horton, but when a young man Mr. Barss entered into mercantile life in Halifax. His business talents were of a high order and he rapidly accumulated a considerable fortune.

After a time he removed to Wolfville, where the middle and later years of his life were spent. While Mr. Barss did not deny himself and his family the comforts and advantages which his ample means afforded, his tastes and habits were marked by simplicity. He was clear-headed, self-reliant, industrious and methodical. His spiritual experience dated from his early youth, and his whole life was spent in the service of Christ. Mr. Barss was distinctly a religious man. His temper was not of the kind that rises into ecstasies, but as in his business affairs; so in his religious life, he pursued the even tenor of his way and served his God with a constant mind. Mr. Barss was eminently practical in all things. He loved the church of which he was a member, and he gave to it constantly his presence, his prayers, his labors and his money. For the space of almost a generation he was superintendent of the Sunday School at Wolfville and his service was wise, constant and efficient. He rejoiced in all the church's prosperity and sincerely sorrowed in its adversities and trials. He believed in and loved the denomination, and manifested his faith and love by generous contributions to its benevolent enterprises. Our educational work owes much to Mr. Barss for the sympathy, advice and financial assistance which he gave for its promotion. His large gifts to the mission work of the body likewise attest his deep interest in the propagation of the gospel. Nature dealt kindly with our friend, and he descended life's western hill with calm and even steps. The weight of years came to rest more and more heavily upon him, he suffered bereavements, and doubtless he came to feel that loneliness which must be the experience of every one who attains to patriarchal years, but there was, we believe, little of sickness or of mental or physical suffering in his experience. His mental powers were well preserved and his mind calm and serene. And now he has been gathered as a shock of fully ripened corn is gathered in its season. All we who knew and honored him bow in sympathy with the bereaved family, and thank God that He gave to Wolfville and to the denomination such a man as Deacon John W. Barss.

## Lord Pauncefote.

The death of Lord Pauncefote, British Ambassador to Washington, which occurred early on Saturday morning, was unexpected, and the announcement called forth many expressions of sincere regret. The Ambassador had indeed been seriously ill, but the symptoms toward the close of the week had seemed more favorable, and his physicians did not consider that there was any immediate danger. But a turn for the worse accompanied by heart failure occurred on Saturday morning, and the end came quickly. Lord Pauncefote was regarded as one of the ablest of British diplomatists, and though well advanced in years, having been born in 1828, he had served his country with undiminished ability up to the time of his last illness, and his death is regarded as a distinct loss to the nation. Lord Pauncefote was the son of Robert Pauncefote of Gloucestershire. He was born at Munich and, educated at Geneva and Paris, finishing his studies at Marlborough, acquiring great familiarity with the modern languages and with international law. He chose the law as a profession, and was called to the bar of the Inner Temple in 1852. In 1865 he received the appointment of Attorney General of Hong Kong, and was elected as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1869. In 1876 he was transferred by Mr. Gladstone to the Foreign Office, rising through various grades of the service until he became permanent under secretary. Lord Pauncefote's career at Washington was so satisfactory to the Government that his term of service was extended much beyond the usual age limit. The Venezuela question, the general treaty of arbitration between the United States and Great Britain, the Behring Sea seal question and the Alaskan boundary are all matters which have come up during his career, and all but the last were settled.