

# Messenger and Visitor.

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The German Chancellor and the Boer Cause. The intimation of the Emperor of Germany to Mr Kruger that it would not be convenient to receive him has been followed by a speech by Chancellor Von Bülow in the Reichstag, which is quite explicit as to Germany's attitude toward Mr. Kruger and the cause which he represents. The German Chancellor does not say in so many words—but it amounts to this—that Mr. Kruger and his government would not take good advice when it was offered them by their friends and when they might have settled their dispute with Great Britain on much better terms than are now possible, and seeing that he refused instruction and plunged his people into a hopeless struggle with a powerful nation, he must not expect Germany now to sacrifice her friendly relations with Great Britain for the sake of averting from the Boers the legitimate consequences of their temerity. Germany had not proposed mediation, because convinced that such action could lead to no good results, and it might have led to war. Overtures to Mr. Kruger in Germany at the present, the Chancellor said, would have interfered with international relations and would have resulted in no advantage either to Mr. Kruger or to Germany. He intimated that the course pursued by Germany in the matter was not due to any special obligation on her part toward Great Britain, but to offer any quixotic opposition in this case toward England would be a piece of folly for which he would not be responsible.

Canadian Boys and Cigarettes. We observe that Supervisor McKay of Halifax in his annual report to the school board has called attention to the prevalence of the pernicious habit of cigarette smoking among the boys attending the public schools of the city. Mr. McKay gives an instance of a lady teacher who found that out of a class of 46 only 11 never used tobacco, that 11 others were habitual users of it, and four of these had become such slaves to tobacco as to be unable, according to their own statements, to refrain from its use. This teacher found that tobacco was sold in the city to boys of all ages both for their own and others' use. Some months later the same teacher wrote to the Supervisor stating that the class which had just graded to her was, in respect to the tobacco habit, worse than any former one. Of 36 boys, members of this class, 17 used tobacco habitually. In this connection Mr. McKay says: "I have made some inquiries in other schools, and I find that this lady's experience is not exceptional. I find that the cigarette habit neutralizes the legitimate work of the schools and injures the boys physically and morally. The 11 non-smokers referred to above presented a striking contrast to the 11 smokers in the same room—the first 11 were clean, tidy, alert, well-behaved, and leaders in their classes—the other 11 rough, untidy, listless, and dull at their work. Seeing that young boys are so susceptible to injury from the use of tobacco, surely something should be done to protect them, and thus prevent the prevalence of a habit so demoralizing to our schools." All this, it must be felt, indicates a condition of things which demands prompt attention. Whether or not cigarette smoking is more prevalent among the school boys of Halifax than in other cities and towns of Canada we do not know, but it must be evident to the most casual observers that many boys in St. John are becoming addicted to the cigarette habit. It would seem that here, as in Halifax, the law against selling tobacco to minors is openly disregarded. The cigarette offers to boys an insidious temptation and an easy way to become confirmed smokers, and doubtless the fact that the sale of cigarettes is constantly working to increase the army of smokers is a strong inducement to tobacconists to keep the market well supplied with them. Mr. McKay has certainly done well to call attention to the prevalence of the cigarette habit among the boys of his city, and it is a matter which

should receive investigation at the hands of the school authorities in every city and town in the country. In our opinion the most effective, and indeed the only effective, method of dealing with the cigarette evil in a legal point of view, is to prohibit the manufacture and sale of cigarettes entirely. To remove from sale tobacco in the form of the cigarette, would be to remove a temptation by which thousands of Canadian boys, before they well know what they are doing, are being made slaves to a habit which cannot but have a powerfully debasing affect upon their manhood and which will leave its evil mark upon their descendants to the third and fourth generation. In some parts of the United States vigorous measures are being taken against the cigarette evil. The State of Iowa has a law which imposes a practically prohibitive tax on cigarette dealers, and Tennessee has a law which absolutely prohibits the sale of cigarettes. The tobacconists have fought the law through the courts, but it is gratifying to observe that its constitutionality has now been sustained by the Supreme Court of the United States.

Britain and Portugal. The recent visit of the British Channel fleet to Lisbon, and the banquet on board the British battleship 'Majestic,' at which King Carlos, Queen Marie Amelie, Prince Louis Philippe, with the members of the Cabinet and other Portuguese dignitaries were present, are regarded as events of considerable significance as indicating, if not a closer alliance between Great Britain and Portugal, at least a quite unmistakable intimation to the world that such an alliance exists. The very cordial despatches which at the same time passed between Queen Victoria and King Carlos further emphasize the fact. At the banquet the Portuguese Prime Minister, Senor J. Luciano, in proposing the toast "Queen Victoria and Great Britain," saluted "the alliance which has long existed in treaties and has been confirmed in recent acts," and said that the alliance meant an assurance that the rights of Portugal would be respected and her dominions maintained. The British Minister, Sir H. G. Macdonell in responding, thanked the Government of King Carlos for its friendly attitude so consistently maintained toward Great Britain, and said, "The confirmation of the alliance which unites us indissolubly is there in the presence of the Channel squadron. Ancient ties are drawn closer by recent events. The British Government desires that a firm alliance may ever be maintained." In conclusion the British Minister proposed "the prosperity of Portugal and the happiness of the Royal Family," which led to an exchange of like friendly sentiments between representatives of the Portuguese and British navies.

Portugal and Holland. Between Portugal and Holland relations are considerably strained, so much so that the possibility of war has been mooted, and the trouble is connected with the different attitudes of the two governments in reference to the war in South Africa. Race feeling in the Netherlands has predisposed public sentiment strongly in favor of the Boers, and the government appears to have gone about as far as it could go in manifesting sympathy with the South African republics without involving a rupture of diplomatic relations with Great Britain. On the other hand Portugal has good reason to stand by Britain, not only as a matter of prudence at the present time, but as a recognition of the part which British good-will and British arms have had in the past in maintaining the existence of Portugal as an independent power. The position of Portuguese territory in East Africa was an important fact in connection with the war, and although it appeared that for a time at least, men and supplies destined for the Boer army were able to pass through by way of Lorenzo Marquez with remarkable facility, yet on the whole, the attitude of Portugal toward England during the war has been one of friendly neutrality. It is understood that the action of Portugal in withdrawing the

executives of Herr Pott, the Dutch Consul at Lorenzo Marquez, was due to a protest on the part of the British Government on account of Herr Pott's undiplomatic conduct. It is improbable that the friction between Portugal and Holland will have any serious consequences, especially in view of the recent demonstration at Lisbon, alluded to above, which may be considered a notice to Europe that Great Britain will stand by Portugal in any trouble that might arise, and also to any nation which might be willing to promote an active anti-British alliance in Europe, that in such an event Portugal must be counted among the friends and not among the enemies of England.

Canada and Australia. It is now announced that the first Parliament of the confederated Colonies of Australia will be opened by the Duke of York on the first of May proximo. This involves some change in the original programme, as it had been the intention to have the Duke of York perform the ceremony of inaugurating the Australian Commonwealth, which is to take place in January. The debut which these ceremonies indicate of another of Great Britain's daughters into the society of nations is an event of great significance not only for the new Commonwealth of Australia but for the Mother Land and the whole Empire. Canada, as an elder sister, may be expected to feel a lively interest in the matter. The fact that during the year now ending, Canadian and Australian volunteers have been fighting together on behalf of the Empire in South Africa, has done much to strengthen the bonds of sisterly interest between these two great colonies and to bind them more indissolubly to the Motherland. It is fitting that Canada should be represented by one or more of her foremost sons in the ceremonies which are formally to mark the establishment of the Australian Commonwealth, and we are pleased to note that the distinguished and eloquent Premier of Canada is to represent his Government and his country on the occasion of the opening of the new Australia's first Parliament. Sir Wilfrid Laurier may be trusted to do honor to the occasion and to Canada. On such an occasion, too, it would seem well that the Dominion delegation should be in the fullest sense representative, and therefore the suggestion seems worthy of consideration, that it would be a fitting, and, on the part of the Government, a graceful thing, if Sir Charles Tupper, who is one of the few surviving "fathers of Confederation" in Canada and who is now retiring from active political life, should be associated with the Premier in this important mission to Australia.

In South Africa. Lord Roberts is now well on his way home to England, and his successor in command in South Africa—Lord Kitchener—evidently has his hands full. During the past week the Boer forces have not only been exceedingly active, but they have apparently fought with an aggressive courage and determination which they had scarcely equalled before during the whole course of the war. The statement that only a guerrilla warfare is now being carried on by the Boers must be revised, for an engagement in which a British General is attacked by a superior force, and is obliged to retreat, after having several hundreds of his soldiers taken prisoners and having suffered a serious loss of baggage and equipment, signifies something more than the work of guerrillas. All this happened to General Clements' command at Megaliesberg and this is not the only success which the Boers have achieved during the week. Fortunately the Boers have no facilities for holding prisoners, so that the four companies of the Northumberlanders taken at Megaliesberg have been released. There have also been successes on the British side. The Boers lost 100 killed and wounded in their attack on Vryheid, and Lord Mithen has captured a Boer laager, securing large numbers of cattle and sheep and a considerable quantity of ammunition. The present situation is, however, regarded as one of considerable seriousness, and Lord Kitchener is reported to have sent an urgent request to the home government to send out every available mounted man.