

Messenger and Visitor.

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Death of the Ameer. News of the death of the Ameer of Afghanistan, which occurred on the 3rd inst., reached London early last week, giving rise to considerable apprehension as to the effect of the event upon British interests in the east. The late Ameer, Abdurrahman Khan was born in 1830. After leading an adventurous life in his youth, taking part in different civil wars and finding an asylum for several years with the Russians who treated him with much consideration, Abdurrahman Khan came to the front in the affairs of his country, and in 1879 was recognized by the British Government as Ameer in preference to the irreconcilable Yakoub Khan. He was accordingly established on the throne of Afghanistan and granted a subsidy of twelve lakhs of rupees a year, besides help in various other directions. He remained faithful in his friendly attitude toward the British Government, and found the friendship profitable to himself, for his throne was thus secured and he was enabled to extend the bounds of his government into Kafiristan. The effect of the death of the Ameer upon British interests is not easy to forecast. He leaves several sons, all of whom may be ambitious to succeed him. The political condition of the country is very unsettled, the tribes are loosely held together and are frequently in revolt against the Ameer's authority. Abdurrahman appears to have been a man of much ability who had remarkable success in holding the tribes together. Much will of course depend upon the ability of his successor and his disposition toward the British. At such a junction the effect of Russian intrigue is quite naturally feared. It is believed, however, that the present Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, has studied the Afghan situation very thoroughly and has taken great pains to master the problem of British policy in Central Asia. A good deal of satisfaction is therefore felt in the fact that at the present time the interests of the Empire in that part of the world are in so competent hands. The Ameer's chosen heir is his son Habiboullak who had been trained with that purpose in view, and was in possession of the strongholds when the change came. One of the officials of the Indian Office in London is quoted as saying that the new Ameer is known to be a strong and capable man, and that his father had done everything to secure for him the undisputed succession.

New Ontario. The development taking place in northern or New Ontario is leading to an influx of permanent settlers of considerable importance. According to the report just issued, of the Director of Colonization, Mr. Thomas Southworth, 818 colonists took up land in Ontario in 1900, who with their families number 2,266 people, their holdings amounting to 127,494 acres, and these figures will be greatly exceeded, it is said, by the present year's returns when they shall be completed. Of the 818 families which have settled in northern Ontario during the past year the large number—504—were from other parts of the Province. Of the remainder 65 came from the United States, 42 from Manitoba, 29 from Quebec and the balance from several European countries. The report on immigration for the Province shows a slight revival, but the numbers are still far below those of fifteen or twenty years ago. The number of steerage passengers settling in Ontario last year was 4,983 as compared with 4,015 in 1899, but for 1883 the figures were 27,119. Juvenile immigration from the old country has decreased. In 1888 the number was 1,839. Last year it was only 981, of which number Dr. Bernardo furnished 752. Other reports go to show that much is being done in mining, in lumbering and in railway extension in New Ontario. A railway to James' Bay has been long talked of for the purpose of connecting the northwestern grain

fields with a northern ocean route by way of Hudson Bay. The success of transatlantic navigation by that route is doubtful, to say the least, but apart from that consideration, a railway is being built which is likely in no very long time to be extended to the southern waters of Hudson Bay. This railway is opening up for settlement some good farming lands. There is also much mineral and forest wealth which it will make available for development as well as the valuable fisheries of those great northern seas.

Hon. Clarke Wallace. The prominent and influential position which the late Hon. Clarke Wallace, M. P., occupied in Canadian public life, is shown by the large space devoted to him in the daily papers of both parties. Yet Mr. Wallace was never a member of a Canadian cabinet, but though for three years under Sir John Thompson and Sir Mackenzie Bowell he held the administrative position of controller of customs. For the remainder of his twenty-three years of public life he sat in parliament as a private member. But even when not in office, Mr. Wallace was for many years a good deal more than the representative of an Ontario constituency. During half his political career he was the official head of the Orange body in British America. While that association is non-political in a party sense, it is concerned about many issues with which parliaments and governments have had to deal. Among those which have arisen in Mr. Wallace's time, were the Irish home rule resolutions, the incorporation of the Orange order by act of parliament, the Jesuits, estates bill, and the Manitoba schools question. In dealing with these issues, Mr. Wallace was more often than not in opposition to the leaders of the conservative party to which he belonged. He resigned office and went into opposition for a time when the policy of the Bowell Government on the Manitoba question was announced. Yet he did not allow these controversies to affect his position on other issues, and when the change of government disposed of school question, Mr. Wallace became once more an active and aggressive fighter in the front line of the conservative party. Mr. Wallace was not an orator, not even a pleasing speaker, and did not impress one as a man of great personal magnetism. But he had strong and earnest convictions, and was always clear and definite in his ideas. He was well posted in Canadian public affairs, possessed untiring industry, and could not be intimidated, discouraged or suppressed. But there is no doubt that his political strength in Ontario was largely due to the fact that he had the sagacity to interpret the mind of the average Orangeman, and also the gift to influence, so far as one man could, the action of that large body of electors.

The Royal Tour. As this paper goes to press the Maritime Provinces, and especially St. John and Halifax are in a bustle of preparation for their royal visitors. During the past week, or the greater part of it, their Royal Highnesses have been in Ontario, everywhere met and greeted by large and enthusiastic crowds. The military demonstration at Toronto brought together some 10,000 militia men, probably a greater army than has been seen in British America since the close of the war in 1812. There also as might be expected was the largest gathering of civilians, and the number of addresses presented was only equalled by the battery discharged at the unoffending guests when they were at Ottawa. Our eastern cities and towns have a smaller population to draw from, but they are equally loyal and not less fond of a spectacle, and no doubt St. John and Halifax will be crowded on their respective reception days. In both cities the soldiers who served in Africa will receive their medals from the hand of the king's son, and this event gives the occasion additional interest.

The Flight of Mankind has at last learned to fly. Many lives have been lost and much machinery has been wrecked in making the discovery, but M. Santos Dumont, the Brazilian inventor, who has been experimenting at Paris, seems to have mastered the problem. His air ship named after himself, propelled and guided by movable sails and steering gear, rises from level ground, travels in any direction desired, with and against the wind, and delivers

the traveller where he wishes to land. The other day M. Santos took his departure from his headquarters, proceeded at the rate of some fifty miles an hour to the Longchamp race course, over which area he manoeuvred in all directions for more than an hour, making sharp turns and abrupt ascents and descents. To keep an appointment to a banquet, he set out for the rendezvous in his air craft, passing through narrow passages between high buildings, finally alighting at the exact spot before the first automobile could get there. In a recent magazine article, Professor Simon Newcome, the astronomer made an argument to show that aerial navigation could never become a regular means of travel and transportation. His contention was that the weight of the load which could be carried, must always be less than that of the air displaced, and therefore, an airship capable of carrying a considerable cargo, would be so large as to be out of the question. The argument seems to be sound, and yet it may be possible to use air-ships for many purposes besides carrying considerable cargo. A large cash prize has been offered by a wealthy club to the inventor of the air-ship, which, within a time limit, shall proceed from a point outside of Paris around the Eiffel Tower in the Champ de Mars and back to the place of starting. After last week's experiment it would appear that M. Santos should find no difficulty in meeting the conditions, if he shall not have done so before this is read.

The Life Everlasting. It may be said with some degree of confidence that the late Mr. John Fiske has addressed a larger circle of intelligent and thoughtful readers than any other modern writer on evolution in its relations to human life, to human ideas, affections, aspirations, and to the destiny of man. Shortly before his death Mr. Fiske closed his series of studies with the treatise called "The Life Everlasting," prepared as an address to Harvard students. This volume as it now appears, is a completion of the course which includes "The Destiny of Man, Viewed in the Light of his Origin," "The Idea of God as Affected by Modern Knowledge," and "Through Nature to God," all of which are connected with the larger work called "Cosmic Philosophy," and the "Essays on Darwinism." Mr. Fiske was to the last an evolutionist, even an extremist of that school. His latest works take for granted what he claims to have been previously established, that man has been evolved from lower animals. But also to the last he protests against materialism, and maintains that the spiritual life, the immortality of the soul, the existence and power of God, are in no way at variance with the Darwin view of the origin of man. This latest book is rather suggestive than satisfactory. It does not go farther than seek to establish the doctrine that science does not and cannot disprove the immortality of the soul. The author holds that all physical and psychological discoveries do not even create a presumption against the life everlasting. In one of his previous books Mr. Fiske had insisted upon the divine purpose as exhibited in the processes by which man was produced and brought to the present state of development. In another he argued from the common belief in an unseen world, and from the fact that this belief had been largely instrumental in human advancement, that this belief must be based upon an eternal reality. The study before us rather answers objections to these doctrines than offers additional argument of a positive character. But Mr. Fiske wrote it in a tone of hope and belief that scientific investigation might in the future go far beyond the region by which it has been hitherto bounded, and reach some direct proof of life after death, other than by revelation and analogy. Those who accept the teachings of Scripture as a sufficient guide to knowledge of God and the future life find in Mr. Fiske a writer who starting from a purely scientific standpoint, and making no conscious use of the Bible as a divine revelation reaches conclusions which so far as they go are not different from their own. Those who find the Darwinian view of the origin of the human race, incredible or repulsive or even blasphemous will at least be gratified to this Darwinian, as interpreted by one of its ablest and most learned disciples, paying its tribute to the essential doctrines that Christians cherish. Whatever else this scholarly and reverend evolutionist believed, he believed in the existence, omnipotence and goodness of God, and in the life everlasting.