

# Messenger and Visitor

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## Cotton in the Soudan.

The insufficiency of the supply of raw cotton from the United States during the past year has led British manufacturers to turn to other countries as possible sources of supply. A Mr. Hunt who has lately visited the Soudan on a mission of investigation in this connection has returned to London, and reports that he has completed a contract for a Government tract of land on which to experiment in growing cotton. Mr. Hunt has no doubt but that cotton will grow and do well in the Soudan, but the question is whether the conditions will be such that the industry can be established on a commercial basis. The Berker-Suakim Railway is essential to the success of the industry, and when that is completed the rate of development will be much greater. Mr. Hunt considers the prospects of the cotton growing scheme distinctly hopeful, but would prefer to discuss the subject a year or two hence when he shall have had time to accomplish some things which are now only in the experimental stage. His opinion is that the Soudan has a promising future. The territory contains fertile land that will be developed by the policy of Lord Cromer and the work of Major-General Wingate, the Governor-General of the Soudan.

## Swedish Immigration.

Dr. Victor Hugo Wickstrom, a highly educated Swedish gentleman, is now in this country with the purpose of visiting the Northwest and reporting upon it as a field of settlement for his countrymen. The political party now in power in Sweden does not favor emigration. The party with which Dr. Wickstrom is connected, however, believes in encouraging emigration on a large scale of the surplus Swedish peasantry to this side the Atlantic, and Dr. Wickstrom has been sent out to investigate. A Montreal paper reports Dr. Wickstrom as saying: "Sweden is in mortal dread of Russia. We know what has happened to Finland. We know what will happen to ourselves, if Great Britain and the United States do not come to our rescue, one of these days. Russia wants everything. She wants, especially, the open ports which she can get by force from Sweden. Sweden is the most pacific country in the world. We have about five million people. There is not a man, woman, boy or girl in the country who cannot read and write. We are at the head of the nations from an educational point of view. We do not think England and the United States, who are the true friends of freedom, would allow us to be extinguished by Russia. We and Norway have buried our political differences for the time being, in order that we may present a united front against the aggression of Russia. We trust that Japan may win."

## Too Much Fame. Cabbage Patch.

A book entitled "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" attained a considerable notoriety a year or two ago. It seems that the original of the famous "Mrs. Wiggs" is generally understood to be a certain Mrs. Mary Bass of Louisville, Ky. Perhaps the Mrs. Bass of real life is not quite so serene a temper as the Mrs. Wiggs of romance, or it may be that Mrs. Bass has been subjected to trials of patience before which even the serenity of the heroine of the "Cabbage Patch" would have succumbed. At all events it appears that the notoriety into which Mrs. Bass has been brought through the popularity of "Mrs. Wiggs" has brought upon her an affliction of visitation so intolerable that Mrs. Bass felt herself driven to take measures to defend herself from the people who at all hours invaded her domestic kingdom eager to get sight of the wonderful woman immortalized in the story of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch." In pursuance of this defensive policy, Mrs. Mary Bass, it is charged, emptied the contents of a slop jar upon a certain Mrs. Emily Smith, also of Louisville, Ky., to the damage of that lady's attire and still more to the damage of her temper. Mrs. Smith accordingly brought suit against Mrs. Bass. The court, however, dismissed the case against Mrs. Bass, holding that in view of all the circumstances she had suffered provocation which went far to justify the inhospitable reception she had accorded to Mrs. Smith. Mrs. Bass' testimony given before the court is reported as follows:

"For many months, years, I've been continually interrupted. Hobo after hobo comes to my house. I order 'em down and away from my place whenever I see

'em. They come by droves, walk around the yard, open the doors. When they rouse me I come to the door to see what they want; I look upon not a single face I know. There they stand and look at each other in a foolish way. After a while one will say:—  
"Well, we read the book."  
"Well, I will say, "Then if that's all, you can git," and I make them git."

As she left the court room Mrs. Bass said:—"Now maybe I'll be able to spend my old age in peace and maybe my trees'll grow out where all them memorals (souvenirs) has been pulled off, and maybe my yard won't be full of strange people every Sunday, and I can move downstairs, where I used to live."

## Drink and Wages.

When it is undertaken to estimate the cost to a country or a community of the liquor business, many things are to be taken into account besides the retail cost of the liquor. One important item is the diminution of the wage-earning power. An illustration of this which relates to the coal-mining industry in South Wales is subjoined. A writer in *The Alliance News* gives a statement which he obtained from a manager of coal mines in that district, the statement being made after careful examination of the manager's books. Taking one pit as typical of the rest the manager said it could produce on an average 6,000 tons of coal per week of six days. The average price paid in wages was ten shillings per ton. But owing to the heavy drinking of the men during the early days of the week he found that the following output was secured: On Monday 50 per cent. of the possible, on Tuesday 70 per cent. of the possible, on Wednesday 90 per cent. of the possible, and it was not until Thursday that the pit was in full working order and producing its proper output. As 1,000 men roughly, are employed in the mine, it showed the following loss of wages directly due to drinking. The average possible is 1,000 tons per day, which at 10s per ton would mean £500 in wages daily. But as on Monday only 50 per cent. is earned, there is a loss of £250. On Tuesday, with an output of 70 per cent., there is a loss of £150. On Wednesday, with an output of 90 per cent., there is a loss of £50. That is a weekly loss amounting to £450, and an annual loss of £23,400, is directly attributable to the drinking habit of the miners. But that is not all. The establishment charges are the same whether half or the whole of the men are at work. And the difference between the present irregularity and full and regular work would be so great that the manager said it would be possible to increase the wages ten per cent. all round if the men were sober and kept steadily at work. The case given is said to be typical and when this ratio of loss is applied to the whole of Glamorganshire the aggregate of loss through the drinking habit of the miners is seen to be enormous.

## The Fight at the Yalu.

Later reports make it evident that the engagement on the Yalu, of which some account was given in these columns last week, was of a severer character and much more disastrous to the Russians than was at first supposed. The Japanese commander, General Kuroki, reports a loss on the Japanese side of 798 killed and wounded. At present writing no official report of the casualties on the Russian side has been received. But the Russian commander, General Zassulitch's report, dated May 3rd, states that up to that date 800 wounded, including fourteen officers, had been brought to the hospital at Feng-Wang-Cheng. The total Russian loss must have been very heavy. General Zassulitch's report says that, according to the statement of participants in the battle, at least 3,000 or 4,000 were killed. This statement would seem to refer to the losses on both sides, and even in that case the figures are probably exaggerated. The Japanese general reports 30 officers taken prisoners, of whom 20 were wounded, and 300 men of whom 100 were wounded. The Russians lost practically all their artillery and considerable stores of ammunition, the guns however were rendered useless by the removal of the breech-blocks before being abandoned. The disastrous result of the battle to the Russians indicates bad generalship. Evidently General Zassulitch had underestimated the forces opposed to him, and attempted to hold positions which, with the troops and artillery at his command, were altogether untenable. The superior character of the Japanese artillery made it impossible for the Russians to hold their entrenchments, and their superior numbers enabled

them to flank the Russian positions and to inflict heavy loss upon the enemy. The result of the first important land engagement of the war has naturally caused great rejoicing in Tokio, and as naturally it has had a depressing effect in the Russian capital. It is easy to believe, as the despatches report, that the Czar was grieved and astounded at the news and that the Russian Commander-in-chief, General Kuropatkin, shared the Monarch's feelings. It was well understood to be the policy of the Russians to harass and weaken the Japanese as much as possible in their passage of the Yalu, but not to risk a general engagement with a largely superior Japanese force. But evidently General Zassulitch was outgeneraled. Either he attempted a stubborn resistance under circumstances which he should have known to be hopeless, or else the attack of the Japanese forces was delivered with such unexpected force and precision as to make it impossible for the Russian General to withdraw in time to save his army from disaster. Later despatches have made it evident that the Russian losses in this engagement did not fall much, if at all, short of 2,500.

## Sudden Death of the Member for Selkirk.

The members of Parliament and other friends of Mr. Win. McCreary, M. P. for Selkirk, were greatly shocked on Wednesday evening last by the announcement of his sudden and altogether unexpected death. Mr. McCreary had retired on Tuesday evening, after having spoken in the House in connection with the G. T. Pacific debate, apparently in his usual good health. His failure to make his appearance early in the day did not cause any alarm among his friends, and it was only when after the dinner hour on Wednesday evening, a chamber maid at the Russel House where Mr. McCreary was staying, finding his door still locked, called attention to the matter, that the fact of his death was discovered. He had died in bed, perhaps while sleeping, and according to medical opinion, death must have occurred some fifteen hours previously. Mr. McCreary was 49 years of age. He had many friends on both sides the House of Commons, and is said to have been very popular among his townsmen in Winnipeg. An Ottawa despatch says: "The late member for Selkirk was a big man of the typical western type, with a bluff, hearty manner and a good word for everyone. Not a member but was shocked tonight to hear that 'Bill McCreary,' as he was familiarly termed, had crossed to the great majority." Mr. McCreary became a member of the House of Commons in 1900. He was a supporter of the present Government, was a man of recognized ability and it is said that had he lived and remained in politics, there was a probability of his attaining a position in the cabinet.

## War News.

The war news of the week is important. Besides additional details in reference to the battle of the Yalu, reported last week,—which details clearly show the engagement to have resulted in a disastrous defeat for the Russians, there are authentic reports of the landing of the Japanese in force on the Liaotung peninsula on both its eastern and western shores, and the cutting of railway communication between Port Arthur and the north. The Viceroy Alex. and the Grand Duke Boris were hurriedly ordered to join the army to the north, and apparently escaped just in time to prevent their being shut up in the now invested city. Another, and it would seem a successful, attempt was made by the Japanese on May 3rd to close Port Arthur on its seaward side by sinking ships at the entrance of the harbor. The attempt was attended with considerable loss of life—probably more than a hundred officers and men lost their lives in this desperate work—but Admiral Togo reports that the entrance to Port Arthur is now closed to everything but small boats. Admiral Skrydloff who was appointed to succeed the late Admiral Makaroff in the command of the Port Arthur fleet had not arrived before the place was invested. He is now not likely to reach his destination, and probably could accomplish little if he were there. The Russians say that Port Arthur is well provisioned and so strongly fortified that they have little fear of the Japanese being able to take it before a Russian army can come down from the north for its relief. Despatches indicate that the Russians are about to abandon—if they have not already done so—Niu Chwang, the well known seaport near the head of the Liaotung Gulf. The report that Dalny (which is only a few miles from Port Arthur) has been captured is probably premature. The report that Feng Wang Chang has been abandoned by the Russians and occupied by the Chinese is confirmed from Russian official sources. This is the second strong position which was occupied by the Russians north of the Yalu, and is 20 or 30 miles northward from the scene of the battle of May 1. There were sharp skirmishes previous to the Japanese occupation of Feng Wang Chang. The Russians blew up their magazine when they retired, but left behind hospital stores to a considerable amount. The Russian commander has no doubt wisely concluded that after the loss of men, and especially of artillery, sustained in the battle of the Yalu, it would be impossible to hold Feng Wang Chang against the force which the Japanese could bring to bear against it.