

A BRUSH BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND BERLIN

It is not often that the German Foreign Office publishes an account of its proceedings. The occasion for doing so must be very weighty. Yet the case in which Secretary Marschall has departed from the usual rules of his department, by publishing a diplomatic correspondence in the official *Reichsanzeiger*, is at first sight hardly warranted. L. Stern, a German Jew, who had risen to affluence in the United States, insulted Baron Thungen, a Bavarian official, during his stay at Kissingen. He was punished, as the American Government thought, too severely. The result was a dissertation on German law, a lesson in international courtesies, and a momentary estrangement between Washington and Berlin. We give below an extract of the correspondence between Secretary of State Olney, Freiherr von Marschall, of Berlin, and Baron Thielmann, German representative at Washington, on the subject, as it appeared in the German official gazette. Secretary Olney opened the ball by a note to the German Ambassador, in which he criticized the proceedings of the German court as follows:

"The proceedings against Mr. Stern appear to have been arbitrary and conducted with unmerited vigor, not only with regard to the demand of excessive bail, but also in the final sentence which includes, besides a fine, a degrading term of imprisonment. Mr. Stern must not be subjected to this crowning indignity, for such punishment could not be justified from any point of view. Whatever may be done with Mr. Stern, it is to be hoped that the relations between this country and the one you represent so worthily will not be disturbed. Complications between great nations have, nevertheless, arisen from causes as insignificant as this, and I believe that I am not saying too much in declaring that, if Mr. Stern's arguments and the serious protestations of this Government are insufficient to procure a just pardon, the people of this country will obtain a very unfavorable impression of the justice dealt out to American citizens in German States, and of the position taken up by the Imperial Government in such cases."

Thereupon Secretary Marschall telegraphed from Berlin to the German Ambassador, at Washington, in the following terms:

"Answer immediately that you must reject, as entirely unjustifiable, any criticism on the verdict in the Stern case, and that you must refuse to make the administration of justice in any state of the German Union, or the right of pardon of its prince, the subject of diplomatic reclamation. If the Government over there has any communications to make to His Majesty's Government, it is at liberty to do so through its representative here."

Ambassador Thielmann acted upon this instruction, and received the following answer from Secretary Olney:

"You misunderstand the situation in rejecting my criticism as entirely unjust. A miscarriage of justice is possible in any state. If a foreigner suffers under it, his Government is justified and compelled to assist him. The view that an absurd sentence may not be criticized by the Government of the state whose citizen is made to suffer cannot be upheld as in accordance with dictates of common sense in any state. Mr. Stern, however, does not stand upon his legal rights; he begs that a charitable view of his case be taken, and that you will use your great influence on his behalf. The request was made because you must be aware of the manner in which the verdict is viewed here."

Informed of the text of this second note, Secretary Marschall wired the following instructions to v. Thielmann:—

"Inform the Secretary of State once more that the Imperial Government cannot receive complaints from foreign governments except in the customary way—through their representatives here. Mr. Runyon spoke to me about the Stern case a few days ago. He thought that Stern had been treated very harshly; that Baron Thungen should have accepted his apologies, and his offer to give \$1,250 to the poor; that the bail was too high and the sentence to a term of imprisonment too rigorous. In the United States, said Mr. Runyon, Stern is a highly respected and influential person, and his sentence has made a very bad impression. I replied that we must reject, on principle, every attempt to discuss the right of pardon held by a German sovereign, as well as any kind of criticism on sentences pronounced by German

courts. With us bail is fixed according to the wealth of the prisoner; judiciary proceedings resulting from unlawful acts can not be warded off here by giving money to the poor, and, as regards the imprisonment, that part of the sentence is according to the law. In Germany the law is equal, for all the courts are entirely independent; Americans and Germans are treated alike. Where German law rules, German views alone can be considered. At present the Sunday-closing law is administered with iron rigor in New York, and several Germans have been punished with fine and imprisonment for selling beer on Sunday. Such rigor is unknown in Germany, yet we do not even think of intervening, and must expect the Government of the United States to act in an analogous manner. If Mr. Stern wished suspension of the execution of his sentence, he must apply to the Bavarian authorities."

The German press is unanimous in defence of the position taken by the Foreign Office. The *Kölnische Zeitung* says that "bail is demanded to insure the presence of the accused. The fact that Stern could afford to 'skip' his bail of \$20,000 proves that a much higher sum ought to have been asked. German law does not provide that a rich man should escape punishment by sacrificing money." The *National Zeitung*, Berlin, expresses itself as follows: "Secretary Olney said that the relations between Germany and the United States would suffer. That was September 26, 1895, but there are as yet no ill-effects. When he received an energetic answer, Secretary Olney altered his tone, and declared that he only wanted mercy for Stern. We do not know what would have been the result if Secretary Olney had acted in this way at the start, but it is very probable that Stern would have come off much cheaper. Ambassador Runyon knew better; he did not criticise the sentence of the court; he only spoke of its effect upon public opinion in America; but American courts are not given to regard German public opinion."

The *Temps*, of Paris, is a little sarcastic. It thinks that the people of the United States, in spite of its enthusiastic endorsement of the founding of the German Empire, do not sufficiently study German views. "The Americans," says that paper, "put their foot in it pretty frequently.—Translated and condensed for the *Literary Digest*."

SILVER MONEY.

No one will deny that when our paper currency during the war depreciated, prices were at once marked up in proportion. In the case of many articles, that advance was greater than the decline of the dollar. But at the same time wages rose very slowly, in spite of the immense demand for labor caused by the transfer of laborers to the army.

There is absolutely no room to question the universal fact that a depreciation of the money unit is at once and fully reflected in all articles that are subjects of international trade; that they are reflected more slowly in articles of domestic production that do not enter into foreign trade, and that wages rise more slowly than any prices. In the meantime, of course, the wage earners are suffering by reason of the reduced purchasing power of their wages. The working people in Germany understand this so well that the Social Democratic party has protested against any revival of bimetalism, which is desired only by the great agricultural landlords and some of the exporters to Asia.

The substitution of the silver dollar for the gold dollar here would at once increase nearly or quite in proportion to the depreciation of silver the prices of wheat, corn, all animal foods, sugar, tea, coffee, cotton goods, woollens, petroleum, coal, iron goods, tobacco, hop products and spirits, for all of these articles are bought and sold internationally, and no change we make in our currency laws can possibly change the real prices. The Englishman would pay the same number of shillings for a bushel of wheat and the same number of pence for a pound of cotton as now, and those prices would mean about twice as many silver dollars as now. If an Englishman pays three shillings for a bushel of wheat now he would do so after we had gone down into the silver abyss. But the equivalent of three shillings then would be a dollar and a half, while now it is only three-fourths of a dollar. The wage earners will not get their wages doubled, and they will discover that there has suddenly been a terrible rise of prices. As the farmer will also have to pay

double prices for every article he buys at the store, he will get no benefit from the increased prices except in the discharge of previously incurred debts. To the agricultural class, as a whole, this is a far smaller matter than the demagogues say, and as all farm mortgages were given within the last few years while the decline of silver has covered a quarter of a century, they have no equitable ground for relief.

As a dollar will buy only half as much on the silver standard as it does now, all taxation will have to be increased in proportion, and this already falls heavily upon the farmer.—*N. Y. Four. of Commerce*.

RELIGION AND BUSINESS.

A few weeks ago the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held its sessions at Cleveland.

The committee on state of the church reported in favor of organizing a mutual church insurance company, the affairs to be in charge of a board of insurance and the company to do a general fire, lightning, and tornado business. William M. Swindells, the chairman of the committee, said that it was practical as a plan, and that its adoption meant a saving of millions of dollars to the church. Only one man in that assemblage had the courage to stamp the plan with its true character.

Gen. Rusling said that the committee's recommendation was one of the most visionary matters that had yet been presented to the conference. "We might just as well embark in the dry goods business or the drug business," he said. "The whole scheme, if adopted, will wind up with a scandal which will shake the very foundations of the great Methodist Church."

Public scandal is very apt to be the outcome of any attempt to combine business with religion. Like oil and water, the two will not mix. A few years ago this same church was scandalized by revelations of alleged abuses in its great publication house. About the same time the whole Catholic Church in America was agitated over the unfortunate outcome of business dealings by one of its venerated archbishops. The Presbyterians, too, are just now discussing the propriety of investments of their large mission funds which wear the air of a real estate speculation.

A certain amount of business is essential to the conduct of all religious enterprises. But experience has shown that when such business, instead of being confined to what is essential and kept subordinate, is elevated to a co-ordinate feature, mischief results. Religion finds its practical expression in works of charity. Here is its natural field of labor. Successful business rules are founded on selfishness; pure self-interest is at the bottom of sound business management. Religion is or should be based on unselfishness, and efforts to mix up the two have cost many ruined reputations.

If our Methodist brethren be wise, they will let insurance severely alone. The fact that it is intended for the protection of their church buildings will not sanctify it. Once started, it would be easy to extend it from the church to the parsonage and to the seminary. Then the next step would be to let some of the more favored lay brethren in on the ground floor. After this we should have the usual fate of companies of this kind; inability to meet losses, an appeal to the churches for funds, and then the public hue and cry; investigations, recriminations and collapse.—*Insurance Monitor*.

—A sign, bearing the following words is, according to the *New York Times*, conspicuously displayed in the side room of an up-town saloon: "A sandwich and a glass of beer, 10c. Notice—A rebate of 5c. if the sandwich is not eaten."

—The following is a list of some of the great steam-hammers in European iron works:—Terni works, Italy, 50-ton hammer, made in 1873; Alexandrovski, Russia, one of the same weight, 1874; Creusot, France, 80-ton hammer, made in 1877; Cockerill works, Belgium, one of a 100-tons, made in 1886; one at Krupp gun works, Essen, Germany, also made in 1886, weighs 150 tons, and is probably the heaviest in the world.