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Current Topics.

The following despatch appears in The London Times of 29th July last:

A Hero.

"H.M.S. MAJESTIC—AT SEA, TUESDAY, JULY 28th,—I deeply regret to have to record the death by drowning of two officers of the Hermione—the first lieutenant, Mr. Augustus R. C. Warren, and the senior assistant engineer, Mr. John P. Good. It appears that, about nine o'clock this morning, when the fleet was off the Shannon, Mr. Good fell overboard, and Lieutenant Warren immediately jumped overboard to his rescue. The fleet was steaming at fourteen knots at the time. The sea, though rough, was not running heavily, but was lumpy and lumpy under a fresh following breeze. The lifebuoy was let go and a boat was lowered without delay, the Hermione hauling out of line and altering course so as to stand by her boat. As soon as the accident was observed from the flagship the speed of the fleet was reduced so as not to leave the Hermione too far astern and to render her assistance if necessary. After making a careful search, however, the Hermione signalled that both men were lost. The circumstances in which Mr. Good fell overboard have not yet been reported, but no more information is needed to illustrate the heroic act of self-sacrifice by which Lieutenant Warren lost his life. The instinctive comradeship and the unhesitating courage which prompt such an act are some of the noblest attributes of the naval service, and, though we cannot but mourn their consequences in the particular case and offer a respectful sympathy to the friends of the lost, yet even the most deeply bereft must feel consolation in the reflection that both men have died in the service of their country, and that such a death as that of Lieutenant Warren is preeminently worthy of the noble service which it illustrates and adorns."

This despatch states everything that is required. It is worthy of its subject. The self-sacrifice of Lieutenant Warren shows that English sailors are true men still. Long may it be so, for, as the poet sings,

"Vain mightiest fleets of iron framed,
Vain all her strongest guns,
Unless proud England keeps untamed
The spirit of her sons."

The second International Congress of Applied Chemistry was opened in Paris at the Sorbonne under the presidency of M. Berthelot, on the 27th of July last. Organized by the

French Association of Sugar Refinery and Distillery Chemists, it counted 1,597 members, 602 of whom were foreigners. The Austrian representatives headed the list of members, numbering 157. Germany had 102 representatives, Belgium 53, Russia 37, Peru 35, Portugal 25, Brazil 25, Mauritius 24, Holland 23, the United States 20, Spain 19, Switzerland 13, Egypt 12, Italy 10, England 8, Greece 8, Rumania 7, Cuba 4, Mexico 4, the Argentine Republic 4, Denmark 1, and Turkey 1. M. Berthelot, on taking his place as honorary president, was surrounded by some of the most eminent chemists in the world. It was an inspiring sight, and rounds of applause greeted the great French *savant*, who has now happily returned to his laboratory from the Foreign Office. M. Berthelot's opening speech occupied two columns and a half of the Temps. He insisted at the outset on the indissoluble bonds uniting theory and practice in chemical science. "We are here," he said, "the free representatives of universal science." He went on to remark that the domain of chemical industries properly so called was day by day enlarging owing to the incessant development of the methods of chemical synthesis. "The marvellous results of the creative synthesis in chemistry are seen nowadays particularly in fatty substances and sugar, while agricultural industries have also been profoundly modified since the discovery, scarcely 60 years ago, of the true theory of fattening matter and manures and the consequent studies carried on in the rapidly increasing agronomic stations throughout the world. It is owing to these studies that agriculture has succeeded in doubling the corn product and in giving to the cultivation of beet and the manufacture of sugar that immense development which now raises so many economic problems."

The Progress
of Chemistry.

M. Berthelot next referred to the practical effect of the discoveries as to microbes in the making of wine, beer, alcohol, and cheese, in determining the conditions of transport of alimentary matter, and in transforming medical theory and practice. In the arts of war and also in mining chemistry had been useful and fruitful, not merely in the manufacture of new explosives and the rigorous determination of their relative force, but in the systematic study of the metals used for weapons. "Heaven forbid," he added, "that we should ever again see sinister epochs in which such engines would be employed in a fratricidal struggle of the European nations, but the duty of every people which would enjoy in peace the fruits of its toil and preserve its liberty and its rôle in the world is to hold itself in readiness to defend singlehanded these possessions, which are the most precious of all." The metallurgy of iron, bronze, and steel had quite changed in our time, and to the metals known for 7,000 years had been added the new ones discovered in laboratories—nickel, aluminium, and tungsten, the future of which could not be foreseen. The methods for the preparation of metals were likewise being strangely transformed. M. Berthelot illustrated this point by reference to gold and the new application of electricity. In dwelling on the astounding results of the alliance between chemistry and physics he discussed the whole problem of light and had some curious