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The Madagascar Blue Book. While there appears to be good reason to hope that the negotiations now being entered into between Great Britain and France will result in the settlement of points at issue and a better understanding generally between the two Governments in respect to international affairs, it is evidently not the intention of the British Government to conceal the conviction that the conduct of France toward Great Britain has been for some time past marked by extreme shabbiness, and that the adoption of different methods on the part of France is a necessary condition to the continuance of friendly relations between the two countries. This is made evident by the appearance at this juncture of a British blue book on Madagascar, in which is set forth the history of recent relations (most unsatisfactory from a British standpoint) of the two Governments in connection with that island. The correspondence included in the blue book covers most of the past year, beginning February 24 and ending December 20. It consists of a series of protests and complaints by the British Government of the French action; first, of securing the British neutrality by promising that the French protectorate would not be overstepped and that British rights would be guaranteed, whereas the protectorate was promptly turned into annexation, and British rights were annulled; second, by allowing the French Agent to forbid native traders to deal with foreigners; third, in increasing the duties on their goods to absolutely a prohibitive extent; fourth, by issuing official illustrations of French trade-marks and urging the natives to buy no others, in order that they might be known to be true sons of France, and, fifth, by forbidding coastwise traffic to all foreign vessels, a decree only revoked because there was not enough French vessels to carry it. Incredible as it seems, it is definitely asserted that the protests, covering eleven months, did not evoke one single answer from the French Government. They simply ignored every promise and treaty engagement, and never even acknowledged the repeated official protests of Great Britain. The publication of these despatches is Lord Salisbury's proof to the country that it is impossible to carry on negotiations with France. The publication of this significant blue book at the present time means, as one London correspondent writer shows, "that the British Government is determined to have done once and for all with the French policy of pin-pricks, and, with the full weight of British public sentiment behind it, intends to put to the fullest test the professions of French desire for friendship, of which M. Cambon, the new French Minister to Great Britain, has made himself the medium. English public opinion has watched this selfish, unfriendly French policy with growing indignation, and there is no man, however opposed to Lord Salisbury in politics, who will not today echo the British Prime Minister's grave declaration that France's action is inconsistent with good faith, with the practice of international law and with the comity of civilized peoples. And England, having in Madagascar the gravest cause of complaint against France, means to make the most of it. She expresses her indictment in the most downright phrases at the moment when her grievances at Shanghai and Newfoundland are already much in the public mind."

Britain and France. France appears to be coming to a more calm and sensible frame of mind in reference to its relations with Great Britain. The idea that the latter intended to seize a favorable opportunity to force a war upon France is being abandoned in favor of the saner view that Great Britain does not want war but a settlement of existing difficulties and an under-

standing as to international relations which will put an end to frictions and exasperations which had become intolerable. The wiser heads in France are no doubt convinced that it is much better to seek to arrive at such an understanding by means of a reasonable diplomacy than to pursue toward Great Britain a policy of exasperation which can only result in war. The Paris correspondent of the 'New York Tribune' notes that there is now for the first time in France a genuine desire manifested to meet England half way, and in a friendly spirit to discuss, and once for all to settle, the difficulties cropping up from Madagascar, Newfoundland, China and elsewhere. In this spirit M. Delcasse and M. Paul Cambon will open forth-coming negotiations in London. As an illustration of the calm business-like way in which the negotiations with England will be opened, the 'Tribune' correspondent quotes the following statement of a French official: "It would be just as ill-advised for France to insist upon rights in Newfoundland, which are conferred by the Treaty of Utrecht, and thereby obstruct the legitimate development of the French Shore region, as it would be, for instance, for England in her dealings with the United States to take a cast-iron stand on the equally obsolete Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, but of course we should expect fair compensation elsewhere for renouncing the treaty. Several of the questions to be settled with England are intricate and difficult, but we mean to brush away all cobwebs spun under different circumstances, and to talk over matters in a practical way such as cannot fail to remove all danger of a war which would be a diplomatic crime."

Britain Cordially Co-operates. In replying to the Czar's proposal for a Disarmament Conference of the Powers, Lord Salisbury promises the cordial sympathy and co-operation of the British Government. "This sympathy," the British Premier declares, "is not confined to the Government, but is equally shared by popular opinion, which has been strikingly manifested by the numerous resolutions adopted by public meetings and societies. There are, indeed, few nations, if any, which, both on grounds of feeling and interest, are more concerned in the maintenance of general peace than Great Britain. The statements which constitute the grounds of the Emperor's proposals are but too well justified. It is unfortunately true that while a desire for the maintenance of peace is generally professed and while, in fact, serious and successful efforts on more than one recent occasion have been made with that object by the great Powers, there has been a constant tendency on the part of almost every nation to increase its armed force and add to the already vast expenditure on the appliances of war." While the perfection to which the instruments of warfare have been brought, their extreme costliness and the horrible carnage which must result from their employment upon a large scale have no doubt acted as a serious deterrent from war, yet the burdens imposed by the present conditions must, if prolonged, produce a feeling of unrest and discontent, menacing both to external and internal tranquillity. Lord Salisbury therefore informs the Emperor Nicholas that "Her Majesty's Government will gladly co-operate with the proposed effort to provide a remedy for the evil, and if in any degree it succeeds, they feel that the sovereign to whose suggestion it is due will have richly earned the gratitude of the world at large."

The Oceanic. The 'Oceanic' launched on Saturday at Belfast, Ireland, is not quite correctly described as "the biggest ship the world has ever seen." The 'Oceanic' does

indeed break all records in respect to length. She is longer than the great German steamship 'Wilhelm der Grosse,' by fifty-six feet, and longer than the 'Great Eastern' by twenty-four feet, the respective lengths of these three monsters of the deep being 648, 680 and 704 feet. But the 'Great Eastern' was both broader and deeper than the 'Oceanic,' and her tonnage exceeded that of the latter by several thousand tons. The 'Great Eastern' proved so discouraging as an experiment in mammoth ship building that it was for a long time believed that no craft of anything like her dimensions would ever again be built, but within the last decade the tendency has been toward the building of ocean liners on larger models. Besides the 'Oceanic' and the 'Wilhelm der Grosse,' there are two of the newer ships which each exceed 600 feet in length. These are the 'Luania,' 620 feet, and the 'Campania,' 625 feet in length. The 'Oceanic' is for the White Star line, and the officials in New York are said to be reticent about her probable speed, but express the hope that she will be able to get in every Wednesday no matter what the weather may be on the voyage across. If the ship is to arrive in New York from a trans-Atlantic port every Wednesday she will certainly need to show some speed.

The United States and the Philippines. Recent despatches from the East appear to indicate that the United States Government may have very serious business before it in the Philippines. The Filipinos, as the people of those islands are called, have very decided objections, it appears, to being governed from Washington. This, at all events, is true of certain leaders who appear to have a very considerable following. If the United States, therefore, is to exercise in the Philippines the functions of government, it would seem necessary to proceed without much regard to that time-honored American doctrine that government rightly derives its authority from the consent of the governed. In Manila and in Iloilo—the two principal cities of the Philippine group, there is a very disturbed condition of affairs. The insurgent leader Aguinaldo, who appears to be a man of a good deal of ability and influence, is urgently demanding independence for the Philippines and is threatening to drive the Americans from the country. A despatch from Manila to the 'New York Herald,' dated January 13, states that the situation there becomes hourly more grave. The native troops seem enthusiastic at an attack upon Manila, and posters bearing the inscription "Independence or death" are displayed on all sides. It is said that the native troops in the neighborhood of Manila number 30,000, and all profess great hatred of the Americans, declaring that they will accept no terms except absolute independence. Wealthy and influential Filipino families are said to be leaving Manila for Hong Kong, owing to the dangerous condition of affairs in the former place. If the matters in the Philippines are as represented, it is evident that the situation is one of considerable embarrassment for the United States Government. The acquisition of the Philippines may involve an inheritance of Spain's difficulties in dealing with them. United States control will doubtless be for the Filipinos far preferable to Spanish control, but if they are determined to resist to the utmost any foreign control, the task of reducing them to submission may prove very tedious and expensive, while, considering the strong opposition that exists in the United States to the policy of acquiring territory in the Eastern hemisphere, it is hardly a task upon which the nation would enter with enthusiasm.