

burns without smell. The only case in which smell occurs is during the removal of a spent cartridge, when the lamp is opened."

As Great Britain has been accused of being slow in recognizing anything unless possessed of undoubted merit, we may reasonably conclude that acetylene gas has now taken its place as an illuminating power, and that recent inventions have made it as free from liability to explosion as any other luminant. Galileo was right, the world does move.

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**Washington and  
St. Petersburg**

The papers of the United States are annoyed, and with good reason, at the somewhat significant and decidedly saucy reference of the St. Petersburg *Novosti*, to the announced intention of Spain to request Europe to intervene in the present war. It seems that the Russian paper in question in the course of an article supposed to be inspired by the government said: "America must voluntarily submit her pretensions to a tribunal of the powers," and then insinuated that the exposed American coast could not withstand the ships of two or three European powers.

Some United States journals are asking what, in view of the recently expressed friendliness of Russia, this threatening and offensive language means. However, we gather from an article in the *Review* (N.Y.), that our brethren in the West are just as ready as Great Britain to resent Russian interference, and it would now seem that upon any future field of dispute in the East, and in any effort to defend China from exclusive aggression by the allied powers of Russia and France, Europe will find Great Britain, United States and Japan standing shoulder to shoulder.

The *Novosti* says: "Let Europe raise her mighty voice and restore that peace which mankind looks for;" yet, in the same sentence, it proposes that, if the United States should reject such a peace as these powers may choose to dictate, "the combined fleets of two or three European powers" should be brought in to immeasurably extend the conflict. A fine specimen of the craft of Russian diplomacy.

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The *Review* adds: "Presuming, therefore, upon our imputed dullness in diplomacy and hoping that their threats may frighten our public out of its propriety, the crafty diplomats of St. Petersburg seek to precipitate a hasty settlement with Spain before our occupation of the Philippines is completed, and thereby divert those islands from our possession into their own control.

"This is evidently the game of which the *Novosti* has made itself the tool. We may expect more of these minatory out-givings from the political organs of France, Russia and probably Austria. It is for us, being forewarned, to see to it that we are forearmed. The only weapon we need is an unflinching NO! to all questionable mediation, from no matter

which or how many of these much vaunting powers it may come. Our safety lies in the fact that the plotters know that forcible intervention would evoke counter-interventions which they are not prepared to face. It may be well enough to try this game of bluff on the principle that one chance in a hundred is better than none at all; but, if we remain firm, in the end our peace with Spain will be made upon our own terms."

The reference to "counter-interventions" is undoubtedly a veiled allusion to the possible alliance of Great Britain and the United States, and, if nothing more comes of the new bond of union between the English-speaking race than a readiness to stand or fall together in defence of their mutual interests and possessions, the present war has accomplished much which the civilized world in years to come will have reason to rejoice at.

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**Life Insurance  
Transfers**

We publish elsewhere a letter signed "Lex," dealing with a question of great importance—the right of the insured to make use of or transfer a policy of insurance without obtaining the consent of the person or persons named in said policy as the beneficiaries. Without knowing aught of the arguments used by those who are responsible for the present law, which prevents such a transfer, we are inclined to favour placing all the obstacles possible in the way of any one desiring to divert a policy of insurance made payable to wife or children from the purpose it was intended to serve—that of provision for loved ones.

Of course, much can be said in favour of permitting the holder of a policy who happens to be in comfortable circumstances to make temporary use of the value represented by the policy; but it is infinitely better that such permission should be withheld, and under no circumstances be granted without the consent of the deeply interested wife and children. That the policy-holder happens to be a prosperous man cannot be regarded as a sound argument in favour of removing the restrictions now imposed upon the transfer of that which his wisdom, prudence and prosperity has led him to provide for those dependent upon him. It is in prosperous days one should be cautious. Indeed, let any man take a review of his past life, and he will find almost invariably that where he has most failed will be when he allowed himself to be lulled into security, when he suspected no crosses, and was prepared with no caution. Taking one consideration with another, the legislation which now prevents the easy transfer of life policies and the ready use thereof as a means of raising money would seem to be a wise measure of protection for the weak and helpless, and, even if illustrations can be given of trouble and apparent injustice caused by the law in question, we do not quite agree with our correspondent's views in regard to this matter.