

facts, accompanied by a few cautious conjectures. That the alleged "coal" is sufficiently carbonaceous to be used as fuel seems beyond doubt, though the conditions under which it occurs point to an origin quite different from that of ordinary anthracite. No experiment has been made on any large scale to ascertain whether it can be used economically for either smelting or the production of steam power. Only by actual exploration can it be determined whether the extent of the deposit is sufficiently great to warrant a heavy outlay of capital in exploiting it. The vein in sight "dips" so rapidly that though it is visible at a considerable height on the side of a steep hill, it disappears below under a thick bed of boulder clay. An effort should, probably will, be made to ascertain its extent by boring at some distance below the point of disappearance. It may be added that all the experts who have made tests or observations are agreed in the opinion that the deposit is bituminous, and that if it is of great extent, it will prove to be of great economic value.

The Torrens System.

The length of time required for the Torrens system of land transfer to make its way on this continent is very surprising to those who have studied it sufficiently to know its merits. Its progress has been comparatively slow in the Province of Ontario, where it has been established as an optional system for many years, and it has just received a set-back in the State of Illinois, where a Torrens statute has been declared by the State Supreme Court to be unconstitutional. There is a prevailing impression that the slow spread of the system is due in part to the self-interest of those who make a living to some extent by title searching, but it is probably due very largely also to the ignorance and apathy of the general public. A man does not care about the title to his land until he is about to convey it, and then he has little time or inclination to put it beyond question for the benefit of future owners. A stronger public opinion, based on a keener appreciation of the evils of the present system and the effectiveness of the proposed remedy, is greatly needed, but it seems difficult to secure the necessary enlightenment.

Irish Informers.

No amount of experience seems sufficient to convince the "force" party in Irish Nationalist movements that the British Government is able to outwit and defeat them by resorting simply to police methods of espionage. Wherever and whenever one Irish "patriot" can be found ready to conspire with other "patriots" to blow up a British building with dynamite, or assassinate a British statesman in cold blood, one of his fellow conspirators can be found ready for a consideration to give away the plot and the plotters. Want of even the honour that is proverbial among thieves is certainly not a characteristic of Irishmen as such, but it does seem to be a characteristic of the men who are heartless enough to plan wholesale destruction of innocent persons for no other apparent motive than a desire to exploit the sympathies of their compatriots so as to secure an easy living. The British Government took a hand in the conspiracy worked up in New York by Tynan, who has been sent back to America from France, and Ivory, who is still under trial in England. At the preliminary investigation of the charge on which the latter was arraigned the inevitable "British spy" appeared. Sent to America for the purpose, he wormed himself into the Irish Nationalist organizations, became possessed of their secrets, furnished the information which led to the arrest of conspirators in Paris and Glasgow, and gave evidence which led to the commitment of Ivory. It is not an extravagant

assumption that he has enough of information in reserve to make sure the conviction of the latter and a life sentence for conspiracy.

British Land Grabbing.

Two more characteristic incidents, which have only recently come to light, illustrate admirably the chronic attitude of Great Britain toward the acquisition of new territory. Early in the late Chino-Japanese war the Chinese Government, fearing that the Island of Formosa might fall into the hands of Japan, as it has since done, offered it to Britain, and it was promptly refused by the British Government. There is good reason to believe that it would have been much better for the Formosans to come under British than it has actually been for them to come under Japanese control, but all that is now matter of history. In connection with the same war two of the other great powers sounded the British Government as to the desirability of dividing the Chinese Empire among the three of them, and they met with a prompt and emphatic refusal. It is not hard to guess what two powers they were, nor is it unreasonable to suppose that Her Majesty Queen Victoria had something to do with the peremptory tone of the declinature, as she had with the emphatic refusal of Great Britain to join France in the recognition of the independence of the Southern Confederation at a critical period of the American civil war.

Great Britain and Russia.

Lord Salisbury, in his Mansion House speech, is reported to have repudiated the idea that there was necessarily permanent antagonism between Great Britain and Russia, and to have characterized it as "a superstition of antiquated diplomacy." This way of putting the matter is rather reassuring just now, when a good understanding with Russia seems to be the only way of stopping the Armenian massacres. But what about the Bulgarian massacres, which Russia interfered twenty years ago to prevent or to punish, and about the attitude of Lord Salisbury himself at that time toward Russia? He and his then party chief, Lord Beaconsfield, went to Berlin for the express purpose of thwarting the humane designs of the Emperor of Russia, the grandfather of the present Czar. By a great sacrifice of men and money the Russian Government had freed the Slav provinces from Turkish rule, and if the British Government had shown any disposition to co-operate with Russia it would have been put forever out of the Sultan's power to play again the part of a "great assassin." The Treaty of Berlin is a standing monument to the discredit of Lord Salisbury, and the discredit is greatly increased by the contemporary secret treaty with Turkey in virtue of which Cyprus was annexed to the British Empire.

A Question of Veracity.

An English nobleman has undertaken in a public speech to explain away the German Emperor's telegram to President Kruger of the Transvaal, which was the occasion of the British "flying squadron" and might easily have led to a war between the two countries. He says, on the Emperor's own authority, that the despatch, properly interpreted, was simply a refusal of President Kruger's previous request for assistance. During the excitement caused by Jameson's raid, the British agent at Pretoria charged Kruger with sending such a request, and both the President and the German Foreign Minister denied that he had done so. Either they lied then, or the German Emperor is prevaricating now. The whole incident shows how eager the latter is to cultivate the good will of Great Britain, after having