

What's What the World Over

New Phases of the World's Thinking Recorded in Current Periodicals

American Remarks

"The Recent Prussian"

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AMERICAN REMARKS

Anent Their Relations With Great Britain are Startling

WE reprint parts of Arthur Bullard's article in the Atlantic Monthly, not because we agree with it, but because it reveals an American point of view. He says: Some months ago I discussed Pan-Americanism with a diplomat from Argentina. He cherished the idea of a League of American Republics, but was pessimistic over the outlook. Again and again he met my arguments with the retort, "Root, Knox, Bryan! Who's next?" "Continuity of foreign policy" is an ideal which all nations desire and none attain.

So it happens that nations which ardently desire to live in friendship sometimes find their governments at odds. This general truth of diplomacy has been often illustrated in the history of Anglo-American relations.

Most of our historians are agreed that if George III. had enjoyed enlightened, forward-looking ministers, we might never have seceded. But our forefathers found the policy of Lord North's ministry unbearable. However, as soon as the Liberal, Fox, won control of the British Foreign Office, it became easy—in spite of the wounds of the war—to settle our outstanding controversies.

Since those days the governance of Britain has been controlled, now by the spiritual descendants of Lord North, now by the liberal progeny of Fox. The two great political parties of England have been inspired by these two political philosophies. The issue between them has rarely been clean-cut. Some Members of Parliament who call themselves "Liberals" would seem to us "Standpatters," and some whom we would call "Progressives" have sat on the



SLIPPING.

—From the New York Times Magazine.

Unionist benches. But in general a Tory Ministry has meant the dominance of the policies of Lord North. A Liberal majority has meant the triumph of the ideals of Fox. The political upheavals in Great Britain have always been speedily felt by our State Department. At times, the "tie of blood" which binds us to the mother country has been thinner than air; at times, thicker than water.

A recent example of this oscillation in British policy was furnished by the crushing of the Boer Republics. The war was the work of those who had inherited Lord North's ideas. We were overwhelmingly pro-Boer in sympathy. But the Tories' mismanagement of the campaign was so flagrant that they were driven from office. Our relations with the mother country—which had been as bad as well might be—rapidly became better as soon as it was evident that the new ministry was inspired by the ideals of Fox.

There was little in the war itself of which Britain could be proud, but there is no page in her history more praiseworthy than the settlement which eventually followed it. The creation of the South African Union, and the granting of self-government to the defeated Boers, will always rank as one of the finest achievements of political history. It is little less than amazing when we recall our own clumsy, brutal Reconstruction policy after the Civil War.

There never has been, and probably never will be, friendship between our Democracy and the Tories of England. They are the "Die-hards"—as bitter in their hostility to popular rule as any aristocrats of the world. Fighting desperately at home to preserve their special privileges against such as we, they do not desire our friendship.

We, as a nation, are too hybrid to be swayed by considerations of race. Such "Anglo-Saxonism" as Homer Lea—an English-speaking Bernhardt—preached is meaningless to a large part of our citizens. We are not pro-English, we are pro-Liberal.

England was the first of the modern nations to experiment in democracy, and in the legislative side of government she has surpassed us all. She deserves the proud title of "The Mother of Parliaments." But she has made no successful efforts to democratize her navy, her army, or her diplomatic service. The caste system is still supreme in these administrative branches of government, which become dominant when war is declared. Parliament, by accepting the "Coalition," has abdicated—for the duration of the war—before the officials of the Admiralty, the Army, and the Foreign Office. Most of those who govern Britain to-day are drawn from the social caste which is most outspokenly hostile to us, and to our ideals of democracy.

The claim most earnestly pressed by neutrals, of late, has been the right to know what to expect. The greatest injuries to legitimate commerce in war times have been caused by the uncertainties arising from the changing and arbitrary decrees of the belligerents. Neutrals have tried to secure general acceptance of a "law" which would make it "illegal" for a belligerent to change the rules of war during a war. American diplomacy has been active in this direction for many years. Generally at peace ourselves, we have sought to protect and expand neutral rights.

When, in the Chinese War, the French put rice on their contraband list, Britain led the world in protest against this interference with legitimate neutral trade. The Russo-Japanese War brought up the same question. Japan was a large importer of cereals from India. This trade was an appreciable element in the prosperity of the colony. Russia, hoping to shorten the war by economic pressure, announced her intention to treat grain as contraband. The British Foreign Office asked us to co-operate with them in a protest against this illegal innovation of putting a ban on food stuff. The Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Fry, writing on the lessons in International Law to be drawn from that war ("The Rights of Neutrals as illustrated by Recent Events"), came to this conclusion: "If we are to weigh the convenience of belligerents against the convenience of neutrals, it would seem that the interests of the latter ought to prevail."

This became the official doctrine of the Liberal Asquith ministry. The "rights" of neutrals have had few more eloquent defenders than His Majesty's present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Sir Edward Grey has gone further in trying to limit the rights of belligerents than any of our own Secretaries of State. He summoned the principal mari-

time nations to a Naval Conference at London in 1909.

From our point of view the Declaration of London was a new step forward toward the acceptance of our contention, that International Law rests, not on



WITHIN THE LAW?

U. S.—"Is that the end of your responsibility?"
—From the New York Times Magazine.

the force of one nation, but on the consent of all. The general ratification of the Declaration, amended where it was faulty, became the objective of all who wished to extend the domain of law.

Simultaneously with his Proclamation of Neutrality President Wilson suggested that, at least for the duration of this war, all should accept the Declaration of London.

This placed a sharp dilemma before the British Government. Sea power was the main weapon—almost the only immediate weapon—which they could bring to the aid of their allies. Should they limit the effectiveness of the navy by submitting to the generally accepted ideas of International Law, or should they, borrowing their enemy's motto, *Might makes Right*, exercise this sea power to the utmost? The answer at last decided upon was a verbal compromise by which the Lord Norths of the sea got what they wanted.

According to the Declaration of London, it was obviously impossible for a maritime power to reduce by hunger an enemy nation which enjoyed a neutral land frontier; but after two years of war it is still uncertain whether this object can be obtained even by a wholesale repudiation of legal restraints. By scrupulous observance of the generally accepted concepts of International Law, the British fleets could have exercised great economic pressure on the Central Empires. By the regime of Orders in Council they have undoubtedly exercised greater pressure. This uncertain degree of added pressure is the credit side of the balance, the gain.

The loss resulting from this policy is even harder to estimate. Germany began this war by an assault on International Law which shocked all the world. The moral position of the Entente, as the champions and protectors of the rights of nations, was exceptionally strong. This advantage was largely thrown away by the claim that the doctrine of *Might makes Right*, which they called immoral when their