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**Home Rule.** The subject of Home Rule for Ireland claimed the attention of the House of Commons for a time in connection with the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne. Mr. John Redmond moved an amendment which was to the effect that, while the House regards with satisfaction the bill foreshadowed in the speech for the reform of local government in Ireland, the proposed measure will in no wise meet the demand for an independent Irish Parliament. Mr. Redmond said that the executive had declared that the celebration of the centenary of the Irish rebellion showed that Ireland hated England. There had been times when England could have changed that feeling and he believed it possible that it might yet be changed. Mr. Redmond proceeded to criticise the changed attitude of the Liberals since the retirement of Mr. Gladstone, and asked for some expression from the Liberal leaders. Sir William Vernon Harcourt replied, emphasizing the sacrifices the Liberals had made on behalf of home rule, which also he had reiterated in all his speeches. But he reminded the Irish members that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament was a material feature of Mr. Gladstone's bill, and had been accepted by the leaders of the Irish Nationalist party. The present amendment demanded an independent parliament, and therefore he would oppose it. Mr. John Dillon admitted the departure from the policy of the late Charles Stewart Parnell, who had accepted Mr. Gladstone's bill as full satisfaction for the Irish demands. Nevertheless Mr. Dillon said he would support the amendment and he warned the Liberals that they would lose the Irish vote unless home rule headed their programme. Mr. A. J. Balfour, Government leader in the Commons, said that the local government bill was not intended as a step toward home rule or as a compromise, but rested solely on its own merits, to confer upon Ireland the same local liberties as enjoyed by England and Scotland. Mr. Balfour added:—"I firmly believe that sooner or later the people of the two Islands will be as closely united as those of any nation in the world." This remark called forth Irish cries of "Never!" to which Mr. Balfour retorted:—"The Irish members neither desire nor hope that. I both hope for and desire it. From study of history I am convinced that the scheme for a subordinate parliament is not workable." The amendment was eventually rejected by 233 to 65 votes. Only two Radicals supported Mr. Redmond's motion. The remainder of the Opposition voted with the Government, or else abstained from voting.

**The United States and Spain.** Senor de Lôme, late minister of Spain at Washington, is a man of ability and a diplomat of experience, but he did a foolish thing when he wrote to his friend Canalejas a letter, in which he permitted himself to speak freely of United States politics and to criticise President McKinley, in highly uncomplimentary terms. The letter fell into the hands of enemies who, acting in the supposed interests of the Cuban insurgents, sent it to the United States authorities at Washington. As Senor de Lôme could not deny the authorship of the letter, the United States Government of course promptly demanded his recall and he as promptly resigned. This, it would seem, should end the incident. Such is the opinion expressed, by the more moderate among the advisors of the President, and this, it is to be presumed, is in accordance with Mr. McKinley's own sentiments, since he has all along been inclined to pursue a pacificatory policy toward Spain. But the American jingoes have to be reckoned with in any such matters, and if they can use the incident to bully the Government into demanding an apology from Spain or to bring about an open rupture with that country, they may be expected to do so. The blowing up of the U. S. Warship Maine, in the harbor of Havana, which occurred on the night of the 15th inst., totally

destroying the vessel and causing the death of some 260 men belonging to her, has naturally had an exciting effect upon public sentiment in the United States and may make it more difficult for the President to maintain friendly relations with Spain. The cause of the terrible disaster is shrouded in mystery. Most of the men were asleep at the time and none of the survivors seem able to throw any light upon the cause of the explosion. It is not impossible, certainly, that it was accidental, resulting from conditions belonging to the vessel. But such an accident is so uncommon in naval experience, and, in view of customary precautions, so unlikely to occur, that there is naturally a good deal of suspicion that the disaster to the Maine was not accidental. A searching investigation will of course take place, but whether the cause of the catastrophe is ascertainable is wholly doubtful. In any case, however, there would seem to be no good reason to suppose that the Spanish authorities were concerned directly or indirectly in the affair. The sad disaster has called forth in the English newspapers many expressions of sympathy which are gratefully noted in American despatches.

**In the Far East.** It appears that there has been some failure of British diplomacy in respect to the negotiating of a Chinese loan. It has been stated, though the statement appears to lack confirmation, that China no longer desires to negotiate a foreign loan, since Japan has signified her intention of holding Wei-Hai-Wei permanently, and it was for the purpose of redeeming that port from Japan that the loan was being sought. Those who scan the daily despatches for intimations of what is taking place in the world of diplomacy will not, if they are prudent, place implicit confidence in what they read. In his recent speech in the House of Lords, Lord Salisbury made rather light of the fact that the Government had not been able to obtain the opening of the Chinese port of Ta-lien-Wan as a condition of guaranteeing the loan of \$60,000,000 desired by China. But if certain newspaper correspondents are to be believed there was just at this point a serious diplomatic failure for which the indiscretion of the London Times was mainly or wholly responsible. The Times by some side wind—perhaps through the Chinese Embassy in London—had learned, it is said, that the opening of Ta-lien-Wan was made a condition of the loan. This it published as a despatch from Peking. Russia, apprized of the fact, was not slow to look out for her own interests, and at once bullied China into refusing the condition demanded by Great Britain. Just what the situation is now on the diplomatic chess-board is not very clear. Lord Salisbury is said to have obtained concessions from China permitting the construction of a railway from Burmah to Yunnan. This, however, may be contradicted by the next despatch.

**France's African Policy.** For some time past the relations between Great Britain and France have not been so friendly as, in the general interest of peace and in the particular interests of the two neighboring nations, could be desired. The French people have taken it very much to heart that, despite the protests of their Government, Great Britain persists in remaining in Egypt; and the British, on their part, have been not a little annoyed at the way in which France has ignored her obligations in Madagascar. Of late France has been pursuing a policy in Africa which is extremely irritating to the British Government and which is felt to involve a constant menace to peace. Mr. Harold Frederic, a close student of European affairs, who knows how to tell in a very interesting way what he knows and what he guesses of the doings and diplomacies of the nations, writes to the New York Times concerning France's policy in Africa as follows:

"For two years one band of French buccaneers after another has been provisioned and despatched from the interior of Dahomey to occupy or devastate that territory recognized by the Berlin treaty of 1884 as the hinterland of the British colony, Lagos, and take possession of the Upper Niger, which is as much British as is the Ottawa.

Two other British colonies, Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, have been previously ruined by precisely the same tactics; that is to say the French gathered an inland cordon around them and cut them off from the interior, so as to starve them to death, and then themselves sat down and did nothing. At the present moment the coast population of French Dahomey is actually begging food from Lagos, so little heed does France pay to a colony after she gets it. The British slowly stirred to resolve that Lagos should not perish by this malicious monkey play, have been sending out large forces, including many regular officers and troops beside the West India Regiment. Numerous battalions of natives are also being enlisted and drilled, till I now believe the British have treble the number of armed forces that the French have in the disputed territory. Moreover, the French expeditions are principally a few white adventurers, salaried by a colonial syndicate of politicians in Paris, with an undisciplined crowd of natives, while the British have a hundred picked regular officers, with men well clothed, fed and drilled. The advanced posts of these rival forces are now within twenty-two miles of each other. This is hardly so dangerous as it seems, because the French, when cornered, come cheekily into the British camp, and say they are explorers or hunters, get drinks and food, go away, and write home to Paris what fools the English are. That there is, of course, a constant danger that blows will be struck by these prowling antagonists in the Niger wilds is plain to everybody. Within the next few weeks or months at most, a singular peril will exist in the Upper Nile basin as well, but there seems more likelihood to be a diplomatic rupture between London and Paris first. If popular indignation sufficed to make war, Sir Edward Monson would be recalled tomorrow."

**In the Dominion Parliament.** The House of Commons during the past week has been engaged principally in discussing the Government's Yukon Railway bill. The opposition leaders evidently believe that the measure affords them an opportunity to make head-way against the party in power, and accordingly the bill and the whole policy of the Government in the matter of opening up the Yukon country have been subjected to vigorous hostile criticism from the opposition benches. The fact is that the uncertain factors in the problem are so important that it seems hardly possible for anyone to say definitely whether or not the Government's bargain with the syndicate is one that ought to be endorsed. It will be generally admitted that it is not wise to place very large areas of valuable land in the hands of a railway syndicate and to grant the same syndicate valuable monopolies in respect to railway building. But everything depends in this case on how the Yukon country develops. If its mineral wealth shall realize the more sanguine expectations that are entertained in regard to it, the land grant to the syndicate will be immensely valuable and the monopoly privileges will be correspondingly so. But it all depends upon that "if." The expectations as to the great mineral wealth of the Yukon country may be disappointed, and if these sub-arctic gold fields prove not to be richer than others situated in a more temperate latitude, they are not likely to be extensively worked, and in that case Yukon land and Yukon railways will not be very valuable property.

The choice of the route by the Stickeen river was determined by the desire to have an all-Canadian route, so that traffic over the road might not be embarrassed by the withdrawal by the United States Government of the bonding privilege or by other vexatious regulations. But for this, the Lynn Canal and Skaguay route would have been preferred to that by the Stickeen. By the route now chosen there is no passing through United States territory except by the Stickeen river the free navigation of which is secured to British vessels by treaty right. But it will be necessary to transship goods at Fort Wrangel at the head of deep water navigation on the Stickeen, since on the shallow waters of the Upper Stickeen only vessels of very shallow draft can be used. But Fort Wrangel is a United States port and it is by no means certain that the U. S. Government will not impose Canadian cargoes transshipping at that point customs regulations which will add largely to the expense of getting Canadian goods into the Yukon country. Judging from legislation projected in Congress, it appears to be the aim of some of the United States politicians to have such regulations made as embarrassing as possible. It is hoped that the American Government will not be disposed or persuaded to play an unfriendly part, since in that case it will be necessary to extend the railway to Fort Simpson or some port which is in Canadian territory. This will add very considerably to its length and cost, and it would hardly be possible to complete it the present season.