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**Great Britain and Russia.** It is understood that an agreement has been reached between Great Britain and Russia, which, in a satisfactory manner, will dispose of the matters which have been causes of friction and anxiety respecting the relations of the two powers in Eastern Asia. Details of the agreement have not been made known, but it is understood that Great Britain will recognize Russia's position in Manchuria, and Russia in turn will guarantee trade privileges to other nations in her sphere of influence, will not oppose Great Britain's policy in respect to the Niu Chwang railway, and perhaps will unite with her to support the British policy in respect to freedom of trade throughout China. There seems to be good reason to believe that Russia does not wish to antagonize Great Britain too strongly at the present time. Her plans are not yet sufficiently matured to make her mistress of the situation in Northern China. Her Trans-Siberian railroad—an immensely expensive work—is not yet completed, her financial condition is not free from embarrassment, the situation in the Balkan States gives cause for apprehension, and in the Volga country there is famine, wide-spread and bitter, which must be relieved at an outlay of many millions of dollars. Apart from these considerations, unless the approaching peace conference called by the Czar is to be made to take on a wholly farcical character, it would seem necessary that Russia herself should assume an attitude not inconsistent with peace. So, all things considered, those who control Russian diplomacy may be expected, for the present, to speak fair words and forbear to press an aggressive policy. Whether this shall mean the establishment of peaceful relations upon a permanent basis, or merely the postponement of an inevitable conflict, time will tell.

**Famine in Russia.** Of what goes on within the Empire of the Czar the world learns slowly. By its rigorous censorship of the press and the telegraph the Government is able to keep the world in ignorance of events which, if they had occurred in any other civilized country, would have been known and discussed wherever newspapers are read. So it is that until now very little has been heard outside of Russia—and probably just as little within a great part of the Czar's own dominions—of a famine in the Volga country, which is causing very great want and suffering. Concerning this famine the London correspondent of the New York 'Tribune' writes: "The whole of four great provinces to the east of the River Volga is now involved, and the peasant population, numbering several millions, is reduced to the last extremity of want. West of the Volga the famine district extends almost to Moscow itself. Throughout this large area the failure of crops is said to be more complete than even during the terrible visitation of 1891-'92. The unhappy peasantry are endeavoring to support life on a mixture of weeds, acorns and chopped straw, and are being decimated by the effects of typhus and excessive cold on constitutions enfeebled by insufficient nourishment. The Russian Government, notwithstanding previous warnings, has not imitated the example of British India in organizing and insuring against famine in times of comparative plenty, and the consequence is that this terrible catastrophe has caught it almost unprepared. Much is being done by private agencies, and the Red Cross has been distributing relief to more than seventy thousand persons for the last two months in one province alone, but Government measures to cope with the distress are still on a very inadequate scale. 'The Times' notices as significant the fact that in a country where 85 per cent. of the population subsists entirely by agriculture the whole expenditure on the Agricultural Department of the Government is £4,500,000, while the army and navy cost £52,000,000."

**The Anglo-French Convention.** The Governments of Great Britain and France have arrived at a settlement of their African difficulties, or at least so much of them as gave cause for immediate anxiety, on terms which appear to be fairly satisfactory to both countries. By this settlement, we are told, France obtains a commercial outlet by way of the Nile, with such a demarkation of boundaries in the Bahr el Ghazel country as will assure the consolidation of her West African territories. Among the results of this settlement, Mr. Henry Norman notes: "(1) The convention finally recognizes the rights of Great Britain over the whole Upper Nile Valley. M. Delcassé, however, has succeeded in having the convention so worded that it in nowise alters the international aspect of Middle and Lower Egypt, which therefore, still remains a European question. (2) England gets what she has from the beginning of this dispute demanded, namely, the whole territory that was subject to Egypt before the Mahdist rebellion. (3) France has now consolidated an enormous African empire. Except Morocco, which no power can touch without instantly precipitating war, since any civilized power holding Morocco could open or close the Mediterranean at its will, and except the British and German colonies in West Africa and Tripoli, France now controls the whole of the Mediterranean hinterland, as far south as the Congo and as far east as the Nile Valley." France has thus secured to her in Africa an immense territory, with large resources to be developed and containing a population of several millions of native people to be subdued and civilized. It includes the country in which a native ruler of mixed Arab and negro blood, named Rabah, who has also been called 'the Arab Napoleon,' has conquered and devastated at will. The conquest of Rabah will be one of the difficult preliminaries to the pacification of the country. The country of Baghirmi is the theatre of Rabah's operations, and the neighboring territory of Wadai, the principal sphere of red hot Arab fanaticism left in Africa is a region so unsafe for modern travellers that it is comparatively an unknown land. "Fifty years ago Dr. Barth reported the country as being rich in horses and cattle, and capable of raising large quantities of food, with an army including 7,000 cavalry. Sheik Senoussis and his followers, the most fanatical of Mohammedans, have their headquarters in Wadai. There are twenty millions of them throughout Northwest Africa, and many in Algeria and Tunis. These must necessarily be overawed before any commercial or civilizing development can be carried out." France would appear to have now in Africa abundant opportunity for demonstrating her ability to play the role of a great colonizing power and for refuting the conclusion of her critics who say that she is much cleverer at political intrigue to gain territory than at the less brilliant but more important work of establishing peace and commercial prosperity in the territory acquired.

**In the Philippines.** It can of course occasion no surprise to those who knew anything of the conditions that the Americans are meeting with difficulties in their effort to reduce the Filipinos to subjection. The business of conquering the country seems likely to prove a prolonged and expensive one. If the natives can secure the necessary supplies of arms and ammunition they can keep up the fight for a long time, and so far they give little evidence of any disposition to make terms with the people whom they persist in regarding as their oppressors and not in the light of liberators from the Spanish yoke. In respect to arms, equipment and the science of war the Filipinos of course

are at a great disadvantage, but on the other hand their superior knowledge of the country gives them important advantages, and their method of warfare proves embarrassing to the United States troops. They avoid fighting in the open, they will fire a few volleys from under cover and then scuttle back to another cover, repeating these tactics for miles, many of the trenches having gullies or connecting paths through the cane and brush, enabling the Filipinos to retreat unseen, and in this way they are sometimes able to inflict more loss than they suffer themselves. In an engagement on March 25 the American loss was 27 killed and 150 wounded, including 2 officers killed and 8 wounded. The fighting ability displayed by the Filipinos on the occasion is said to have been a surprise to the Americans. The climatic conditions are of course greatly on the side of the natives. The American troops find the heat very exhausting, and they will naturally suffer the more from this cause as the season advances.

**The British Revenue.** The returns of the revenue of the United Kingdom for the last quarter of the year ending with March show that the revenue for the year was £117,857,353, a net increase of £1,841,039 as compared with the previous year. The increase proves to be unexpectedly large and practically removes the difficulty which has been anticipated in balancing the budget. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, has estimated that the increase of revenue would be only £500,000. The actual increase, however, exceeds his estimate by over a million, and it is now expected that the budget deficit will amount to only £1,500,000 instead of £3,000,000, which makes it possible to provide for the amount needed without seriously increasing taxation. The augmented revenues are mainly derived from the income tax and the death duties. It is generally expected that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will propose a reimposition of the tobacco duties or an increase of the duties on beer.

—The Dominion Temperance Alliance at a recent meeting passed the following preamble and resolution:

"Whereas, the Dominion Parliament has at different times declared that prohibition is the right and only effective remedy for the evils of intemperance, and that Parliament is ready to enact such legislation when public opinion is prepared to sustain it, and

"Whereas, the Dominion Government and Parliament ordered a plebiscite to ascertain whether or not the people are in favor of prohibitory legislation, and

"Whereas, the electors of Canada were led to believe that the Government and Parliament of Canada intended to be governed in their legislative action by the mandate of the people thus invited, the Premier and other members of the Government having definitely declared that the Government would give effect to the will of the people as expressed in the proposed plebiscite, and

"Whereas, the plebiscite so ordered resulted in a substantial majority in favor of prohibition of all the votes cast in the whole Dominion, including an overwhelming majority in favor of prohibition in all the provinces but one, and a very large proportion of all the possible votes in these Provinces, and

"Whereas, the Prime Minister of Canada has stated on behalf of the Government that in the opinion of the Government the expression of public opinion recorded did not represent such a proportion of the electorate as would justify the introduction by the Government of a prohibitory measure, therefore,

"Resolved, that this meeting desires to express its strong dissatisfaction at the refusal of the Government to carry out the promise to take such steps as would give effect to the expressed will of the people, and earnestly call upon the representatives in Parliament to accept the invited mandate of the electorate and carry it out by enacting such prohibitory legislation as will fairly embody the will of the people as expressed at the polls. That a copy of the foregoing resolution be sent to every member of the Dominion Parliament, along with a statement to be prepared by the president and secretary of this Alliance, calling attention to the magnitude and character of the prohibition vote, and the duty it imposes upon the Parliament and Government."