

British shipbuilders. Some concession to open up the empire and to keep the gangway clear to Peking might form the basis of a barter. Does China contain within herself the seeds of resuscitation, or is Britain to merely aid the Son of Heaven to become a more powerful instrument, or ally, for the Czar? On condition that China would throw open all her closed ports and allow commercial daylight to there freely enter, England and Germany would secure her another loan, cheaper than Franco-Russian financiers.

Impartial lookers-on, and so the best judges of the game, avow that England has checkmated Russia in the latter's proposal to blockade Crete. Russia and France have now to dry-nurse the Sick Man, and so cannot oppose the Christian, the Hellenic, smashing-up of European Turkey. The Ottoman empire, rapidly falling to pieces, for the cracking of the ice is ominous everywhere, falls within the ambition of Russia; only it is coming sooner than she expected, and is not prepared for the dismemberment. She cannot even aid the "Shadow" to raise a little cash, and there is no corn in Egypt visible. Lord Salisbury has this time the ball at his feet; before he utilizes a British ironclad he must see those of other nations present—of Germany especially, who fills the academic adviser rôle as usual—and that if bombarding is to be done, England must take her precautions that none of the six Powers will sail away at the psychological moment. The fire this time seems to have gained the Balkans. As the Arabs say, the speaking is now to the powder. The Egyptian bondholders continue to be gloomy at the contemplated and very business-like project of the Khedive to convert the national debt into five per cent. stock. It is said the Powers will not permit him to so act, as if any compact could prevent a man taking up and paying off his bills, as he has the option to do, when in possession of the cash. Russia has been black-balled in the London Stock Exchange for autocratically converting a loan from a higher to a lower rate of interest, after binding herself not to do so till after the lapse of a fixed period. That's not the case of the Khedive.

The renewed attacks of the German press, all for the French gallery, and Bismarck's old game, fail to draw. The Gauls see through the artifice as plainly as do the Britons. The former discount it as a means to turn aside attention from Germany's situation, and of her reported handing over of poor Alsace to Baden, and raising the latter to a kingdom, like Saxony and Bavaria. It would take a great many columns of Anglophobian writing to console French patriotism for that "new departure" of the amputated province. But the French take a good note that Germany does not drain herself of men and money to develop her colonial possessions while she covers France with flowers and envelopes her in incense for doing so. "She agrees with us in pulling up Japan; she approves of us—along with Russia understood—opposing England in executing Lord Rosebery's Armenian policy; so far, that may be good Samaritanism, but, if matters came to a head, would she contribute the oil and the two pence by employing her ships and her army?" You will never eradicate from the mind of a Frenchman that *au fond* Germany and Britain understand each other; that may be inexact, but it is a salutary suspicion. In the coming European war it is possible to guess the grouping of the Powers at its commencement, but who would hazard the combinations at its close? The gigantic contest, where the existence of at least four States will be at stake, is beyond all human ken. All one can count upon is, that the Power with the longest purse, and the greatest staying resources, has the odds in its favour, and that secondary realms will soon discover how to range themselves behind the handle of the broom.

A few faddists are taking soundings as to the having a convocation of the "Latin race." It would be well to first of all define what is the Latin race, and to bring out a demographic map of the whereabouts of its members. The Balkans claim to possess the purest branch of the Latin family—it is a kind of lost tribe, but the natives speak not the less the language of ancient Rome, and though the country be marshy, the dialect is not "bog Latin." The theory or doctrine of "nationalities"—the *dada* of Napoleon III.—was his ruin. He advocated it for the Germans, who ran together and took him prisoner, out of gratitude, at Sedan; he tried Latin race planting in Mexico, and was Monroed in due course by Juarez and Uncle Sam; he helped to unify Italy, and she ended by preferring the Germans.

To-day France prefers the Slavs before any other people, and Greek sympathies have been carried over to Byron's countrymen—one returns always to their first love. France has other fish to fry than patchwork pastimes of race. She is, like England, closely studying the rapid commercial growth of Germany, that the sly Teuton has stolen a march on them while they were bagatelling about the Nile valley, Mekong, and the Niger. Now they are on his tracks, and intend to make him stand and deliver his secrets. The German bagman has got a big start of them, and is well seasoned for the race.

Paris is an abomination of bad smells. The doctors are this time agreed. They recommend people quitting the city for holidays, and by the time they return mother Nature will have arranged all with the goddess Hygie. Some sanitarians accuse the paying water-closets—*entrance libre et prix fixé*—as the cause of the offensive odours; the closets hit back and lay the charge at the doors—or rather kitchens—of the multitude of cheap restaurants in their vicinity! It is a pretty quarrel as it stands.

Although Prince d'Arenberg, the new chairman of the Suez Canal Co., be not an Anglophilist, and which is no crime, he is an excellent man of business. He is the great gun of the Colonial Expansionists. The position is non-political, and the big ditch being now internationalized, he can never place his legs on its banks, and Colossus-of-Rhodes-like, compel the British navy to sail under that "fork." Britain now controls the majority of the shares, and can command the exit and entrance of the canal, while any Cairo donkey-boy, with a few cartridges of dynamite, can close it.

Paris, August 8th, 1896.

\* \* \*

## Letters to the Editor.

THE TIDAL WAVE.

SIR,—Under the above heading, in the issue of THE WEEK for the 7th August, you appear to be apprehensive as to the happening of great events in the immediate future, but do not seem to be very certain where the Wave will start from, nor where it will strike with the greatest force. The Signs of the Times, apart from any other consideration, denote some impending calamity or calamities of great inquietude to be approaching. So as not to prolong this statement, and without at present giving elaborate reasons for my prognostications, I simply assert that some events may be expected, and that soon, out of the ordinary course. The history of the world shows that all human revolutions and convulsions have been preceded by, or accompanied with, striking and unusual natural phenomena in heaven and in earth. These are noticeable in all the continents of this earth at the present time. But to come to the question, as to the immediate coming events, it may be asserted with little doubt that a great war will soon be in evidence on the continent of Europe. As to the nations expected to take part in that war there are and have been seriously expressed diversities of judgment. My view—contrary to most predictions I have observed as made—is, that the great War will primarily be between Germany and Russia; and, secondarily, with their respective allies, probably, as now indicated, by present alliances. Germany, Austria and Italy on the one side and Russia and France on the other.

Thus all the great Continental European nations will be engaged. England will not be a party. Her true policy is to keep out; and I judge she will keep out of the impending conflict. Her present attitude is in that direction, and she should pursue it with all her wisdom and energy. The immediate occasion of the war will, I think, be the Central Provinces or Principalities of Europe. One or more of the number will be the bone of contention. The Emperors of Germany and Russia do not wish for the war, but it will come; they cannot prevent it. They are not their own masters, although in a sense despotic and tyrannical. England will then be master of the situation—of Egypt, the rest of Africa, of Asia, including China and Japan. In another generation, after Russia is worsted in this conflict, as she will be, a war with England will be in order. They have been at the line of battle in Afghanistan for over fifty