

Austria gave Russia a free hand with Prince Alexander, approving her virtual seizure of the very heart of the Balkan Peninsula! We have little doubt that, on the contrary, this futile *coup*, which has fallen out so ludicrously contrary to Russian expectations, may have the immediate effect of driving the two Empires yet farther apart from the third, and probably of cementing the good understanding between Germany and England, set on foot by Lord Salisbury last year, and forwarded with so much judgment by Lord Rosebery.

THERE may be some ground for the report that in consequence of the infraction of the Treaty of Berlin by Russia, in closing Batoum, Lord Salisbury immediately on assuming office took the important step of notifying Russia of the withdrawal of the Afghan Boundary Commission. The Premier, it is said, made it plain that he saw no advantage in prolonging negotiations, while Russia claimed the right to repudiate agreements at its individual convenience. Earl Dufferin, it is added, has been informed of the contents of this despatch, that he may be prepared for any attack that may come from the North—a danger, however, which we think very remote, as far as respects India at any rate. This action of Lord Salisbury's is a fitting rebuke to the dishonest diplomacy of Russia; it were more folly to enter into any further agreement with a Power seemingly with no higher aspiration than to swindle its way in the world. The rebuff has doubtless caused anger at St. Petersburg; and perhaps the Czar, smarting under the reproach conveyed of bad faith, may further commit himself; but it is not England that should most shrink from war. To war the debate between the two countries must probably come, sooner or later; unless a social and political upheaval in Russia should intervene, which would most effectually remove this great menace to the peace of the world by destroying the existing autocratic government. The great body of the Russian people are eminently peaceable; and perhaps a sharp conflict between Russia and England would confer a blessing on the world, by shaking to wreck the autocratic system of government, and burying beneath the ruins the corrupt, but small, classes who cause all this disturbance, and whom the outside world erroneously takes to be all Russia.

MR. SHIRLEY HIBBERD, of Kew, writes to the *Times* on a subject which it is to be hoped may some day receive that attention at the hands of Prohibitionists that its importance deserves. If those mistaken humanitarians, instead of taking the platform, would take to the kitchen, and begin a work there which would do more to banish drunkenness than half a dozen legislatures filled with Prohibitionists,—the work, that is, of teaching the working classes the common principles of cookery,—they would receive the active aid of many as good friends of temperance as themselves, who now, however, are debarred from usefulness by the exclusive adoption of methods which it is plain to see, used exclusively, can result in no lasting good. A pregnant root of drunkenness is bad cookery: if people's digestion are spoiled from childhood up, how can they be expected, with the resulting and continuous thirst, to be abstemious in the matter of drink? And supposing it has not got to this pass, with tastes superior to the brute's, is it not natural, with enticing drinks to hand, to crave for them? But what is an unfortunate person of the poorer sort usually offered at home when parched with thirst? Water or—but let us hear our correspondent on the subject of Coffee (*his* subject)—that coffee which is usually supplied to working people, “What may be termed chandler's coffee,” he says, “is so bad that I strongly recommend a trial of it to respectable people who love good living; for they ought to know by a taste of real agony how the poor are robbed and poisoned, and have, as it appears, no protection from law, gospel, or the customs of society.”

HAVING broken a somewhat difficult bit of ground in this easy fashion, we now beg to lay before our readers—Prohibitionist or otherwise—the leading features of Mr. Hibberd's suggestions for the procuring of what we should administer to any unfortunate inebriate instead of a temperance lecture—a cup of hot, strong, delicious coffee. First, let us note that at for 12d. to 20d. (25 to 42 cents) per pound, a good coffee in berry is always obtainable, and 16d. (33 cents) may at the present time be considered a fair family price. Mr. Hibberd, it seems, in the course of a series of experiments, bought every kind of coffee he could see or hear of, and tried every possible (and some impossible) way of making it, having the assistance therein of a diligent and clever cook; and one striking result was the discovery that all ready-ground coffees sold in canisters, packets, and other “convenient” parcels are bad; some very bad, a few infamously bad. After trying innumerable samples without noting one that was worth trying again, he concluded that canister coffee is an unmitigated cheat, consisting usually of a mere shadow of the real thing, with a great bulk of chicory and more or less of what is termed “colour,” this being simply

burnt sugar to give factitious strength. It is not good policy, he says, to purchase coffee ready ground, but if it must be done the supplies should be small and frequent. Any one may test the purity of ground coffee by shaking a little over a tumbler of clear, bright, cold water, and leaving it for an hour or so. Pure coffee communicates its colour to cold water slowly, and when the colour has been imparted the infusion is still bright and clear and the colour is never deep. But chicory and other adulterants quickly produce an opaque and dark infusion. The difference is so striking that for ordinary purposes a better test is not required. It is best to roast and grind as wanted, but the grinding is the one important point, because ground coffee quickly parts with its aroma, and there is a great charm in having it made immediately from the mill. In some houses the trouble of grinding is thought much of, but, as a matter of fact, it is almost nothing, and a mill costing only a few shillings will last a lifetime. Coffee should never be boiled; it should be made with soft water at boiling heat, but if hard water must be used, it should not be made to boil until wanted, for boiling augments its hardness. A common tall coffee-pot will make as good coffee as any patented invention, but a *cafetière* is a convenient thing, as it produces bright coffee in a few minutes, and thus enables us to secure a *maximum* of the aroma and dispense with the use of any rubbish called “finings.” Every one to his taste, we will say, but as careless people make the coffee too strong one day and too weak the next, the ground coffee and the boiling water should be both measured, and it will always take as much as four cups of water to make three cups of coffee. For the breakfast table the addition of about one-eighth of chicory is an improvement, but for the dinner table coffee should be made without chicory, because it dulls the piquant flavour of the genuine article.

It is said in well-informed circles that the Czar's perpetual fear of bombs has developed in him a temper bordering on insanity. He has taken the control of the foreign affairs of the Empire into his own hands entirely, and this is really the explanation of the clumsy and bungling way in which the Batoum affair was conducted, so differently from the usual Russian policy of concealing the iron hand within a velvet glove. His Ministers fear to remonstrate, and the whole outlook for Eastern diplomacy is decidedly gloomy.

EVIDENCES of a post-glacial forest have been discovered on the western outskirts of Hull, England, about a mile from the Humber, and one mile and a half from the river Hull. Workmen engaged in a brickyard in the locality named, on cutting through the clean warp clay about twelve feet, have come across a forest bed on an irregular surface of the drift, on the top of which is a greenish sandy clay, with pebbles and stones. The roots of the trees are standing where they grew, and from their closeness represent the remains of a dense forest. The forest bed is now at the low water level of the sea. A stone implement has been found on the surface of the drift.

A TELEGRAM from Lyons announcing that some Austrian pilgrims to Lourdes had been insulted by a French mob has caused great indignation among the Roman Catholics in Vienna. One of the clerical journals, recalling the insults offered in Paris to the late Czar, the late King of Spain, and on many occasions to the German flag, exclaims:—“Nation of ill-bred gamins, you want a smart rod to correct you. Meanwhile, what friends have you in the world? What people can take you *au sérieux*!” And truly, what friends have the French in the whole world, except a class in Russia, who hope to profit by French hatred of Germany in any war between the two Empires?

THE London *Spectator*, reviewing Mr. Sydney E. Williams's *Party and Patriotism*, points out that many advocates of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Bills are so, purely in virtue of some general principle of the inherent right of a nation to self-government. The whole practical question as to the character of the representatives of the National League; the practical possibilities of a stable Government; the poverty of Ireland, and the radical injustice of its having alike the support of English money and the advantages of independence; the practical look-out under the proposed measures for the Ulster Protestants; all such questions vanish before a principle as little self-evident as, or rather less nearly self-evident than, the principle that every State has a right to actual independence. Such modes of argument admit of no direct answer, but are best met by recalling the reply made by Dr. Johnson to Goldsmith. “Surely, Sir,” said Goldsmith, “you cannot deny that ‘who rules a free people should himself be free.’” “Zounds! Sir,” replied Johnson, “you might as well say ‘who drives fat oxen should himself be fat.’”