

The Road to Peace. As European intervention, arbitration and all other roads to quietude and harmony appear to be blocked, any suggestion having for its object a speedy return to the peaceful pursuits of trade and commerce ought to be welcomed by Spain and the United States. Hence, we regard favorably the announced intention of the Washington authorities to land sufficient men in Cuba to bring the war to a speedy termination. It would be a good thing for the business world if, instead of aimless wanderings in search of one another, the nations at war would arrange for a decisive battle as for a prize fight. A battle ground could be selected, time and place of meeting agreed upon, a referee and stakeholder selected, and the result of the decision could settle the dispute. In the present quarrel, the stakes could be the Spanish West Indies against the State of Illinois. By a sale of tickets and a proper division of the gate money received from other countries, the expenses of both sides might be reduced to nothing, and national honour be satisfied without much expense.

Anything would be better than the present reign of doubt and the consequent disturbance in the commercial and financial world.

Cecil Rhodes Re-habilitated

Nothing is more remarkable than the proneness of the Anglo-Saxon to almost idolize a celebrity. The re-election of Mr. Cecil Rhodes as a Director of the British South Africa Company and his apparent restoration to the confidence of its stockholders is the outcome of a speech which was distinctly political rather than businesslike. The Raid and its consequences appear to have been forgotten in the patriotic pleasure of listening to an address which dealt much more extensively with a projected extension of British interests from Capetown to Khartoum than with the question of practical interest to Chartered Company Shareholders—the dividend paying prospects of this Empire building scheme.

Public opinion ascribes the rehabilitation of Mr. Rhodes to his force and character. He has so impressed his personality upon the minds of his worshippers in South Africa and Britain that, in listening to his fervid protestations of devotion to Imperial interests, they forget to ask if his magnificent notions of Empire building will pay interest to investors in the Chartered Company Stock.

However, even if the British capitalist and speculator finds that South Africa fails to return interest on the money expended, there is comfort for the countrymen of Rhodes in contemplating what the capital employed has accomplished.

In a recent number of *Herepath's Railway Journal* allusion is made to Mr. Rhodes' fear that the Sirdar would get to Uganda before him. Events point to the possibility, and there may be truth in the state-

ment that, "before half a century is over our heads," a line of railway will link Alexandria to Capetown, with connecting branches to the harbours on the eastern coast of Africa. As the quickest route to India, it unfolds a wonderful future for Rhodesian railroads, and, as the journal elsewhere remarks, it "will be realized whilst yet the Euphrates Valley project is in a dim state of conception."

The business side of Mr. Rhodes' speech embraced a statement that the Chartered Company required increased capital to finance sound gold mining propositions and that the income and expenditure of the Company would meet in fifteen months' time. But, in a subsequent explanation of the position of affairs in South Africa, the "African Colossus, bestriding the continent from the Cape to Cairo," said Englishmen would go on agitating until they obtained their rights.

We shall probably hear more of President Kruger when Mr. Rhodes is restored to all his former glory.

An Important Decision. Judgment has recently been rendered in the case of an action taken against the City for the value of Typewriters supplied to one of the Civic Departments, which were ordered by the Committee without due authorization from the City Council, and without having the funds on hand wherewith to pay for them. Judgment was rendered against the City, chiefly on the ground that the machines had been received and used by the Department in question for the benefit of the City, and had not been returned. This raises a very serious and important question. According to the Montreal City Charter, any Alderman voting any sum of money for which an appropriation is not available, is personally liable, and subject to disqualification for five years. Can any official or member of a Committee, order goods without authority and without having an appropriation or available funds to pay for them? Does a Department or Committee represent the City of Montreal? Can any member of the City Council vote to pay accounts contracted, and for which there is no appropriation or available funds? How can the City as a whole be held responsible for goods ordered by one of its Committees without authorization, and about which the City Council, as a body, has no knowledge? If Committees, without due authority, without having an appropriation for the purpose, and in view of the clause in the Charter, making it illegal for an alderman to vote any sum of money for which there is not an appropriation, can order goods to the extent of thirty, forty, fifty or one hundred thousand dollars, how can the financial affairs of the city be administered? And what is the meaning of that special clause in the charter, which was framed for the express purpose of preventing over-expenditures either on loan or ordinary revenue account? These are questions of vital importance in connection with civic administration.