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RUSSIA AND ENGLAND.

Affairs still hang in the balance between Russia and England, and there is as much uncertainty as ever as to whether there will be war or not. The bear is noted for a good deal of cunning and it is generally believed that the Russian bear is no exception to the rule in this respect. The British lion, more straightforward in nature, is making open and immense preparations for a fray. In the Australian colonies most of the important harbors are being protected with batteries, and torpedoes are at hand in readiness to be sunk at short notice. The colonial militia corps are drilling actively. In the naval and military arsenals preparations continue, and at least eight men-of-war are being prepared to receive crews. The steamship "Oregon" of the Cunard line, noted for her extreme swiftness, is now being transformed into a man-of-war, and the "Alaska" will be used as a troopship. The steel-plated turret ship "Colossus," 9,150 tons, one of the most formidable ironclads in the British navy, is to be attached to the Baltic fleet which, it is expected, will be ready for action in a few days. The whole of the fast American liners purchased by the Government are to be converted into cruisers, but they are, in addition, to be fitted with transport accommodation, whilst such vessels as the "Oregon," "America," "Arizona," "Alaska," and "Etruria" will be furnished with six ten-inch breech-loading rifle guns beside torpedo and electrical equipments. These preparations made by the Government are fully in accord with the feelings of the English people generally. A large meeting of London citizens was held when strong speeches were made by numbers of prominent men urging the Government to take the steps required to secure the supremacy of the English Navy over all the navies of the world. In Bombay harbor numerous torpedoes have been placed, and four million cartridges have been landed there. Quantities of breech-loading rifles are on the way to Herat and Gurlia under escort of British soldiers and native Indians who are accompanied by Afghan officers dispatched by the Ameer. The Afghan troops who are furnished with these weapons will be trained in their use by the officers who are conveying them and will not again be defeated on account of poor accoutrements. Sir Peter Lumsden, who is at Herat, has been reinforced and now has in the neighborhood of 6,000 men. The island of Cyprus, too, is being made an important naval stronghold, and the troops now holding the island will be reinforced. In the event of war Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan will side with the party they think strongest, and the last named country has already declared for England and will in all probability remain faithful. A Constantinople despatch says that the Shah of Persia has offered England 50,000 Persian troops in the event of war with Russia. Russia's position toward England is most unsatisfactory. The Russian newspapers are clamoring for war, and one military or-

gan sums up the situation thus: "Forward to Herat; now is the time." War preparations are incessant, and the whole Muscovite grenadier corps has been selected for service in Central Asia in case of need. The Russian railway is being pushed forward to the Afghan frontier, and a leading Russian recently stated in Paris that Russia would not occupy Pendjeh except with the firm resolution of advancing toward Herat, not with the view of invading India, but of continuing the railway from the Caspian Sea to Herat, and thence to the Persian Gulf. This would give her a great hold in Afghanistan and also great commercial advantages. M. DeHiers, we are told in the telegrams, will give no satisfactory answer concerning the Pendjeh affair, which later details do not at all explain satisfactorily for Russia. Gen. Komaroff who attacked the Afghans at Pendjeh is a natural son of the Czar Nicholas, and this explains his influence with the Russian Government. The Afghans are now said to have lost as many as a thousand men by Russian bullets, cold and hunger. The Sarakh-Turcomans, in the recent battle, pursued the Afghans almost to Herat, being ordered to do so by the Russian General. Komaroff has appointed a Russian Governor of Pendjeh and put Sarakh officials in charge. The correspondent of the London Times in St. Petersburg says the opinion of every one in the Russian capital is that Herat will be seized by Russia before England has time to turn around. It is generally understood that Komaroff was fully aware of the treaty between England and Russia when he attacked Pendjeh. According to this understanding, England was to deter the Afghans from advancing beyond the positions they then occupied, and the Czar was to do the same with his troops until some arrangement had been made concerning the Afghan frontier. Sir Peter Lumsden's report asserts that Komaroff was aware of this arrangement two days before the fight.

The positions other countries have taken are on the whole favorable to England. The Ameer of Afghanistan has given permission to the British troops to pass through Afghanistan. He has ordered the road from Cabul to Herat to be put in repairs and has decided to hold a durbar, or council of war, composed of the chiefs of the different clans, at Herat. He believes Russia may yet yield to remonstrances, being unable to give a good excuse for her aggression. Only when all arguments have failed does he intend to make war and then the Afghans, he stated, would rise as one man to repel the invader. He has also declared that the Afghans would never surrender an inch of territory or allow their country to be the highway for a Russian army, which would mean the occupation and protection of a long line of Russian communications and result in the ruin and loss of their independence. The Afghans would see this and find that England was helping them to maintain their freedom. Turkey at last accounts is going to remain neutral and has assured Russia that, in the event of war, no English ironclads will be allowed to enter the Black Sea. Turkey, "The Sick Man," has also declared that she could make the

Dardanelles impassable in a few hours if necessary and is now building strong forts at Batoum. The papers in St. Petersburg are chucking over the fact that over two hundred English steamers are at present in the Black sea and sea of Azof. Vessels of all nationalities are crowding into the Black sea to transport grain from Russian ports before an outbreak occurs. Eighty-seven English vessels arrived in one week. Lloyd is doing a large shipping insurance business at greatly increased rates. The Berlin press generally expresses the opinion that Russia is humbugging England. A Vienna paper says that while the Ameer of Afghanistan and Lord Dufferin have been exchanging courtesies, Russian money has been influencing the Afghans. News has from time to time come bearing alarming rumors to the effect that the Afghans would not let their defeat on the 30th of March pass unnoticed but would try to revenge themselves, and also that the Russians were avowedly ready to fight and invade Afghanistan if the Afghans who have evacuated all the frontier posts show signs of flight. There has been a general advance of the Russian lines towards the debated frontier and 12,000 cavalry are reported to be already at Baku, a town on the Caspian sea and in Caucasus. Amongst the preparations the English have made, a number of eighty ton guns have been sent to Hong Kong and other English stations in China. Steamers belonging to the Peninsular and Oriental line are being chartered and transformed by the British Government into cruisers for the Pacific Ocean where Russia has a fleet. A Rome despatch states that the Italian fleet is being fitted out for movement to the Baltic Sea, and that a number of seamen engaged for service in the Red Sea have been recalled with a view to the change of destination to the Baltic. It is understood the Italian Government is preparing another naval expedition, which will go to the Black Sea whenever necessary. This looks as if Italy would be England's ally if war broke out in Russia, and again prove herself friendly as she has done in the Soudan.

The English money market has, of course, been anything but quiet, and the big sums invested in Russian securities and British consols compelled a vast and powerful interest to maintain and spread good news, while owners of millions of idle money in London and continental bonus seeking investment constitute an equally powerful class, whose interest is to break values by securing and circulating bad news. Russia has been making great efforts to maintain her financial credit in Europe, as with her large debt and stagnant commerce she is greatly in need of money with which to furnish the necessities of war. It is not definitely known what the result has been of Russia's efforts to negotiate a loan with the Rothschilds. It is believed, however, that the Rothschilds have declined Russia's terms. General Von Noraki, the Russian Minister of War, desires to retire, alleging ill-health. Gen. Oboukloff is named as his successor. Gen. Von Noraki belongs to the peace party and it is suspected that if he retires it will be in deference to the war party which seems to be getting control of

the Russian Government, and with which Oboukloff is thoroughly in sympathy. His assumption of control of the War Office would undoubtedly indicate the adoption of a warlike policy by the Czar. Despatches advise a close alliance between Persia and England. A despatch says Russia cannot rely upon Persia in the event of war. Some Russian tourists have lately been expelled from Khorassan, while Englishmen have been freely admitted. At Odessa the good faith of the Ameer toward England is mistrusted in well-informed circles. A good number of fast going steamers have been purchased by Russia, and it is believed that there are agents of both the British and Russian Governments in New York on the lookout for vessels which could be transformed into cruisers. Their operations are conducted with great secrecy.

THE FRENCH IN CHINA.

Every account of a battle between the French and Chinese is an account of a slaughter of the latter, terminated by a victory, which is either won by them or is gained by the French at such loss that it amounts to a defeat. We are glad to see this great butchery finally coming to an end and preparations for peace being made. These cannot be accomplished at once, however, and there have been several small engagements between the invaders and invaded. Gen. De L'Isle telegraphs from Hanoi, April 15th, that two thousand Chinese troops, unaware of the conclusion of peace, attacked Kep on the 14th instant and were repulsed. The garrison at Honghoa made a sortie, and dispersed a Chinese detachment, which attacked the French gunboats conveying the convoys to Honghoa to give notice of the cessations of hostilities. There is also a report that there has been severe fighting in western Tonquin between French and Chinese troops. The Chinese claim to have been victorious, but admit that they suffered heavy losses. The French blockade of Formosa was raised on the 16th instant.

GENERAL GRANT.

Gen. Grant has passed a number of comparatively comfortable nights lately, sleeping soundly. His pulse and temperature are normal. Some of his physicians still say that he has but one chance in a hundred of recovery. It is now stated that he is suffering from skin cancer, and may possibly live many years. If he continues to improve he will probably spend a short time with ex-speaker Sharpe, at Catekill. Lately the General has been up and walking round the house. Getting up and going to his window, one morning, he saw a number of newspaper reporters who saluted him and who had the satisfaction to receive a gracious and spontaneous acknowledgment. Last Monday the General started for a drive in the afternoon, walked down his steps unaided and as he got into his carriage, smiled and bowed as the large number of people who had gathered to see him, raised their hats.