

THE ANTWERP CONFERENCE.

from the ideas suggested by the Washington Treaty and the Geneva Arbitration, that it was possible to form by the friendly counsel of Publicists, Statesmen, and leading Commercialmen an International Code and International Tribunals by which the various laws and usages which affect nations in their mutual transactions (as distinguished from the Municipal laws of different States) might be brought at least to some extent into harmony, and so diminish the occasions of contention between them. "Substituting," as was said in the Society's original resolution, "the Arbitrament of Reason and Justice for the Arbitrament of the Sword."

The Association held its first meeting at Brussels on October 10th, 1873, and while not neglecting the original intention of its Founders, wisely determined first to deal with questions of law and usage affecting individual interests throughout the world. The special subjects upon which at this meeting that we are now discussing it has made its report are those of General Average and of Bills of Exchange, both, it is hardly necessary to say, of the utmost importance to mercantile men throughout the civilized world. "All nations," says the Right Hon. Lord O'Hagan, President of the Association (speaking of bills of exchange), "in which such instruments are employed for the purposes of commerce, have a common interest in making them by a simple, speedy, and universally intelligible procedure promptly negotiable and easily convertible." He further pointed out that the various German States as far back as 1849 have, under the auspices of Prussia, drawn up a Code of Laws affecting these instruments, which at this moment arranges the commercial dealings, not only of Germany, but also of Austria, Hungary, Sweden, Switzerland, Finland and Ser-

via; and that Spain and some of the South American States have in like manner adopted the French Code on these points. He went on to say that encouraged by these precedents the Association formed a Commission for considering the principles on which such an International Code should be based, and they issued a statement of their opinions on the subject which was adopted in 1876 at Bremen.

The subject of General Average is of scarcely less importance to mercantile men and is equally involved in difficulty from the variance of the laws and customs of different States, which variance often produces much delay and injustice. It is then, these two great subjects of almost universal interest that the Association at their last meeting proposed to examine and report upon, in the hope of inducing the various mercantile communities to make an effort to bring their differing laws into conformity one with another. During the year 1876-77 the following subjects have been discussed and reported on by the Committees of the Association: International Patent Law and the Laws of Copyright. The possibility of introducing an International Coinage, the question of Maritime Capture, the principles of Extradition and International Criminal Law, International Arbitration and the Law of Collisions at Sea. All questions of vital importance and concerning which the laws of different States are in their relation to one another various and vague.

The proceedings of each day's sitting were briefly as follows: Thursday, Aug. 30th, Dr. Tristram, Judge of the Consistory Court of London, read an able paper on "the execution of Judgments and Orders of Foreign Courts," which paper and the subject generally was referred to a Committee. Friday, Aug. 31st, Mr. H. Richard, M.P., read a paper