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Perils of Peace
vs.
Perils of War.

Statements which have been made to the effect that the dangers to be encountered in industrial pursuits are as great as those involved in war are easily shown to be fallacious, as is demonstrated by a writer in "The Nineteenth Century" who has thought it worth while to deal with this subject in view of the widely published assertions of that kind and the statistics presented to show that the number of persons killed and injured in industrial accidents in Great Britain and Ireland, during the year ending September 1st, 1900, exceeded the total number of killed and wounded up to that date in the war in South Africa. The statistical fact may be admitted, but the fallacy appears when the number of persons engaged in the war is compared with those engaged in industrial labor in the United Kingdom. The whole number of officers and men engaged in active warfare in South Africa has been under 200,000 thousand, while the number of those with whom comparison is made, engaged in the industries, is well up towards five and a half millions. A comparison of the ratios of those killed or injured in pursuit of industrial pursuits and those who were killed or died from abnormal sickness and those wounded in the war, shows that, while one out of 27 was killed in the war, only one out of 1260 was killed in industry, and that while one in 15 was wounded in the war, only one in 60 was wounded in industry. Even in the occupations which are most dangerous, the percentage of casualties is far less numerous than in war. But no doubt the contention that in some occupations the ratio of casualties might be reduced by more thorough and careful provision against accident is correct, and this is especially true in railroading, where it is admitted that the ratio of casualties is nearly half that involved in war.

South Africa.

The news from South Africa of late, has been such as to indicate that the country which has been the theatre of war still lacks much of being in such a condition of peace that refugees can with safety return to their homes and the normal conditions of life be resumed. The Boers under De Wet, Botha, Delarey, and other commanders of less note, are still in the field. Their mobility is as remarkable as ever, while the number of men they still appear to have under arms and the boldness and success of their operations elicit surprise everywhere, and give much trouble to the British generals. No doubt the Boer commandants have been making the most of their forces and their opportunities, with a view to the effect that their movements might have in connection with Mr. Kruger's arrival in Europe and his appeal to European Governments for intervention, and the South African despatches which, in the interests of journalism, have been making the most of the Boer movements have also done them valuable service. Some military men of reputation in London are said to consider Lord Roberts' more recent bulletins, keeping the world informed of the progress of the guerilla warfare in the Transvaal and the Orange State, a mistake. They think that a state of peace should have been proclaimed after the Boer resistance had taken on a merely guerilla character, and that the advertising to the world of any small successes which the Boers have lately achieved is a gratuitous encouragement to them to prolong their resistance. Lord Roberts is now surrendering the chief command to Lord Kitchener who has been promoted to the rank of Lieut. General. Under his directorship the world will probably hear much less of what is going on, and it appears to be understood that he will employ severe measures with a view to reducing

the Boers to subjection as soon as possible. Such measures seem to be justifiable—if the war is justifiable at all—by the stubborn determination of the Boers not to accept defeat and their continuation of a hopeless and bootless struggle. There is however the recognized danger that severe measures towards the Boer guerillas may so excite the Dutch population of Cape Colony as to lead to serious trouble there. There is, no doubt, a disposition on the part of many of the Cape Dutch to show active sympathy for the insurgents. Altogether it is very apparent that the task of bringing the war to an end has its unpleasant and embarrassing features. The prospect of a condition of affairs in South Africa which will mean peace in reality as well as in name is not so near as could be desired.

The Opposition Leaders.

It will be generally admitted to be desirable that men of high character and ability and of ripe parliamentary experience should obtain seats in Parliament, irrespective of the party to which they may belong. It is quite possible that there are times when the leader of an Opposition is able to render more valuable service to his country than the leader of a Government, and it is possible also that a leader of an Opposition may be exerting a larger and more valuable influence in that position than he could if he were himself in a position to control directly the political policy of the country. The Montreal Witness quite truly remarks that, "to those who take a view of public affairs superior to party, the exclusion of such men as Mr. Bergeron and Hon. George E. Foster from Parliament must appear as a distinct loss to the country. They are not only representative men in the fullest sense of the term, but also parliamentarians of training and skill, who bring to the discussion of public affairs intellectual familiarity with the complex interests likely to be affected by legislation. It is therefore to be hoped that the Opposition will be able to arrange matters so that both these Conservative leaders may find seats." There are probably members on the Conservative side, who are willing to retire in favor of the gentlemen named. But a member of the Canadian House of Commons can resign his seat only to the Speaker of the House, and in the present instance that cannot take place until Parliament shall assemble and a Speaker be appointed.

The Constitution and the Flag

The relation of the lately acquired possessions of the United States to the nation and its constitution is a question involving some serious considerations and practical difficulties. The question is, are these possessions—Porto Rico for instance—to be regarded as dependencies of the nation, to be governed by Congress, by extra-constitutional methods, or do they, by virtue of acquisition, become in the fullest sense a part of the United States. Does the United States tariff constitutionally apply in Porto Rico as truly as it does in Pennsylvania, and is the Porto-Rican a citizen of the United States in the same sense that the Pennsylvanian or the New Yorker is? Different views and doctrines on these points are put forward. Mr. W. J. Bryan is the prominent representative of a party which contends that "the constitution follows the flag" and that the United States is as much bound by the provisions of the constitution in enacting and administering law in Porto Rico as in any part of the United States. The McKinley administration, on the other hand, has adopted and acted upon the view that the constitution does not necessarily follow the flag, that the newly acquired territories are rather to be regarded as dependencies of the nation, to be governed according to the wisdom of Congress, and that therefore it is not necessary to apply to Porto Rico the provisions of the United States tariff. The question involved is regarded, it appears, as a constitutional one—that is the constitution itself is

A Possible Explanation.

supposed to decide the limits of its application, and the Supreme Court of the United States, as the constitutional interpreter of the constitution, is to take the question into consideration on the 17th of the present month.

As Englishmen read of the kind of triumphal march which Mr. Paul Kruger has been making in France, the reception accorded him by the official heads of the nation, the government and the municipalities, it naturally occurs to them to ask, why did not the British Government notify France and other European powers of the annexation of the Transvaal and the Orange State, and thereby make demonstrations, so flattering to the Boer leaders and so offensive to the people of Britain, impossible? It is suggested by way of explanation, and not without plausibility, that it was out of consideration for the French Government, which on the whole has acted a friendly part toward Great Britain in connection with the war, that Lord Salisbury has refrained from notifying the Powers of the annexation of the Boer republics. For, it is said that, in view of the strong anti-British and pro-Boer feeling among the French people, a refusal on the part of the French Ministry to show official courtesy to Mr. Kruger would have involved that Ministry's downfall. But as the French Government is still in an official sense ignorant, that in the view of Britain, the South African Republic has ceased to exist and the Transvaal country has become a part of British territory, it can still treat Mr. Kruger as the official head of that Republic without a breach of diplomatic courtesy toward England. Lord Salisbury, it is said, studies the politics of foreign capitals, and sometimes makes it easy for a Government with which he is in sympathy to escape disaster. So we are to understand that Lord Salisbury consented to the present tail-twisting performance across the channel, on the ground that the British Lion can submit to it with equanimity, while it is affording immense relief to the perturbed spirit of France.

China.

Despatches respecting Chinese affairs received during the week, indicate small progress in the direction of effecting a settlement between China and the negotiating powers. According to some accounts the Emperor is willing to return from Sian Fu to Peking, and there is a probability that the return will take place, but it is said that the return of the court to Peking would not be agreeable to Li Hung Chang, who believes he can work to better advantage with the representatives of the Powers in the absence of the Emperor and the Empress Dowager. On the other hand, it is reported, on the authority of the Chinese Minister at Berlin, that the Emperor and Empress are virtually prisoners in the hands of Prince Tuan and General Tung Fu Sian. Prince Tuan and the Empress Dowager are no doubt more responsible for the Boxer uprising than any other two persons in China. The court is therefore, it is said, unable to go to Peking even if inclined to do so. Besides, the long journey from Sian Fu to Peking, now that the snow is on the ground, is almost impossible with the vehicles in use in these primitive districts. Starving out the court, which has been suggested, is not feasible. The allies will be unable to carry out such a measure. However, even if it were possible, the provinces would rise in a body for the court's defence. The worst feature is that the court has lost confidence in Li Hung Chang and Prince Ching, who have demonstrated their impotence to deal properly with the invading powers. Under these circumstances it is certain the Chinese troubles cannot be adjusted before spring or summer.

The latest despatches from South Africa tell of heavy fighting between the Boers under General De Wet, Viljoen and Erasmus and the British forces under Generals Pilcher and Knox. The fighting at Rietfontein was very severe, the Boers making a most stubborn stand and inflicting considerable loss upon the British. The Boers are reported to have been finally driven from their positions with heavy loss, but a full account of the results of the fighting has not yet been received.

The recent bulletins in regard to the condition of the Czar have been entirely favorable, and there appears to be every reason to believe that the royal patient is now convalescent.