

a rapid vegetation. This accomplished, the peasants cut the wood, burn it on the spot because unsaleable, sow flax or wheat for some years on the soil enriched by the ashes, and when signs of exhaustion again occur, let it lie fallow again. This old method of working the soil is even now practised in southern and western Europe. Traces of a more regular system of an alternative management, consisting in using the soil, one while as cultivated fields, and another while covered with varieties of forest growth, are observed in some parts of Central Russia, as in the district of Mojaïsk, government of Moscow; or, after a cutting has been cleared away, a crop of rye, oats, buckwheat and other economical domestic plants is taken off for two or three years, and the ground then reforested, by sowing, or more rarely by planting. The expense of reforestation is generally more than reimbursed by the benefits obtained from the cultivation of the soil during the intermediate time.

The system of periodically cutting the shoots from the roots of the willow and other trees is only met with in exceptional cases, and especially in places exposed to inundations, as the borders of rivers and lakes in the western and southern provinces.

### Parisian Affairs.

THE murder of the Shah has, lamentable as is the crime, happened at a moment when England is acting on her new and gritty foreign policy, to be armed for every eventuality and to instantly strike whenever her interests are threatened or attempts made to belittle her. Where she was sneered and ridiculed a few short months ago, she is now respected and feared. It is useless for Russia trying to scheme away British interests and influence in Persia; she has the means at hand to resist any Russian advance, and can patiently await the unfolding of events, like the stealthy Muscovite himself. Every day adds to her power and preparedness. Herat can never become Russian, nor the Persian Gulf become her lake. India is at hand, and the Emir of Afghanistan is staunch in the maintenance of the integrity of his dominions. It is now tacitly accepted in British Indian frontier territories that the day has gone by when Russia could invade India. The question for her now is, could she beat off a British invasion of Asiatic Russia? England has only to keep capable and resolute functionaries in Persia and the Shah's successor will soon know on which side of his bread is the butter. It is by Persia that England could command a flank attack on the main railway route of Russia to Merv, that and the command of the Black Sea will ever make the Czar pause.

It was a most righteous judgment of Sir John Bridge to refuse the extradition of Dr. Hertz. France is apparently ashamed of the flimsiness of the demand for handing over the refugee to the Gallic lictors. Only an extract, more or less elegant, from a cipher telegram, twenty-seven words, the one-seventh of the despatch, picked from the text, the latter not even produced, nor the key to the cipher handed in. The translation of the cipher telegrams in the Arton trial was so comical that the three judges could not resist a splitting of their sides. And to think, no matter what his sins were, that France, since nearly three years ago, kept Hertz under preventive arrest. And the journals express no indignation. Happily, England is placing the foreign part of her House in order. She must see by this the error she commits by the delusion of avoiding wounding French "susceptibilities"—a consideration not reciprocated. There is no desire to treat the French as enemies, but merely as England does other nations. The French misunderstand, misconstrue all other plan of action of the British. When that régime of business cordiality is acted upon, and the system of blarney and flummery discarded, France and England will get along better. Never will relations be better maintained than when both nations politely comprehend they do not care a straw about each other and that neither is at all necessary for the other's existence. That will never prevent their mutually liquoring up.

The municipal elections express no political lesson or moral one way or the other. Those of Paris signify to the councillors "as you were." The capital, as a rule, always remains faithful to its municipal members. They may have

political sins of the deepest scarlet and the wildest utopias to make mankind in general, and Parisians in particular, great, glorious, and free. But the councillors ably administer the city's revenue, and their political opinions have no weight with any ministry who vetoes any expression of opinion in that sense. Only the municipality will not sanction the metropolitan railway nor extend any lines into the suburbs. That would induce citizens to live outside the city; so cause a fall in rents, diminish the revenue levied on food supplies, transfer the profits on material life to the municipalities of the environs? Why, it may be asked, do the citizens submit to be so manacled? They are partners with the municipality. The latter has raised several immense loans for the improvement of Paris; the subscribers to the loans are chiefly the inhabitants of the city. No scrip is considered to be sounder, no interest more certain, no investment more run after. A girl's dowry is chiefly in shares in the Paris loans. Well, if the revenue of the city seriously fell, the interest on the bonds would be compromised and the value of the scrip reduced. Now, gentle reader, you understand why Parisians do not threaten a revolution, and why they never will, if they be denied their metropolitan lines. The general municipal elections just held clearly attest that the country is fatigued, wants rest and desires only to work and to save. War is dreaded as the greatest of calamities, for none can see, but all shrewdly guess in what it would ultimately terminate.

Excepting professional politicians and the newspapers the new Méline cabinet does not create any marked attention. Besides, it may be turned out to-morrow as it will have a hard fight to live, and its scratch majority may dissolve at any moment. But any other Ministry would just be as precarious. At present Ministers seem to be engaged—the usual task with new brooms—undoing all the work of their predecessors. Happily that old Turk's head, the evacuation of Egypt, has been laid. The joke has been worn threadbare, and the shortest pleasantries are the best. Having decided to embark in the construction of railways in the Soudan, with running powers over all Italian lines to be made, the Mahdists are only viewed by the English as trespassers on the proposed routes and to be cleared away, they will be "smashed."

Of course the acquittal of Lothaire, who murdered the British subject Stokes, cannot end with the ruling of the Congo assizes. An example must be made of Lothaire, for it is full time to stamp down that impudent indifference of shooting a European, or stringing up an Englishman as if he were a dog. Germany—and public opinion—quickly regulated the autocratic barbarity of Dr. Peters: it is to be hoped the punishment to be inflicted on Lothaire will not be less exemplary, with this difference that Lothaire ought to swing from the same tree as his victim. Britain in these times cannot afford to have her prestige laughed at and whittled away by a Belgian captain. Give him the benefit of the *lex talionis* and prevent the fad of King Leopold from risking similar tragedies in its advance to the Nile, when it is no secret his Majesty is only the cat's paw for others in quest of new hinterlands—and that would ever remain undeveloped hinterlands.

Here, it is considered, that the Presidents of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State are playing a very dangerous game in trying to thresh a South African civil war out of the Jameson raid. Unjustifiable in its way, but that has always as attenuating circumstances the foul administration of the Boers towards the foreigners who make Johannesburg what it is—or was. It is useless trying to irritate John Bull; he has in his burly character a way of biding his time; he in this sense is imitating his rival Russia; he has submitted, during fifteen years, to the pin-stickings of France in Egypt, but he has secured the Protectorate of the Land of Pharaoh in recompense. In fifteen years what will be the situation of the two Sud-African republics? Europe has time just now to eye them, but if the continental Armageddon breaks out where would be Pretoria and Bloemfontein? By then England will have her Rhodesia well populated and railway lines communicating with the sea. The Boers ought to study that.

In the recent Municipal Elections in France a curious evolution in voting took place, and that was as valuable a motive perhaps to arrive at a candidate's merits as any other. The cycling clubs voted straight and solid for all