

AFGHANISTAN.

England and Russia are armed to the teeth and ready for a desperate encounter and need to be, but whether the interests at stake are sufficiently important to both countries to fight over has not been yet quite decided. The war parties in both countries would, no doubt, fight over a mere bone and the only thing to be feared is that, that Party dominates over all others in Russia and could easily force a *Casus Belli*, whereas in England the House of Commons and British Cabinet serve as a safe-guard against any precipitative course, without first having the services, consideration and consent of the English people.

The English race may be safely left with the decision of all great questions and in the future or in the past it is to be hoped the result of any action that may be taken will be for the benefit of mankind generally and the spreading of those free enlightened principles which make a people prosperous, happy and powerful.

A war with Russia is an undertaking of no ordinary moment and importance and the British Cabinet of which the Right Hon. Mr. Gladstone is the "head" may be safely counted upon to calculate the cost of such an undertaking and secure by every honourable and available means a way out of the difficulty and misunderstanding if possible at all.

Although the English press and people are bellicose in the extreme it goes beyond question that the dogs of war will be held in restraint until such times as our interests are seriously threatened.

Russia must be ill advised if she insists in menacing even indirectly the interests of the Anglo-Saxon race and incurring the responsibility of such a war which would certainly prove disastrous to her financial and social standing among the nations of the globe.

It is to be hoped that wise counsels will prevail in Russia and so prevent for the present at least what would no doubt turn out to be one of the bloodiest and severest conflicts of modern times.

INDUSTRIAL NOTES.

To prevent the cracking of the glass tubes that are connected with steam boilers to show the height of the water within it is recommended that two glass tubes be used, one within the other. The air that is confined between the two serves as a protection to the inner tube against outside cold and the outer one against the high temperature of the inner one. Both tubes are packed in the same brass couplings. But this device is hardly new.

In England there has been a great increase in the past ten years in the number of women engaged in various industries, while some entirely new classes of female labor have been created. In the civil service there are 3,215 female officers and clerks; while the municipal and other local authorities furnish employment for 3,017. There are 1,660 women engaged as missionaries, Scripture readers, and itinerant preachers, and 3,795 appears as nuns and Sisters of Charity. There are 100 female law clerks, 2,646 midwives, and 35,175 women engaged in subordinate medical service; 122,846 women are engaged in educational work. Female musicians and music mistresses number 11, 376; inn or hotel servants, 26,487; and domestic servants, 1,230,406.

ENGLAND is at the head of the mirror manufacturing industry of the world, producing 750,000 square yards annually. France produces 530,000 square yards, and Germany 340,000 square yards. In this country the principal manufactory at Lenox Furnace, Mass., produces about 110,000 square yards a year. There are other smaller manufactories in Kentucky, Indiana and Missouri.

AMERICAN CHILD AND PAUPER LABOR.

The condition of labor in this country is not always so rosy as it is painted. The annual report of the New Jersey Inspector of Factories and Workshops reveals to the public that he found 15,000 youths and children at work in 5,000 factories in that state. The average age at which they went to work was nine years, after one or two years of schooling. All of them had been accustomed to work ten hours a day, and many of them even fourteen hours. Those who had entered the shops the earliest in life were the puniest and the most ignorant. Some of them were set at work at so tender an age that they could not tell when they began. The weekly wages of the children do not average \$2. The inspector has remedied a good deal of this, and sent many of the children to day and night schools.

The New York Bureau of Labor Statistics has also found a bad state of infant labor. It appears from the evidence taken at Cohoes that the little slaves of the mills there are kept at work, under their drivers, eleven hours a day, all the year round; that various subterfuges are adopted for employing children not yet in their teens; and that overseers are permitted to apply the strap to their backs, as well as to slap them. The fathers themselves, it appears from the testimony, have been turned out of the mills because the children and women can be got to work more cheaply; and so the men are described as a worthless set of do-nothings, living after a fashion on the toil of their offspring. The superintendent of one of the mills admitted: "Families come here from Ireland, and the girls are as healthy and rugged and rosy cheeked as you would ever see, and yet in two years the girls would be in consumption, and half the family would be gone in seven years." The commissioner says: "It is an established fact that parents would be unable to support their families without the wages earned by children," and that, even with this addition to the family income, a "majority of families barely manage to make both ends meet at the close of the year, while a considerable number actually find themselves in debt." We ought to let Europe alone for a while, and turn our attention to our own pauper labor.

BALANCE OF TRADE.

Ever since the Mercantile theory popularized a fallacy, there have been millions of people who never could understand "the balance of trade." A leading New England newspaper that ought to know better says that a foreign trade prosperous for us ought to leave a balance of exports over imports. This is an illustration: A and B have open accounts for one month. On the last day of the month they settle. A's bill against B is \$78, and B's against A is \$45. Now they will come to the conclusion that B owes A \$33, and that B must either pay the balance in money or give his note for it. Foreign trade in the long run does not end this way; nor does it end in an excess of imports as others would have us believe, giving the following illustration, which is more properly an illustration of the advantage of foreign trade; An American loads a ship with a cargo of American wheat costing \$100,000, and, taking it to Liverpool, sells it for \$120,000, and then buying \$120,000 worth of British goods, brings them to New York and sells them for \$144,000. His gross profits on the two trips are \$44,000; though the "balance of trade" is \$44,000 against us. The fact is neither this way nor that, in the long run, but that the exports and imports of a country *tend* to balance each other. The fallacy in the first instance lies in the failure to remember that the exporter will not bring back money so long as he can bring imports that will return a profit, as he can up to a limit, about balancing the value of the exports; and what money is left for him to bring to this country he will carry in the shape of a bill of exchange drawn against a like amount owing a foreigner in this country, and arising from a reversed transaction. In the other case, that of the \$14,000 profit, it is a mistake to suppose that we will sell \$100,000 worth of goods and buy \$144,000 worth through many years of trade. We will not buy so much more than we sell. Theorize as you please, the fact is that exports and imports tend to balance each other.

THE English drummers, who have been heavily bitten by the depression in trade, are further exasperated by the competition of women, who, for the first time in England, now advertise and are advertised for as travelling agents for mercantile business.