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ENGLAND AND AMERICA AT QUEBEC.

The Tablet.

The coming Conference at Quebec, between the representatives of England and Canada on the one side and those of the United States on the other, will begin its work before the end of August, and its work will be the making of history. But more significant and more important than anything the Conference can achieve is the fact that it should meet at all. The questions at issue between Britain and America are not new—what is new is the common wish in both countries that all possible causes of quarrel should be handled at once and ended for ever. In itself a war with Spain was not calculated to excite serious emotions in the United States, and still less to oblige them to show their strength, but behind that perplexity with a particular Power lay the possibility of a European combination minded to treat America as they had already treated Japan. But such a movement was impossible without the acquiescence of Great Britain, and the attitude of the English people was never in doubt. In the words of THE QUARTERLY REVIEW: "But for the aegis of the British fleet, which still rules the sea against any probable European combination, an attack might have been delivered by the Continent upon America; or the strength of the United States might have been boldly challenged by a German seizure of South American territory. It is our 'fleet in being' which, as a pillar of cloud and fire, has shielded the United States throughout the contest." But whether the danger was near or far, it is now known to all men that any attempt by the Military Powers of Europe to coerce America would find the English people siding with their kinsfolk without the hesitation of an instant.

To those who believe that all the best possibilities for the future of mankind are bound up with the hope of a permanently friendly understanding between the sundered branches of the English-speaking people it has been exceedingly pleasant to note the tone of the British Press from the outset of the present contest. With barely an exception all the great English newspapers have been frankly and unequivocally American in their sympathies. And this has been the more remarkable because there has been much kindly feeling for the QUEEN REGENT and her sickly child; there has been admiration for the hopeless heroism of the Spanish sailors; and, generally, the inevitable English sympathy for "the under dog." So that while there has been gladness for the American triumph, there has been no rejoicing over the defeat of Spain. And happily the leaders of both political parties have made it clear to all the world that on

this question there is no room for difference between Englishmen, and that the statesmanship of the country has not been belied by its Press. If MR. BALFOUR and MR. CHAMBERLAIN have spoken strongly on the value of the friendship of the United States, SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT has certainly said no less. The wonder is not that this feeling of kinship and goodwill should have so leaped out at the first suggestion of peril to the American people, but rather that it was ever in doubt or obscured. No two nations were ever bound by so many ties—by common memories and a common literature, by laws in common and ideals in common, and, above all, by that common glory the large music of English speech. If we turn to more material considerations we find the interests of the two countries so intimately and inextricably interwoven, that any grievous misfortune to one would be a disaster to the other. The total annual value of the foreign commerce of the United States for the year ending 30th of June, 1897, was £378,276,000, and of that tremendous total £178,736,000 represented trade with the British Empire. Of the sea-borne commerce, amounting to £357,256,000, no less than £134,468,000 represented goods interchanged with the United Kingdom. Each people supplies and understands the wants of the other, and any circumstance which diminished the purchasing power of one would react with fatal effect upon the other. This community of interest is likely to be still more accentuated as the years go on. The paramount commercial interest of both countries is not the acquisition of new territory, but the maintenance of the policy of the open door in the neutral markets of the world. Wherever France or Germany or Russia advances in the East, British and American manufacturers are faced by a barrier of hostile tariffs. The British flag means equality of opportunity for all, and on whatever spot a British sentinel is planted there is a free market for the manufacturers of America. There is good reason to hope that the United States will adopt the same policy with regard to the foreign possessions which events are thrusting upon them, and that if they hold the Philippines they will do there as they have done already at Santiago de Cuba, and proclaim the policy of the open door. If we consider the question from the point of view of Catholicism it is impossible not to feel that every extension of American influence, in the Pacific or elsewhere, by widening the area of religious liberty, tends to the advantage of the Church. The other great advancing Power of the world has just given us an object-lesson which may point the contrast. The Russian authorities have just expelled from their newly-acquired sphere of influen-

ce in Manchuria all the Catholic missionaries.

This new era of good feeling between England and America is marked by the agreement to make an honest attempt by means of the coming Conference at Quebec to get rid of every possible source of friction or misunderstanding. Of these the most important—not from the point of view of the money involved, but because of the constant irritation it causes—is the fur-seal question. The Paris arbitration established the lawfulness of pelagic sealing, but imposed certain restrictions as to time and place and the weapons employed. Unfortunately, while these regulations are said by the Canadians to make pelagic sealing a difficult and precarious business, the Americans, as the owners of the chief rookeries, complain that they are insufficient to prevent the wasteful destruction of seal-life. It is admitted that to kill seals in the open sea often involves the sacrifice of gravid females and the mothers of pup-seals, but there are wide differences of opinion as to how far the herds are in danger of extinction. The other pressing question is the demarcation of the southern boundary of Alaska. The gold discoveries upon the head waters of the Yukon have suddenly given this matter a very unlooked-for importance, and it will be open to the representatives of the two countries either to interpret the terms of the old treaty between England and Russia or to agree upon a new frontier. The American Commissioners will also seek a revision of the inhospitable clauses of the Treaty of 1818, which prevent American fishermen from obtaining either bait or supplies in Canadian ports on the Atlantic. The Canadians on their side complain that upon the great lakes the Americans do nothing to protect the fish and neglect to enforce regulations, as regards a close time and the sort of engines of destruction to be used, which exist in some form or other in almost all civilized countries. An attempt is also to be made to bring about as large a measure of free trade as possible between Canada and her neighbour; but whether much can be done in that direction without abandoning the preferential treatment secured by the legislation of last year to this country seems very doubtful. Altogether the protocol arranges for the consideration of ten or eleven questions, some of which, however, are not of great importance. The Commissioners have a great work before them, and if they rise to the height of their opportunity, the conclusion of a permanent Treaty of Arbitration between the two English-speaking people ought to become at once almost superfluous and wholly inevitable.

THE TRUTH TOO LATE.

Liverpool Catholic Times.

It is pleasant to record that at length English papers are beginning to do justice to poor Spain. Before the outbreak of the war, certain journals in this country, following the lead of the hysterical American press, were never weary of abusing Spain and Spaniards. Tyranny, murder, superstition, organized outrages, any and every crime was laid at the doors of the proud nation which was engaged in a death struggle with its rebellious colonies. As our readers will remember, we entirely dissociated ourselves from those calumnious misrepresentations. While admitting that Spain had no doubt misgoverned her dependences, we could not bring ourselves to credit the outrageous assertions that Spanish officers and soldiers had been guilty of wholesale murder and fiendish outrage. Now, at last, the truth is coming out, and both this country and America will be by no means pleased to learn how thoroughly they were deceived by the irresponsible newspaper correspondents who made Cuba their happy hunting ground just before the war. The "Times" has a special correspondent in blockaded Havana. He has succeeded in sending a letter to the office of his paper. It is a letter which will mark a revulsion in English feeling, as regards the character of the Spanish forces cooped up in Cuba.

Of Havana the correspondent says its population is most orderly, and the police force excellent, the men being as good-tempered and forbearing as those of London. Yet these are the very men described by American journalists as ruffians and terrors to the law-abiding. With regard to the poor and those thrown out of work by the blockade, the Government issues a certain amount of food; their distress is also relieved by private charity, the Spanish officers themselves contributing largely; for, says the correspondent, incredible though it may appear to many good people outside this island, these officers are humane men and Christian gentlemen. As to the reconcentrados, the poor wretches who suffered first from the insurgents before they became the innocent victims of the drastic code of civil war, everything possible is done by the city authorities. He does not deny the terrible sufferings they have undergone. But he asks, "Is Spain alone to blame? Only one side of this question, that of the American Jingoism and the Cuban insurgents, has made itself fully heard. A large section of the American press, bent upon bringing about this war, has employed gross exaggerations and misstatements in order to inflame the passions of the American people. Trading on the Anglo-Saxon hatred of injustice

cruelty, and oppression, these papers shouted for war in the name of humanity—and not in vain. They likened the officers and soldiers of Spain (whom I firmly believe, to be as humane as those of the United States) to the murderous Bashi-Bazouks of Turkey; while the Cuban rebels were compared to the Armenian martyrs and were represented as having been slaughtered, tortured, and mutilated wholesale by the inhuman butchers of Spain. The majority of the American people, well-meaning, warm-hearted, but credulous, and ignorant, became the ready dupes of these agitators. They hurried their country into what, I think, will be recognized later on as an just and foolish war." And the correspondent says the foreign colony in Havana is bitterly indignant at the hypocrisy and the injustice displayed by those who have fomented this war in the name of humanity.

We are glad that the truth is coming out at last. No one who knew the chivalrous people of Catholic Spain had any doubt about the calumnious nature of the current accusations of cruelty, massacre, and murder. Spain's faults have not been those of her soldiers or sailors. These knew how to die, whether in the trenches before Santiago or in the rotten tubs which went down under the American fire at Manila. The Spaniards had no government, no policy. They drifted on from defeat, to defeat and every stage of the war has made only more evident the stupidity of the administration which misrules Spain. In truth, Spain is crushed with an army of "empleados," Government functionaries who wield great political power, and whose influence, naturally, is not in favour of progress. It is progress that Spain wants, not the progress of which its Freemason liberals rave, but the progress which lifts up the people and watches over their interest. With a Government that would deal with monopolies, and would open out the country to trade and commerce, that would teach numbers of public functionaries their duties to the public and keep the railway stations clean, Spain would rise from its sleep and take its position once again among the nations of the world. We have always been of those who look forward to a great future for the land of the Cid, but we confess that the great future will be achieved only by seriously modifying some of the customs of the present. Spain is behind the times now, and perhaps if her newspapers would fearlessly criticise the adverse conditions of their national existence, and would deal severely with all cases of jobbery that come under their notice, their country would have reason before long

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