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COLONIES AND THE EMPIRE.

Early in the present month a brief cable report was published in the Colonist of a meeting of the British Empire League, which was held in the Mansion House. On that occasion speeches were delivered, among other representatives of the colonies and dependencies, by Sir Charles Tupper, leader of the Conservative opposition in Canada, and Hon. R. R. Dobell, a member of the present Liberal administration. The deliberations and deliverances of that important assemblage can in no sense be regarded as other than of the most serious import, involving as they did the consideration of the responsibilities, the obligations and the duties connected with the commerce of an immense empire and at the same time the peaceful or other relations of the peoples of the world, largely directed by the maintenance of the proud position occupied by Great Britain as the mistress of the seas.

The membership of the League, as such, knows no party politics, whether of Great Britain or the Colonies. Not only were speeches full of significance made among others on the part of those who represented Canada, but the Duke of Devonshire, the president of the League, set forth in eloquent and forcible terms the progress which had been made by the organization, and further explained how the Imperial Government was co-operating with the Colonies to provide for the adequate defence of the Empire.

"Defence, not defiance" was, it may be remarked, the keynote of the gathering, the object of all present, and all who sympathize with the movement, being the consolidation of British prowess and British institutions, as embodied in the Empire, and the intensification of the feeling that colonists as well as natives of the Islands are heirs of all the ages in the almost boundless march of time as concerns the progress, the greatness, the power and the influence for good of all that may be claimed to be British.

In much of this we notice that many of our neighbors to the South claim to be rightful participators, and this we do not grudge them, as our own glorious heritage is large enough and rich enough to permit them to take a full share. In their enjoyment of this, it is to be hoped that they will grow increasingly proud of the relationship and less disposed to carp and quibble over minor matters, at the same time being more appreciative of the honor and the responsibilities attaching to the connection.

Very naturally, the Duke of Devonshire concurred with the remark of Right Hon. Mr. Chamberlain, some months ago, that the question of Imperial unity must be approached from the commercial side, and this led him to refer to the Colonial conference held some time back at Ottawa. Speaking of this, His Lordship said that although the time might not be ripe for the discussion of either of the commercial proposals as to Imperial and Colonial trade that were made at that conference, it might be possible for the British and the Colonial mercantile communities to make suggestions of an informal character through the agency of such an association as this, which would pave the way for the formation of a better understanding, and it might be possible then to collect materials which would form the basis of discussion and another conference which might be held on the subject. His Lordship proceeded to say:

I have referred to the great moral effect which was produced by that conference as a visible symbol of the Empire—(cheers)—but in addition to that it

had at least one immediate result of a practical character. The naval agreement which was entered into between this country and the Australian colonies and the colony of New Zealand was the outcome of that conference. By that agreement the colonies undertook to pay the interest on the cost of construction and a part of the cost of maintenance, of a considerable addition to our fleet to be maintained in Australasian waters for the protection of British and colonial commerce. (Cheers.) Those colonies had already undertaken considerable obligations of a naval and military character for their own defence, but this agreement was the first recognition which had ever been made by any of the colonies of the duty and interest of the colonies to contribute to the support of the Imperial navy.

It was further stated by the Duke, with respect to Imperial and Colonial defence, that the Colonial Defence Committee, composed of representatives of the Admiralty, the War Office and the Colonial Office, had made a complete study of the question of Colonial Defence, as it affects every colony of the British Empire, and this he went on to explain at some length, as appears in another column of this morning's paper. The importance of His Lordship's explanations, particularly in view of what is at present being done at Esquimaux and what there may be still in contemplation, will no doubt cause the report to be read with special and peculiar interest.

A NEW VIEW.

We have grown accustomed to hear of the Armenians as an oppressed, persecuted, down-trodden people. Our sympathies have been awakened by their sufferings, and our indignation stirred against the brutal rulers whose cruelty and ruthlessness have rendered their native land a shode of waned misery. We have, perhaps, become somewhat tired of listening to the sorrows of people whom we cannot help and who we have learned to think have no capability of helping themselves. We pity the Armenians, it is true, but at bottom the pity of many of us is, to some extent, mingled with contempt. That this estimate of the Armenians is a greatly mistaken one, an article by Emma Cons, in the December number of the Contemporary Review, on "The Armenian Exiles in Cyprus," shows very plainly. It is the writer gives an interesting description of a holiday trip to Cyprus, made by her and a friend last September. They went for the purpose of assisting in the establishment for widows and orphans at Cyprus, which had been undertaken by Mrs. Sheldon Ames. They were too early to help in this work, but their willing hands did not remain idle. They had gone by way of Constantinople in a French vessel, on board of which were one hundred and ten Armenians, mostly men, some of whom had obtained passports for Smyrna and others for Beyrout.

When they got to Smyrna sixty of the passengers landed, and were immediately arrested and imprisoned under the pretence that they had left behind in their houses treasonable papers, of which the authorities had obtained possession. The remaining passengers, dreading a similar fate, decided not to land at Beyrout, as they had intended, but to go to Larnaca, the principal town in Cyprus, where they would be safe under the protection of the British flag. The refugees first gained the good opinion of the writer, because in spite of their evident destitution, they did not ask the rich English ladies for money, though this is the invariable custom of the Turks and Arabs who are met with in this part of the world.

However, the ladies went to work immediately to help them in a way that would be acceptable to honest, independent men and women. One of their number, a young advocate, was set to work to draw up a list of their names, ages, and occupations before they landed. After they arrived at Larnaca, a town with a population of about eight thousand, he was employed to keep a similar record of all the refugees who were arriving in other ships. This work he at first refused to be paid for; but when his own money was gone, he accepted the ordinary wage of a laborer on the roads in that country, a shilling a day. The ladies then undertook to form committees of the principal inhabitants of the Island in order to set these people at the work for which they were best adapted. Some of the men were employed as gardeners. Two cooks and a barber started a cafe. The Mayor supplied work for the most destitute at the ordinary wages. One committee sent in a report as to what had been done for sixty-one of these immigrants. Among those supplied with work were one tobacco sorter, four coppersmiths, two silk weavers, one silk reeler, one carpenter, one blacksmith, two dress-makers, three block printers, porters and others without occupations. The report states that:

We advance the money necessary for providing the trade implements as a loan without interest, to be refunded from the profits of the concern. A house is also to be provided for such artisans as the block printers, the weavers, the coppersmiths and the silk reeler. It is hardly likely that among sixty people of any nation cast adrift in a strange town there would be found a larger proportion of skilled labor. The writer of the magazine article believes that the Armenians would have the same effect upon the industries of Cyprus as

the Huguenots had, two centuries ago, on those of England, and thinks that the English Government ought to encourage their immigration into that island. The Armenians are good farmers, and a great part of the island has been allowed to become a desert for want of intelligent cultivation. That there is plenty of room in Cyprus for industrious and intelligent immigrants is shown by the fact that while it once had a population of three millions there are now in the island but 186,000 people. It will be interesting to learn the result of this practical attempt to relieve a small portion of Armenian distress.

BAD METHODS.

There has been a great deal of rejoicing among the Liberal party over the Cornwall election; but if the Toronto Mail's account of the manner in which the election was gained is correct, the victors have very little reason for self-gratulation. Prejudices are much more easily roused than alayed, and race and religious hatred is a two-edged sword that is as likely to wound the party who raises it as that against which its blows are directed. The Mail says: One of his (Mr. Laurier's) agents from Montreal regaled the French-Canadians of Cornwall with the story that he is objected to by his opponents solely because he is a Frenchman. Another invented the falsehood that Sir John Thompson was denied his legitimate place in the councils of Canada, and was actually killed in Windsor Castle, because he was a Roman Catholic.

It is hard to believe that such methods were resorted to by the agents of one who has been looked upon by some as a sort of Bayard in politics. But the actions of the past year have shown that Mr. Laurier has learned to use, not the instrument which he would have chosen, but that which lies most ready to his hand.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

An experienced New York plumber in a letter to the Herald, of that city, makes a proposition for coping with the dangers of atmospheric infection in the large cities by providing for the combustion of the foul sewer gas. He says: "Why not annihilate sewer gas? Why not burn it up? Why not build stations equipped with furnaces and high chimneys, into which the gas would be drawn to be forced over the fires and consumed? This process of combustion would create a natural and constant draught toward the point of combustion." Then, the writer adds, the drainage system of dwellings would be properly ventilated by pure air drawn down through the ventilating pipes opening on roofs and out into the street sewer, driving before it the disease-breeding sewer gas to the purification-station.

IGNORANCE IN RUSSIA.

The ignorance of the Russian nation is very forcibly shown in the following paragraph from the New York Commercial Advertiser.

"The condition of the people of the Russian empire, in point of intelligence, is the most deplorable of any nation in letters or in education, is indicated in the fact that of the men last year drawn for army service, more than 200,000 could neither read nor write. One in five of the men of population of that mighty realm has the acquirements of the ordinary child of even less than ten years in an American school—or, as matter of fact, in an English or French or German school. Two Czars of Russia in the past have made themselves names imperishable—Peter the Great, who, in the exercise of a personal enterprise the world has ever delighted in, led of introduced the elementary principles of civilization into his dominions, and Alexander, who freed the serfs. The Czar who shall disseminate and render practically effective a scheme of popular education will do more for the glory and good of Russia and for the progress of the world than any predecessor of his. Let the Russian people as a people become educated, and absolutism in government over them, with its show of tremendous sovereignty, would decay and perish, but the nation would grow irresistible in its right to the throne or crown or whatever stands for authority and supremacy having real power, and not as now, sham power brutally but also precariously held.

THE STUBBORN SULTAN.

(From the Portland Oregonian.) The story that the three great maritime powers would intervene jointly to coerce the Sultan and impose administrative reforms in Turkey has been told so often that it has lost interest. Probably it is true, since everybody seems to believe it but the Sultan himself. Apparently nothing will convince him but the appearance of the three fleets in the Golden Horn. His attitude then will determine the dramatic and historical interest of the subsequent proceedings. If he shall be very humble and accept the proposed reforms without question or qualification, British power will gain its point by prolonging his empire for another season. If he still shuffles, evades and resists, as Russia undoubtedly desires the end for which Russian policy has striven and waited for more than a century will come. That is, the Turkish empire in Europe will come to an end. It is probable that the powers have anticipated this contingency, and that even then there will be no general war.

The Prussian government is systematically representing the agitation in the Polish provinces. The archbishops and bishops have been notified that unless they stop the propaganda among the lower Polish clergy, the government must treat the Catholic church as a severely. House searches have been made in the case of members of the Society of Sakil at Beuthen, and President Dombarek was arrested. All the Polish Societies are closely watched.

SATAN'S SIGNATURE.

(From the New York Herald.)

The assertion has been made that there exists in the Free Masons' lodge in Rome a document which bears the signature of the devil. The question now arises, Can the devil write? This interrogation is considered in ecclesiastical circles of so much importance that two German papers—the Pelikan, published in Feldberg, and edited by Dr. Kunzle, and the Volkszeitung, of Cologne—have been engaged in a heated controversy on the subject for some time.

This controversy was provoked by the publication of a tract called "The Secrets of Hell," written by a pious woman, Miss Diana Vaughan. Its author gives an account of a conference that took place on the night of October 18, 1883, between the devil and Signor Crispi, who afterwards became Premier in the government of the Kingdom of Italy. It was held in the Free Masons' lodge in Rome, of which Crispi is a member, and the interest of it lay in the circumstance that the devil predicted that within a year from the time of the certain woman, whom he named, would give birth to a child, destined to become the grandmother of a boy, who would serve as the most powerful of his earthly allies. In testimony of the truth of this prediction a document was drawn up at the end of which the devil wrote his title, "Sanctus Daemon, Primarius Praeses," which may be translated as "First Presiding Sacred Devil." He did not write in words, but in symbolical signs, such as a rooster, a three pronged fire fork, a pair of horns and a caudal appendage, using for that purpose a pen which lay in the lodge room. The Free Masons besides Signor Crispi kept an eye on him while he was engaged in writing, or rather drawing. The news of this affair leaked out, and it came into the possession of Miss Vaughan, the author of the tract on the subject.

Now Dr. Kunzle, of the Pelikan, contends for the genuineness of the signature, appeals to tradition in support of his opinion, and fortifies his appeal with arguments drawn from theologians of distinction. Among the many prominent men supporting him in his opinion may be named the aristocratic Prince Zu Loewenstein. The Volkszeitung, on the contrary, refuses to give credence to the story. It holds that "only superstitious people could believe in the authenticity of the devil's signature," and the report of the interview with Signor Crispi, the Free Mason." While the Volkszeitung affirms that it is certain that a man like Crispi might hold interviews with Satan, sometimes known in the Tyrol as "Vitru," it rejects the testimony offered as proof of Vitru's appearance in the lodge at Rome. "How could Vitru know," it questions, "that the woman Sappho would give birth to the grandmother of the chief one of his earthly allies?"

Can the devil write? How few of us have ever given the subject a thought, and how perfectly natural the quick rejoinder is: "Why, of course he cannot!" And yet why should he not? That is, provided we admit the existence of a devil, of a fallen angel, of a prince of darkness. If we believe the story of Lucifer's disobedience and consequent banishment from heaven into the eternal fires of hell, we practically admit the existence of the devil! If we read the story literally, we even look upon it as a myth, we must admit his superiority, the nobility and grandeur of the archangel Lucifer, as God created him as he was before his fall, and even today he is a formidable opponent of the Creator! We cannot close our eyes to that fact! Our ministers warn us against him, prayers are offered up for strength to withstand him, the Salvation Army, that powerful organization which has grown up in our midst, and which has stubbornly forced us to admit the good it does and admire while we may not approve of its methods, has for its principal aim the conquest of the devil.

THE HAWAIIAN QUESTION.

(From the N. Y. Times.)

The Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs, now visiting this country, is reported as representing the Hawaiian government to be in fear of what the Japanese may do, and anxious for annexation to the United States on that account. The Japanese, Minister Cooper says, "outnumber all other foreigners" in Hawaii, the Americans being a "handful in comparison," and they "are beginning to chafe for the right to vote." If they get it "American ascendancy will be at an end forever." Regarding Hawaii as an independent nation, why has a numerous body of "foreigners" any less right to power than a "handful" of other foreigners? If it is a republic, why do not the foreigners from Japan chafe for the same rights that are allowed to foreigners from the United States?

What special right has a "handful" of Americans to "ascendancy" in a land of freedom, any way? If it is not a land of freedom, if it is not a republic, if the majority is not fit to rule, if its larger "foreign elements" are undesirable for citizenship, and if it has to be governed by some kind of a handful of superior persons, why should we annex it to our system, which is founded upon the "consent of the governed" and the right of the majority to rule? Every advocate of Hawaiian annexation seems destined to have the arguments he uses in its favor turn upon his very lips into arguments against it. He presents reasons why Hawaii is utterly unfit to become a part of the United States. We do not want such a possession.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28.—According to news received here from unofficial sources, Li Hung Chang's visit to England and the United States has already borne fruit in the decision of the Chinese government to gradually Anglicize the Chinese people at least as far as their language is concerned. The Peking government recently issued instructions to various viceroys and governors of provinces of the empire to establish schools for the teaching of the English language and foreign sciences in all the principal cities of the country. According to the wording of one clause in the general instructions, it is required that in that China, in order to keep herself on terms of equality and in touch with the great powers of Europe, must educate the masses and encourage foreign learning among her people, together with that love of country and home, and that devoted patriotism so conspicuously ingrained in the hearts of those who have studied such languages and sciences.

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