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Manager.

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## THE SITUATION.

The United States revenue cutters, according to the Washington correspondent of the New York *Herald*, have received orders to seize all vessels of whatever nationality found engaged in the illicit killing of seal. Nothing is more natural than that these cruisers should receive orders to enforce the observance of the law, and to make captures for its violation. The trouble is that the United States law, having merely a municipal and not international effect, may not be such a law as other maritime nations are bound to regard. This divergence it is evident may lead to complications. What is illegal seal-catching in Behring Sea, even according to the law of Congress, is not very clear; but previous captures both of American and Canadian vessels in these waters, if they be maintained, would shut out all competitors of the Alaska Company. The British cruisers in that sea, the same authority alleges, are not there to provoke a collision or to settle the disputed questions by force. Seal-killing forbidden by international law, if such a law can be appealed to, we might expect the British cruisers to be engaged to prevent.

Africa is the part of the world which at present offers the greatest temptations to the spirit of colonization. The United States is not a colonizing nation, though the last born of the great nations which colonization has brought into being; but if report speak true American capitalists are willing to venture something in a railway from the lower falls of the Congo River to Stanley Pool. The same authority says that the Belgian Government is prepared to put \$2,000,000 into the scheme. When all this has been done, there will be an opportunity for others to take a hand in the venture; none need fear being shut out from the investment. It is rather much to ask us to believe that complete surveys of the route have been made; explorations there certainly have been, but that is about all. The length of the proposed road is only two hundred and sixty-two miles, and if, as alleged, it would open up a water communication of three thousand miles

above Stanley Pool, the enterprise cannot be said to be without promise. Projects of this kind are generally talked about long before they are realized; but considering the interest now centering in Africa, this may prove an exception.

Another Atlantic cable is among the projects of the hour. The Paris *Temps* is authority for the statement that Germany is negotiating with Belgium in the project of laying a cable from Ostend to Portland, Maine, on this side of the Atlantic. The motive stated for the enterprise is that Germany desires to have a cable independent of English companies. This is perhaps a natural motive, and it would be a sufficient one if there were any assurance that another cable would earn a dividend. If by Germany we are to understand the German Government, the new cable would not be likely to be swallowed up by the old ones; but if private German capital set the enterprise on foot, there would be no guarantee against another amalgamation. Every unnecessary cable makes it more difficult for them all to earn a dividend. It remains to be seen whether the alleged negotiations will have any practical result.

It looks as if the authorities of Chicago were thoroughly in earnest in their attempt to search out the murderers of Cronin, and it seems as if no man's nationality would stand in the way of his conviction. This is an encouraging sign of the times. From the earnest spirit displayed in searching out the criminals, there is no more reason to believe that their nationality would protect them than that any argument could be used to convince the average American that tenderness ought to be shown to Anarchists. The fact that strong efforts are made to induce the belief that Cronin was a British spy, and that his murderers probably acted upon that belief, does not appear to have any effect in weakening the hands of justice. A spy, even if proved to be such, is not a man who may be murdered at sight. The feeling about many kinds of spies, who now go by the softened name of detectives, has of late been greatly moderated. The business of this class of spies has come to be recognized as necessary, if not honorable. A Quebec judge recently pointed out the necessity of not permitting private detectives to pursue their calling unless they be licensed and compelled to report what they have done. Of all the European nations England makes least use of spies, Russia perhaps the most. The statement has recently been made that the Russian Church, as it exists in the United States, is nothing but an elaborate system of espionage. It is not shown that Cronin was a spy, and if it were his murderers would not on that account escape, if their guilt were established.

A Washington despatch states that the British Minister recently made an informal complaint to the Secretary of State of the operation of the alien contract law, as it affects Canada. The matter was referred to the Secretary of the Treasury, and we need not say that his report promises no relief under the present law. The only

duty thrown upon the executive is to enforce the law as it stands; "and," remarks the Secretary of the Treasury, "such considerations as those presented in your letter, however forcible and reasonable, should be addressed to the law-making power." Will Mr. Blaine act upon the hint? And if he should, is there any good reason to believe that his representations would have the effect of producing any change in the law? This is very doubtful. This law is one phase of the extreme protectionism which is rife in the United States, and which at present shows no sign of abatement.

The Samoan conference has finished its work and the treaty has been signed by the three powers, Germany, the United States, and Great Britain. The administrative autonomy of the islands is guaranteed, under the joint control of Germany and the United States, England having the function of umpire in case of difference between them. The natives are to elect their own king and viceroy; the Legislature is to consist of two branches, the principal chiefs forming the Senate, and the House being elective. The Germans are to be indemnified for their losses, payment to be in money; revenue will be obtainable from duties which the islands are to have the right to levy. The treaty cannot go into effect till ratified by the Senate of the United States, but there is no reason to suppose that ratification will be refused. It remains to be seen how the tripartite protectorate, nominally reducible to the single voice of the umpire in the last resort, will work. The present difficulty is got over; if new friction should arise, its removal will be provided for by some new expedient.

In the Panama Canal, the enthusiasm of M. de Lesseps induced the French nation to undertake a task which, if done at all, should have been shared by the whole world. American jealousy was hostile to the success of the undertaking, and British caution held aloof from doubts of the result. The doubts were mainly financial, but they also touched the scientific problem. Now the canal is abandoned, like a ruin, when its achievement is far off. Will the work now left off ever be taken up again, or will all be lost? This must depend largely upon economical considerations; whether the wreck is in such a shape that a modicum of the cost can be extracted from it. What we ought perhaps to wonder at most is that the collapse did not produce widespread panic. This is due largely to the fact that the disaster did not come suddenly, though M. de Lesseps kept up appearances till the day before the crash was announced. It is satisfactory to know that the laborers lately employed on the work are getting safely away, no less than 9,000 having been sent home to Jamaica. The City of Panama has resumed the quiet which belonged to it twenty years ago; but as contrasted with the late activity, it must seem like the silence of death.

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