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NOTES OF THE MONTH.

ON June 20th of next year the Queen will have completed the sixtieth year of her reign. That there should be a fitting commemoration of this event, unprecedented in the annals of the British throne, is generally conceded, and that such observance should take the form of an empiric benevolence is equally to be desired.

Were it possible that by a common impulse of the two great English-speaking nations, the present movement toward the establishment of an international tribunal of arbitration could be consummated upon that date,—this, of all others, would be the crowning tribute to the gracious sovereign whose rule has been always for honour, but whose influence has been ever for peace.

LORD RUSSELL'S address at the recent meeting of the American Bar Association has given renewed stimulus to public interest in the question of international arbitration, which received strong impetus from Lord Salisbury's speech last month. Because of the high authorities engaged in discussing it, and also in no small measure, because the trend of public thought is in favour of the movement, it has become suddenly one of the live issues of the day.

The largeness and high purpose of a movement is its best earnest of ultimate consummation; since these very qualities attract statesmen and advanced thinkers in every walk of life. When brilliant legal minds like that of Lord Russell, versed in the shortcomings of international law, and cognizant of the many difficulties of this most difficult question, yet see ground for hopeful and encouraging outlook, there is every reason to anticipate a consummation of what but a few years ago would have been deemed a chimera.

LORD RUSSELL'S speech should be read and re-read, until the fulness of thought embodied therein unconsciously moulds the minds of all of us upon this great question. As he says:

It behoves then all who are friends of peace and advocates of arbitration to recognise the difficulties of the question, to examine and meet these difficulties and to discriminate between the cases in which friendly arbitration is, and in which it may not be, practically possible.

And again:

In dealing with the subject of arbitration, I have thought it right to sound a note of caution, but it would, indeed, be a reproach to our nineteenth centuries of Christian civilisation if there were now no better method for settling international differences than the cruel and debasing methods of war. May we not hope that the people of these States and the people of the Mother Land—kindred peoples may, in this matter, set an example of lasting influence to the world?

THE Queen's speech at the prorogue of Parliament says:

The condition of portions of Turkey continues to cause anxiety, and at present Crete is the principal centre of the disturbances. I have observed strict neutrality, but, in conjunction with the powers, I endeavoured to reconcile the contestants by proposing a system of government which should be equally acceptable to Christians and Mussulmans.

If the Armenian and Cretan outrages have emphasised one fact above all others, it is the criminality of 'strict neutrality' under certain conditions, and the impotency implied in that strong-sounding phrase, 'in conjunction with the powers.'

WITH the death of Lady Tennyson, we feel as if the last link had broken which held us in near and present communion with the sweetest lyrical poet, outside of the Bible. For next to David, none can so woo us with his songs to higher things as Tennyson.

The present has become past, the touch that lingered through one who shared his closest life, has vanished. Yet, it is impossible to conceive of any future in human history when Tennyson shall not be with us in the beautiful lyrics that express our heart fears, heart loves and heart aspirations for all time.

IN studying the lives of public men, nothing is more remarkable than the instability of their hold upon public favour, and how slight the incident that may accelerate their rise or fall.

One false step—nay, less—one ill-advised phrase is sufficient to cause the downfall of governor or general, great statesman or petty politician.

A year or two ago, Cecil Rhodes, the stalwart South African, was a small king in controlling the affairs of that colony. The favour of the Imperial Government was his, even to making him a Privy Councillor.

To-day it is purposed to strike his name from that honourable roll; his prestige has gone for ever. And all because of his ambition, which led to indiscretion.

General Wolseley came dangerously near the point of losing his long-continued and well-won popularity, in his indiscreet remark concerning Her Majesty's Indian troops, that he would not like to lead them against any European soldiers: and his ambiguous explanation has not improved his position.

His comment may have been pointed, but it was ill-considered in one occupying the position of commander-in-chief; and the public is merciless, it makes no allowance for blunders either in conduct or speech.

THE British Parliament closed with a show of cordiality between the opposing members, that was evidently not all upon the surface. One of the healthiest signs in any Assembly constituted with organized opposition is, that when the tussel is over, they should realize a hearty feeling of good understanding, a mutual

appreciation of each other's work and purpose.

When opposition becomes virulent personal attack, and adverse criticism degenerates into bitterness, then such feeling is impossible. And where this condition of affairs endures, it predicates a certain downfall.

LI HUNG CHANG, the feted Chinese Viceroy, who is to pay Canada a brief visit this month, is evidently amenable to the wiles of women. When in England he refused to be interviewed by reporters, but granted that favour to Miss Elizabeth Banks, a young American, on account of her nationality.

He was most cordial to the young lady, and asked her unnumberable questions about her family, her income, her age, and love affairs. Finally Miss Banks in desperation retorted: "But your Excellency, I came to interview you, and you are interviewing me;" whereupon Li Hung Chang burst out laughing. He continued his inquiry, however, and the enterprising visitor got little satisfaction from him. But when she departed the Viceroy produced a purple velvet jewel case containing a gold medal bearing a Chinese inscription and a well-executed profile of his features, which he begged her accept as a souvenir of her visit.

It is very evident this astute old Chinaman is equal to the demands of any situation, when he can so skilfully handle an American reporter both as news-gatherer—and woman.

DR. NANSEN'S Arctic achievements apparently surpass all earlier efforts. First bringing his ship to a point further north by several hundred miles than any other vessel has attained, he left it and with two dog teams and a single comrade made a dash overland—or rather over ice—for the North Pole. He succeeded in coming within two hundred and fifty miles of it; but then the terrible sledging conditions compelled him to turn southwest for the nearest land.

There is no doubt that the North Pole will be reached in the near future. That 'two hundred and fifty miles' will act as a tantalizing enticement until the prize is grasped, albeit it will be an extremely cold grasping. Nansen's ship, the "Fram," which he left far up in Arctic waters, is also reported safe within habitable regions again.

ONE good result—possibly the only one—arising from these repeated Polar voyages, is the scientific knowledge gathered. The Polar sea will soon become as definitely marked in its shores and soundings, its shoals and currents, as any body of water in habitable zones. While not a little may be added to geologic lore.

It is worthy of note that Nansen carried an electric light plant with him, under the belief that heat and light are the best preventives of