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GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE PRIME MINISTER SERIOUSLY ILL.

The *Observer* states that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is suffering from dropsy as well as from heart complaint, and that no improvement has taken place in his condition. The rapid progress of the disease has prevented him from seeing any of the Ministers since the beginning of his illness.

INTERNATIONAL BAGMEN'S LEAGUE.

According to a London telegram, a well-attended meeting of commercial travellers was held in London on Saturday, in furtherance of a project to establish an international league of Commercial Travellers' Associations. Mr. Lloyd George, President of the Board of Trade, occupied the chair, and was supported by representatives of the various Embassies. It was announced that messages approving the object of the meeting had been received from Germany, Switzerland, France, Hungary, and Denmark. Mr. Lloyd George welcomed the foreign and colonial delegates present. He said he was glad to find himself once more among commercial travellers. In his younger days he was thrown a great deal among them, and he then conceived a very high opinion of their intellectual alertness. Since he had been in politics he had always felt that he would rather have commercial travellers on his side than against him. They were very dangerous foes. They were met to organise and promote a very important international movement, important undoubtedly from the point of view of their own individual interests, and still more important from the point of view of trade as a whole, and if he might venture to predict, still more important again from the wider and higher point of view of international interests as a whole. They proposed to organise a great international association of commercial travellers, with a view to rendering assistance to the representatives of the trade, who had to visit foreign countries in the interest of their business, and with a view also to affording the same assistance to men of the same profession, who came from foreign countries to ply their trade in this country. It was the mutual interest and the mutual goodwill which were at the bottom of this association, that he welcomed so heartily.

After speeches by Lord Stratheona and others, a resolution in favour of the establishment of such a league was enthusiastically carried without dissent.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT AND LORD CROMER.

The New York *Tribune* states that Mr. Roosevelt, who has the greatest admiration for Lord Cromer, and has read his book, "Modern Egypt," with the greatest interest, has sent a personal letter to his lordship in which he invites him to pay a visit to the White House at an early date. It is understood, adds the *Tribune*, that the President desires to receive from Lord Cromer's own lips suggestions as to the best method of governing the Philippines.

INGENIOUS TARIFF PROPOSITION.

Senator Lafollette, says a Washington telegram, has introduced a bill which provides for the duty-free importation of such articles as are controlled by a corporation or an individual, during the period of such private monopoly.—If this bill became law it would prove one of the heaviest blows ever dealt at the Trusts.

THE DISPUTE WITH VENEZUELA.

A telegram from Caracas (via New York) reports that the Fitzgerald concession granted by the Venezuelan Government, advantage of which was taken by various American asphalt companies, has been declared null and void by the Supreme Court of Venezuela. The claims of these companies are now the subject of diplomatic representations between the cabinets of the United States and Venezuela. The companies concerned have made a protest to the American Ambassador in Caracas. The U. S. cruiser "Tacoma" arrived at La Guaira on Saturday.



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THE HOMEWARD VOYAGE OF THE FLEET.

The return journey of the United States Atlantic Fleet bids fair to be as epoch-making as the outward voyage. Tokio despatches state that gratification is expressed throughout Nippon at the acceptance of the Japanese invitation to the American Fleet, and it is confidently predicted that the visit will afford an opportunity of demonstrating the sincerity of Japan's friendship for the United States.

The Paris *Matin* publishes a telegram from M. Lauzanne, its editor, who is now in New York, stating that the American Fleet during its passage through the Mediterranean will call at a French port,—Bizerta, Algiers, or Toulon. "I questioned Mr. Roosevelt," M. Lauzanne adds, "during my recent visit to the White House. The President remarked that he knew the fleet would be well received everywhere, and added, 'I know that it will not receive a greater welcome than in French waters.'"

THE UNITED STATES NAVY LEAGUE.

We have received the following communication: The U. S. Navy League has recently transferred its headquarters to Washington (No. 1808, First St. N. W.), where its affairs are under the charge of a new Secretary, Mr. Henry H. Ward. It is to be hoped that he will bring the affairs of the League out of the lamentable condition which has characterised them during the past year. Mr. E. K. Roden, Secretary of the Admiral Dalgren Section 31, writes that the prospects are that the organisation will go ahead with leaps and bounds.

THE ABRUZZI ROMANCE.

No international matrimonial match of recent times has created such widespread interest as that said to be arranged between the Duke of the

Abruzzi and Miss Katherine Elkins. We say "said to be arranged" advisedly, since the many conflicting stories circulating in Washington indicate the existence of obstacles in the way. The Duke left New York on Saturday on board the "Lusitania," and a Washington telegram of the same date asserts that His Royal Highness was refused by Miss Elkins. This, however, appears incompatible with the fact that on Thursday evening he was the guest of the Elkins family at dinner. The ubiquitous newspaper man maintained his reputation during the Duke's sojourn, and we read that no member of the Elkins family could stir out of the mansion without the fact being duly chronicled by a reporter lurking in the vicinity.

As usual, the Hearst journals make the most astounding assertions with that sublime dogmatism characteristic of irresponsible journalism. The New York *American* says the Elkins family are resolved that the marriage shall not take place unless the full rights of accession to the Italian Throne are accorded to any heir who may be the out come of the union. The same paper also denies that the Royal and State objections to the match have been overcome.

On his homeward voyage the Duke of the Abruzzi is travelling incognito, under the name of Signor Luigi Sarto. He is accompanied by an attaché of the Italian Embassy at Washington.

THE HAYTIAN REFUGEES.

Despatches from Port au Prince, under date of yesterday, state that General Firmin and other revolutionaries who had sought shelter in the French consulate at Gonaives, went on board the French cruiser "D'Estrées" on Sunday, the vessel leaving for St. Thomas shortly afterwards.

NEWS FROM RUSSIA.

ANOTHER PORT ARTHUR DUEL.

The Petersburg *Russ* states that the Minister of War has sanctioned a duel between Gen. Stössel and Admiral Nebogatoff, and that the encounter will take place at the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul.

RUSSIA'S GRAND OLD MAN.

The reports respecting the health of Count Leo Tolstoy, the one Russian whose writings have a world-wide influence, still give rise to anxiety. In Russia he occupies a position which has no parallel, and in a sense he stands above the Czar himself. No other Russian could have written such a letter to the Czar as Tolstoy indited and published two or three years ago without finding himself in Siberia, if not on the gallows. But the whole bureaucracy of the Empire covered before this one old man, who, if he lives to next August, will be eighty years of age. The worst Tolstoy has ever had to suffer has been excommunication by the Russian Synod, a penalty which seems to have sat lightly upon his soul. His experience in the Crimea gave him a horror of all war, and shortly after organising relief for the starving population of Middle Russia in 1891, he renounced all property in his lands, his copyrights, and his money. He is a fine chess-player, and despises the English because, as he says, they take a pride in washing themselves every day.

CHINA AND JAPAN.

A *Reuter* telegram from Hongkong says that, as the outcome of repeated monster indignation meetings in Canton, the local self-government association has proclaimed that the anniversary of the formal release of the "Tatsu Maru" shall be observed as a day of public mourning. Itinerant lecturers have been engaged to denounce the weakness of the Wai-wu-pu (Foreign Office) in the matter, and to urge the people to boycott Japanese goods.

Later reports from Peking state that in consequence of the release of the "Tatsu Maru" wide-spread agitation has broken out in the south of China. Crowds clamour for the Governor of Canton's dismissal, and a popular boycott of Japanese goods has set in. All the Japanese merchants have hurriedly quitted Canton.

A Tokio telegram reports that the Japanese steamer "Matsu-Maru" was sunk in collision in the neighbourhood of Hokodate yesterday morning. The captain, 43 men of the crew, and most of the 244 passengers on board were drowned.

(Continued on page 4.)