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THE ADMIRALTY OF THE PACIFIC.

The vast fleet of United States armoured warships representing the Atlantic Squadron has arrived at San Francisco and effected a junction with the vessels already stationed in Pacific waters, the result being a truly imposing display of naval strength. Across the Pacific lies another fleet, not less powerful, which flies the flag of Nippon. The United States and Japan are now playing a waiting game; the prize is the Admiralty of the Pacific Ocean, and all that that phrase implies.

Rarely has the world seen such a rapid shifting of the balance of power as that which has taken place in those waters during the last six years. Formerly Great Britain held undisputed sway in the Far East; her fighting vessels were numerous and formidable. But events occurring nearer at home rendered it advisable to concentrate her entire naval strength in European waters, and she tacitly struck her flag to Russia. With the last echo of Japanese guns at Port Arthur and Tushima vanished the Muscovite's sovereignty in the Far East, and the little Island Kingdom triumphantly assumed her place as mistress of the eastern Pacific, an attitude which she soon rendered obnoxious to the great Republic whose western littoral is washed by the waves of that ocean. Then followed the epoch-making voyage of Admiral Evan's squadron, and all the world was firmly convinced that once the ships reached San Francisco they would remain there indefinitely. But President Roosevelt's expectation that the spectacle of a defenceless Atlantic seaboard would awaken the American nation to the necessity of providing another fleet has not been realised. The Senate has put its veto on the four-battleship programme, so that nothing remained but to recall the Atlantic squadron, thus depriving the Pacific coast of adequate protection. It is not surprising that the people of California are alarmed and indignant; for months they had solaced themselves with the thought that the great fleet steaming towards the Golden Gate represented permanent protection, only to find that it will almost immediately leave for European waters en route to the Atlantic again. A monster petition has been presented to the Navy Department by the inhabitants of California, pleading for defence against possible emergencies, but this can have but little effect.

And yet the danger is by no means a bogey of the imagination. Any one who has followed the tread of events since last December, when the fleet set out from Hampton Roads on its long voyage, cannot fail to have noticed the subtle change that has occurred in the tone of the Japanese Press. Six months ago the militant journals of Tokio did not hesitate to indulge in veiled threats when commenting upon California's exclusion of Japanese immigrants. Now their columns are daily filled with eulogies of the United States, and a welcome is extended to the American squadron with a wealth of flowery Oriental phraseology. Will this tone be maintained when the American battleships have left the Pacific far behind them? We think not.

The last great fight between East and West was in the far East, almost on the shores of the Pacific; the next will be in the Pacific itself. The immigration problem is liable to become acute at any moment, and the Japanese have already shown their tendency to strike swiftly and silently once the necessity for action has become plain. The Panama Canal is not within reasonable distance of completion, and until this waterway is opened the Atlantic coastline of the United States is, to all intents and

purposes, cut off from the Pacific. Several months must elapse before a fleet of warships, steaming at their utmost speed, could make the voyage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and Californians do not care to contemplate what might and would occur during those months if hostilities had broken out with Japan.

Under present political conditions there is nothing to justify the maintenance of a huge United States fleet in the Atlantic Ocean, whereas the dictates of national safety and commonsense demand the presence of such a fleet in the Pacific. The Yellow Peril may appear mythical and imaginary viewed from the European standpoint, but it is very real to dwellers on the Pacific slope. If the U.S. Government persists in its determination to recall the Atlantic fleet it will be committing a grave error and inviting a national catastrophe. But, on the other hand, the squadron's retention in the Pacific must result in the sanctioning of a larger building programme for this year. When deciding between these two alternatives it would be as well for the Government to remember that "the strong man armed keepeth his house, and his goods are in peace."

GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

At the sitting on Monday the Prime Minister gave notice that an Autumn Session would be unavoidable.

Mr. Nield (*Cons.* Ealing) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether His Majesty's Government would give an assurance that, in case of the ships which were now being built in England for the Brazilian Government being offered for sale, the sale would not be allowed if the fleet conditions of the Powers would thereby be altered to the prejudice of Great Britain.

Mr. Mc. Kenna replied that it seemed premature to discuss the purchase of these ships before they were offered for sale.

The Bill for founding two new Universities in Ireland passed the second reading by 352 votes to 38.

THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION.

Reuter's Bureau learns that the answer of Russia to the Note sent by Sir Edward Grey on the 4th of April has reached the Government. The answer contains a plan for Macedonian reforms based on the fusion of the proposals made on certain points by the British and Russian Governments; it has no final character, and the discussion between the two Governments will continue.

PROBABLE END OF SHIPBUILDING STRIKE.

A London telegram of yesterday states that as a result of the conference between Mr. Winston Churchill, President of the Board of Trade, the dockyard owners and the representatives of the men, an agreement was reached respecting the present lock-out. The proposals will be submitted to the men at the earliest opportunity.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

CAPITAL AND LABOUR.

In a speech at St. Louis, addressed to the Committee of the Society for the National Welfare, President Roosevelt said: "If we dare not return to a state of things in which wrong was tolerated, we must not allow ourselves to be

misled by those who would involve us in a fanciful crusade against all corporations and all kinds of business. It is our duty to protect the true rights of property as well as the true rights of labour."

AMERICAN TRADE IN THE FAR EAST.

The message from President Roosevelt which was read in the House of Representatives on Monday asks for means to enable the United States to take part in an international commission to enquire into and report upon the conditions of trade in the Far East.

THE FUTURE OF THE NEW WORLD.

The foundation stone of the future home of the Bureau of American Republics in Washington was laid by President Roosevelt on Monday in the presence of a brilliant and festive gathering. This Bureau will serve to promote more intimate commercial relations between the United States and its sister American Republics. Mr. Andrew Carnegie has contributed 750,000 dollars towards the 1,000,000 dollars which the building is to cost.

President Roosevelt, in his speech, dwelt first on the high symbolical import of the building as a token of the community of interests between all the nations of the New World. He then thanked Mr. Carnegie, in the name of all concerned, for his generous contribution. By such efforts as found their symbolical expression in the building of this bureau the Western hemisphere had taken a great step forward towards ensuring a lasting peace among the sister Republics of America. He welcomed the representatives of those Republics, who now looked back on an older civilizing development which had followed its own course. "Now," said the President, "we have united for common expansion." The development of North America had, on the whole, gone on faster in the past century than that of South America; but he believed that in the next hundred years no part of the world would show such progress as would Mexico, Central and South America. The President then expressed his thanks for the hospitable reception which had been given in South America and Mexico to the battleship fleet on its voyage to the west coast, and in connection with that topic referred to Secretary of State Root's visit to the Southern Republics and to the cordial welcome accorded by them to a State official whom history would number among the most eminent statesmen of America. Mr. Root, the President concluded, had by his indefatigable labours brought the Republics of the New World nearer together, and united them in a common effort for the material and moral welfare of the dwellers in the Western hemisphere.

CYCLONE IN OKLAHOMA.

A cable from Woodward (Oklahoma) states that a cyclone which raged to the south of Woodward on Sunday evening resulted in the death of several people and serious injuries to many others.

SANGUINARY RIOTS IN ITALY.

In the village of Retegno, not far from Lodi, a sanguinary conflict took place on Monday between the Carabinieri and refractory villagers, in which two of the latter were killed. Fighting between the troops and a number of labourers also occurred in the neighbouring town of Busto Arsizio, where the labourers attempted to frustrate the military in their efforts to arrest a man under police surveillance. The casualties were one killed and two severely wounded.