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INTERNATIONAL AMENITIES.

The prospect of international relations is at the moment remarkably unobscured, and it seems as though the work of last year in bringing the nations of Europe into closer sympathy with one another has not been altogether without effect. Political cynics may continue to sneer at enthusiasms which are inspired by the clear prompting of material interests; political sceptics may continue to question the permanence of good will which even treaties cannot guarantee; and bellicose theorists may continue to regard peace with the double horror that springs from the infringement of a principle and the violation of a temperament. Nevertheless Europe is, in a sense, committed to a policy of peace; and to such an extent, it might be urged by an optimistic critic, that even the building of fresh battleships on battleships is only a proof of the dread of war. While the Franco-British Exhibition is bringing still nearer to each other the nations of the *entente*, a meeting has been arranged between the King of England and the Czar of Russia. The two monarchs are to meet early in the next month in the Gulf of Finland, where they are to remain for three days and where, there can be little doubt, questions of a political nature will be discussed by them. Queen Alexandra and the Empress of Russia are both to be present, and there is some probability, as in the case of the famous meetings of last year, that both monarchs are to be accompanied by their respective Foreign Secretaries. There is, however, always a danger lest undue significance be attached to such meetings, even though they show every token of an official character; and it is, therefore, always safest to limit anticipation to the minimum that may reasonably be looked for from an exchange of courtesies.

With the fullest exercise of moderation and prudence, with the most dutiful circumspection as to means and ends, there are still certain facts to be borne in mind regarding the possibilities to which such meetings give an opening. It should be recollected that during recent years, especially through the action of King Edward, the English legal principle, that the power of making treaties is vested in the Crown, which had been regarded almost in the light of a legal fiction, has received a stimulus and acquired a certain reality. King Edward, with his remarkable tact in constitutional matters, has availed himself to the full of the extremely wide field of personal influence still left as so much actual or potential power in the hands of a British monarch. He has not indeed made treaties; but he has prepared the ground for treaties in a way that would have been scarcely possible for the Foreign Office and its representatives. A single flash of insight on the part of a monarch and the good-will to avail himself of opportunities—a matter not always easy or unlaborious—are factors which shorten the work of Government departments by whole decades. It can justly be claimed for King Edward that the insight, the good-will and the necessary application have been his, and with brilliant success, in the case of France; a similar claim, though in a lesser degree, might be made in respect of his work last year as regards Spain, Italy, Austria, and Germany. There is thus some ground for supposing in the present instance, where a substantial agreement does actually subsist between the two countries, that there are tangible points at which adjustment might be possible. The question is not so much whether the Convention of a few months ago leaves anything to be desired, although that is a question on which argument is certainly possible. We imagine the two Emperors will devote themselves less to the discussion of the details of their frontier policies than weigh those considerations, of a broader and deeper kind, which render possible such national friendships as are the basis rather than the limit of mutual assistance. With the particulars of policy the foreign departments of both Governments have of late been dealing very amply. There is, in point of fact, a Convention between the two Governments touching the most sensitive

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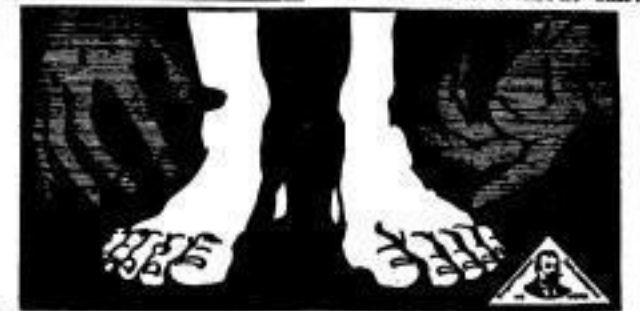
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points at issue between them. Socially and commercially there is much intercourse between the two nations. Is there anything to be gained, politically as well as humanly, from a closer friendship and a better understanding?

In dealing with foreign nations, and especially with a nation like Russia, which has for centuries been partly misunderstood, partly misrepresented, and greatly mistrusted (sometimes not without reason) by friends and foes alike, reservations are necessary. There is still much in the Russian system of administration that no subject of a constitutional government can regard with anything but abhorrence, nor is it consonant with the spirit of international understandings that the internal affairs of a nation should be made the subject of interference. A consolidation of the existing good feeling must therefore be taken to exclude any very practical form of sympathy with the internal system of Russia, although, doubtless, it is a source of gratification to Englishmen to know that their own constitutional practice is gaining partisans who understand as well as those who misapply it. A state of friendship with Russia will depend for its sanction more upon the degree of its international value and the sense in which it makes for peace. It is noteworthy that through the *entente cordiale* England has been drawn closer to the ally of France, Russia; and it is tempting to speculate as to whether a similar increase of warmth might not be the result of friendship with a Power to which Germany stands near, both by reason of contiguity and interest. In the Russian Empire, it is true, England and Germany are commercial rivals; but commercial rivalry, as we have frequently maintained, is no bar to mutual understanding. The commercial spheres of England and Germany, not only within the Russian Empire but throughout the world, are becoming more sharply defined year by year, and if there are disputed territories the best solution lies in understandings rather than in wars. Hostility, beyond the point of vital interests is, let us hope, a shameful anachronism which the world has now outgrown.

GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE GERMAN CLERGYMEN IN LONDON.
In accordance with an invitation extended to them by the theological professors of Cambridge University, the German clergymen travelled to that city on Friday, and after visiting St. James' College, attended a garden-party in their honour at the Botanical Gardens. A banquet was held in the evening at which many English clergymen and a number of Parliamentary representatives were present. Mr. Allen Baker, chairman of the committee for the reception of the German pastors in England, proposed the health of the German Emperor, whom he designated a prince of peace. The Imperial chaplain, Herr Dryander, laid stress upon the numerous bonds of friendship between the two lands which should never be overlooked.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, who was unable to attend the banquet, telegraphed his regrets and expressed the hope that the present visit represented a further step in the establishment of a good understanding between Germany and Great Britain.

SHORT TIME FOR IRISH FLAX-SPINNERS.

A Belfast telegram announces that the flax-spinners have decided to further reduce the working week by five hours. This decision affects from 15,000 to 20,000 workers in Ireland.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

THE NEW PERUVIAN PRESIDENT.

Despatches from Lima state that Señor Leguía was elected President on Friday without opposition. Several prominent politicians are still detained in custody, but their early release is anticipated.

(Continued on page 6.)