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RICHARD WEHSENER.

GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE QUEEN'S VISIT OF MERCY.

The Queen, accompanied by Princess Victoria, paid a surprise visit this week to St. Luke's House, 14, Pembroke-square, Bayswater. Her Majesty was attended by the Hon. Charlotte Knollys and the Hon. Sydney Greville.

The visit, says a *Globe* correspondent, was an absolute surprise to all the officials of the institution, of which Her Majesty is the patroness. Some days ago Martha Massey, one of the patients in the house, surreptitiously wrote a letter to the Queen saying how much she should like to see Her Majesty before Her Majesty took a long trip abroad. The girl explained that she had been unable to see the Queen whenever she was driving through London or visiting the district of the house owing to her illness. Would Her Majesty gratify her dying desire by coming to see her before going abroad, because she was afraid she would not be living when Her Majesty returned?

No intimation of Her Majesty's visit was communicated to the House, which was reached at a quarter to five. Her Majesty drove from Buckingham Palace in her white motor car. Arriving at the principal entrance, the Queen inquired at once: "Is Miss Massey in?" The door was opened by a servant girl, who recognised the Queen and momentarily stood astounded. The girl showed the Queen into the room of the matron, Miss B. Brooke-Alder.

Her Majesty, who was carrying a lovely bouquet of orchids, lilies-of-the-valley, carnations, and asparagus fern, explained her mission to Miss Brooke-Alder, and the Queen was at once conducted to the ward in which Miss Martha Massey was lying. Her Majesty spoke some kindly words of sympathy to the girl, thanked her for her letter, and expressed the pleasure it afforded her to respond to the invitation. Her Majesty handed the bouquet to Miss Massey, and told her it was specially for her, and that the flowers were cut from the Palace gardens, and the girl, with eyes bedimmed with tears of joy, replied: "Thank you, your Majesty."

The Queen then passed on to other patients who had been envying the good fortune of Miss Massey, and distributed some lovely roses to each. Her Majesty also spoke words of sympathy and encouragement to each patient. When bidding farewell to the matron in the hall Her Majesty heard someone coughing, and asked who was coughing. Being informed that it was Miss Massey, Her Majesty ordered that cough lozenges in the motor car were to be brought her. Upon receiving them, the Queen went back to the bedside of the poor girl, and placed one of the lozenges in her mouth, and in the kindest tone instructed the girl to allow the lozenge to dissolve. Her Majesty then handed a number of the lozenges to the matron, requesting her to give them to the girl when she was taken with severe fits of coughing.

The Queen charmingly smiled upon the helpless patient, and again shook hands with her, and then left the house.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

In the course of last Thursday's sitting, Mr. O'Grady (*Labour*) proposed a reduction of the Foreign Office Budget as a protest against the official visit of King Edward to the Czar of Russia. Mr. McNeill (*Nat.*) declared it to be a breach of

the Constitution for the King to pay such a visit abroad without the attendance of a Cabinet Minister, for the diplomatic nature of the visit was proven by the fact that the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is to accompany His Majesty, and that the presence of Admiral Sir John Fisher and General French at the meeting indicated a connection with naval and military matters. Mr. Kettle (*Nat.*) asserted that the Irish Party would vote for Mr. O'Grady's motion, adding that in the eyes of Europe the visit signified that England was prepared to endorse Russia's liabilities in order to restore the latter's financial credit.

In reply, Sir Edward Grey said that in this matter the King was acting upon the constitutional advice of his Ministers, who assumed full responsibility for the visit. It was not saying too much that His Majesty's foreign visits had so far proved fruitful. He had been asked if the visit had any special significance in auguring the creation of a treaty between the two countries. In his (Sir Edward's) opinion it was to the interests of Great Britain and of other Powers that this impression should be eradicated once and for all. No new treaties were in course of discussion with Russia, and during the forthcoming meeting at Reval no discussions having as their object the furtherance of such treaties would be engaged in. That the visit would have a political effect was very true, and it was greatly to be desired that this effect should prove to be beneficial to the relations of both countries. The demand that Russia should be boycotted was absurd, and such a policy would be detrimental to England and Russia alike. The events which had taken place since the signing of the Anglo-Russian convention on both the Persian and Afghan frontiers would have caused a rupture in the relations of the two countries had it not been that a system of mutual co-operation was contained in the convention ratified previous to these events.

In the further course of the debate, Sir Edward Grey had occasion to remark that Mr. O'Grady talked as if he were representing the mass of the Russian people, which supposition was of course untenable. The forthcoming visit was welcomed by all parties in Russia save the revolutionaries and the extreme reactionists. The adoption of the policy advocated by the Labour party would greatly benefit these two elements, an honour which Sir Edward thought the Labourites might not appreciate. The Secretary for Foreign Affairs concluded his speech with an eulogy of the fundamental character of the Russian people, and a prophecy that when the process of evolution through which Russia was passing had reached its climax she would play a very important rôle in the history of the world.

On behalf of the Opposition, Mr. A. J. Balfour strongly supported the attitude of the Government in regard to the King's visit.

Mr. Keir Hardie, the Labour leader, was admonished by the Speaker for asserting that the Russian Government condoned cruelty. After some discussion Mr. Hardie expressed his readiness to withdraw the word cruelty so far as it had been uttered in connection with the Czar or his Government.

Mr. O'Grady's motion was eventually negatived by 225 votes to 59.

HERR DERNBURG IN CAPE TOWN.

Herr Dernburg, the German Colonial State Secretary, was interviewed by a *Reuter* correspondent at Cape Town on Thursday, when he expressed his thanks for the reception accorded him at the

Cape. He had had an opportunity in the last three days of discussing with prominent people the native question, the irrigation question, and South African affairs in general. Herr Dernburg spoke in warm terms of thanks for the facilities afforded him by the Government to acquaint himself with English methods of colonial administration.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.

Governor Hughes is again reported by the New York correspondent of a contemporary to have intimated his intention not to accept nomination for the Presidency at the Republican National Convention, even if tendered to him. This, however, is placing the Governor upon too high a plane of virtue. There is probably no man in the country who would be so self-sacrificing as to refuse such an honour, not even Mr. Roosevelt.

What Mr. Hughes means, according to statements made by his more intimate friends, is that he would prefer that his name should not be submitted at all to the Convention, but that the party should demonstrate its unity and determination by nominating Mr. Taft at the first call by acclamation. The plan of running Mr. Hughes on the ticket as candidate for the Vice-Presidency has apparently been abandoned.

It is expected that he will reserve himself for a fight for a second term as Governor of New York State, as, if successful, he would be in a most commanding position among the Presidential possibilities four years hence. He has admittedly made his mark on national politics by the legislative and executive victories which he has won during his first term, and he will not lose anything by waiting awhile for the greater honour.

A Washington telegram states that Mr. John Hays Hammond, the famous South African mining engineer, has announced his intention of standing for nomination as a candidate for the vice-presidency of the United States on the Republican ticket.

RECORD BALLOON TRIP.

A balloon, piloted by Mr. Coey, on Wednesday, according to reports received from New York, covered 800 miles in 11 hours. It started from Quincy, Illinois, and came down at Clearlake, South Dakota.

AN OKLAHOMA HOTEL.

In an hotel at Oklahoma, U.S.A. (says a correspondent) the following notice to visitors is posted up: "Gentlemen sleeping in their boots will be charged extra. Three knocks on the door will signify that a murder is being committed in the house, and it is necessary to get up. It is forbidden to take away the bricks inside the mattress. If the rain comes in your bedroom you will find an umbrella under the bed. If the towel is dirty, use the corner of the counterpane."

NEWS FROM FRANCE.

THE TRANSLATION OF ZOLA'S ASHES.

The Panthéon on Thursday was crowded by a brilliant assembly of French State officials and other dignitaries, headed by President Fallières. The coffin containing Zola's remains was placed upon a large catafalque. The strains of the "Marseillaise" and other national melodies heralded the opening of the ceremony, and a speech was delivered in the name of the Government by M. Doumergue, Minister of Education. The minister said that Parliament wished to pay a tribute of homage

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