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THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN MEETING.

The state of public feeling on the projected meeting between the monarchs of Russia and England must have been appreciably modelled by the important debate in the House of Commons last Thursday. It was inevitable from the outset that the sympathy, almost universally extended to those who are fighting for liberty in Russia, would carry a number of high-minded people somewhat beyond the bounds of reasonable disapproval. In a word, it was to be anticipated that many would find it difficult to bestow a conscientious sanction on a meeting which appeared to ignore the grave and manifold abuses prevailing in the Russian system of government. The tone of several of the speeches emanating from the Labour benches was certainly tactless, hasty, ill-considered, and even unwarrantably abusive; but nobody can question their obvious sincerity. They were the heartfelt utterances of a free people to a people who are fighting for a similar freedom, and as such they must be regarded with tolerance. In effect such speeches might be mischievous; without a touch of malice they might be incalculably harmful. It was due to the masterly handling of a singularly complex problem by Sir Edward Grey that the real dangers of such well-intentioned comment were exposed. The Foreign Secretary appears to have spoken with great earnestness and simplicity, and certainly with an effectiveness that found full expression in the subsequent division. He amplified a point made by Mr. Hilaire Belloc by comparing the state of feeling towards England at the time of the South African War, and the effect which any official boycotting would have had on English opinion. Had the Kaiser, for example, sanctioned the hard things that were said against British policy at that time by withdrawing from all personal connection with the English Royal family, the action would have been interpreted in England in a spirit of extreme resentment. By the force of political argument and example Sir Edward Grey demonstrated the futility of attempting to influence the internal affairs of a State by complicating its external relations. He drew a just distinction between the internal affairs of a largely homogeneous and entirely independent State like Russia and the smaller nationalities which England has assisted in the struggle for liberty; and he left the impression that all the objections that are raised against the meeting of the sovereigns might with equal, and greater, relevancy have been raised against the Anglo-Russian Convention. He insisted with much earnestness that the good relations subsisting between the two countries made for peace, and that the refusal of the House of Commons to sanction the present visit would not only be a hint to the guilty reactionary party but would also be regarded by the mass of the Russian people in a spirit which their sympathisers in England had never intended to arouse. That, indeed, is a most vital point. There is no historical parallel to the Russian revolution; and, like those who are governing Russia today, those who are struggling for the power of government, though they are grateful for outside sympathy, are reluctant to avail themselves of outside advice, because they feel that it is not possible for anyone except the Russians themselves to realize the needs of the nation and the manner in which they are to be achieved. Not so much to secure the internal government of Russia by direct interference as to ensure the maintenance of a peace sufficiently tranquil to allow the right forces to work to the surface should be the aim of British statesmanship.

One of the most gratifying features of the debate was the tribute paid even by the most extreme section of the dissentients to the personal share of King Edward in the work of peace. It is something when iconoclasm, so often wild in its application of principles to facts, makes an exception of royalty itself and indeed expressly maintains that, in spite of his crown, a monarch may advance the cause of liberty and peace. The attempt, however, to raise a constitutional issue by inquiring into the actual initiation of the visit was entirely ill-advised. As Sir Edward Grey pointed out, in this affair of State, as in any other affair of State, the King acts on the advice of his Ministers, who are responsible for the monarch. "The King can do no wrong" is an axiom of the common law which has for long been capable of the only political interpretation that the advisers of the King are held in full responsibility for any acts of State whatsoever. It is completely irrelevant to inquire whether the monarch has influenced the Cabinet or the Cabinet the monarch, so long as we are sure that the final step has the approval of the nation as expressed through its representatives. This does not quite dispose of the more relevant inquiry as to what may be the Constitutional limits of the King's interference in foreign policy. The personal influence of the monarch has its widest scope here; nominally he has the full power of making all treaties that do not involve any tax or payment; although actually his interference in foreign politics is conditioned by the degree of his personal popularity at home and abroad. A monarch possessing this essential qualification, may, without encroaching on any difficult Constitutional ground, extend his influence to the point of actual treaty-making, and leave to the House of Commons its undoubted privilege of general supervision. King Edward has already exercised his opportunities with such tact and success that there is ample reason to be sanguine about what is perhaps one of his most delicate missions. The course of events is bound to show whether the suggestion of the dissentient members that the real object of the meeting is to rehabilitate Russian credit is well-founded; and, further, should that be the case, whether the greater prosperity of the Russian Administration will imply of necessity the stimulation of reactionary methods and an illiberal form of government.

GENERAL NEWS.

KING EDWARD'S JOURNEY TO REVAL.

The British cruisers "Minotaur" and "Achilles" anchored in Kiel harbour on Saturday in expectation of the arrival of the Royal yacht which went through the Kaiser Wilhelm Kanal.

The Royal yacht "Alexandra" which preceded the "Victoria and Albert" on her passage through the canal, collided with a wall and broke the blades of one of her screws. She continued her way to Kiel and Reval under her own steam with but one screw.

At Kiel on Sunday the German warships in harbour were dressed, with the British ensign at the main, in honour of King Edward and Queen Alexandra who were to pass on their way to Reval through the Kaiser Wilhelm Kanal. Soon after half-past two in the afternoon the Royal yacht "Victoria and Albert" arrived at Holtenu, where Prince and Princess Heinrich and Prince Sigismund were waiting, and a guard of honour of Marines with band and colours was drawn up. Their Royal

Highnesses at once went on board, where they were cordially received by the King and Queen and Princess Victoria, and remained for three quarters of an hour. The Royal yacht then resumed its voyage, preceded as far as Friedrichsort by Prince and Princess Heinrich in the Admiral's barge, and escorted by nine German torpedo boats. As soon as the Royal ensign was perceived from the harbour the fleet there moored fired a Royal salute, the crews parading and giving three rounds of cheers. Prince and Princess Heinrich were saluted on their return by the British ships. The Royal yacht proceeded to sea escorted by the cruisers "Achilles" and "Minotaur," and four torpedo boats, and was soon out of sight.

The Czar's mother, the Queen of Greece, the Grand-duchess Olga Alexandrovna and Grand-duke Michael Alexandrovich, accompanied by Count Benckendorf, Russian Ambassador in London, left Gatchina on a special train on Monday at 9 p. m. for Reval.

The programme for the Czar's journey was altered in the last moment and the Imperial train consequently did not arrive until yesterday morning, when the Czar went on board his yacht at once. King Edward arrived at 11 o'clock yesterday morning.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

LORD TWEEDMOUTH.

With reference to the reports, says the *Aberdeen Free Press*, regarding Lord Tweedmouth's condition, we are informed on the best authority that he has been ordered to take a rest cure in the country, owing to a sudden nervous breakdown. Meanwhile arrangements have been made whereby during his absence the ordinary official duties of Lord President of the Council will be carried on under commission, so that no public inconvenience may be occasioned.

ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL VISIT.

The German workmen from Düsseldorf and Duisburg now on a visit in London have been invited by the City authorities to inspect the Central Criminal Court and the Mansion House, and to luncheon at the Guildhall, on Friday next.

THE FRANCO-BRITISH EXHIBITION.

The *Iron and Steel Trades Journal* in London announces on good authority that President Fallières and M. Clémenceau will pay an unofficial visit to the Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush late in August or early in September.

DEPRESSION IN THE COTTON TRADE.

The cottonspinners in Ashton under Lyne, Lancashire, have closed the works for a week, in some cases for ten days, on account of the depression in the cotton trade. Usually Whit Sunday and Monday are only closed.

RAILWAY COMBINE. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

Saturday afternoon the Great Central Railway Company announced that the directors of the Great Northern, Great Central, and Great Eastern companies had decided "to seek Parliamentary powers with the view of entering into a working agreement based upon the arrangements recently approved by the shareholders of the Great Central and Great Northern companies. The three companies have already made arrangements for co-operation in connection with the movement of their traffic, which will tend towards economy in work-

(Continued on page 2.)