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THE PERSIAN CRISIS.

At the close of last year affairs in Persia were in a condition of deadlock. The two political parties in the State, in so far as they may be called political parties, could not be brought to understand one another. The Constitutionalists, in endeavouring to teach the Shah the position of a constitutional monarch, were beginning to encounter his resentment; while the Shah, though he repeated the words of his mentors, acted quite contrary to their spirit. He treated the revenues of the State as so much personal allowance and the protests of Parliament as so much misguided rhetoric. In a word, without endeavouring openly to play the despot, he shewed that he could not free himself from the traditions of Oriental Government and that the effort to take in the new ideas from the West was more than his temperament, his environment and his clear interest could bear. This presumption has been confirmed during the last few weeks, which have witnessed the adoption of a new line of action on the part of the Shah. He appears to have made up his mind that repressive action is the only course to be pursued, that just as his ancestors won the throne by the sword, so it is by the sword that he must defend it.

The *Times* of last Wednesday publishes another article from the pen of its well-informed correspondent, dated June 19th and dealing with the earlier aspects of the present rupture. The article is headed, appropriately enough, "A Dark Outlook"; and it is indeed difficult to foresee at what point a compromise would be possible in order to avoid civil war. The supporters of Constitutionalism are urging their cause like religious fanatics. The moderation on which true democracy must be based is largely wanting; the worst elements in the State are flocking to the capital, where they are constituting themselves the leaders of the nation and the advisers of the Court. "The free Press," adds the writer, "has abused its liberty; the Anjumans (or political clubs) have done great harm; liberty of the subject has destroyed all liberty; and the very word 'freedom' has produced hopeless disorder." Such is the immediate result of the reaction against centuries of despotism. Meanwhile, the troops who have been mustering at the Shah's camp have plundered the peasantry as they came. Encouraged by the hospitality extended to them they have dragged thirty rusty but efficient guns out of the Gun Square to the royal camp. Consequently, it was through long lines of horsemen and foot-soldiers that the deputation of the Mejliss passed, in order to wait on their monarch, on the 14th of last month. They were well received, but their entry and their surroundings were too significant not to fill them with mistrust; and when they had told their tale of grievances it was not the cold expression of Royal regret of the Shah for his people but the impassioned protest of the defied tyrant in his culminating words that they were bound to take as their answer. The Shah, gripping his jewelled sword and raising his voice, said:—"But remember well that my ancestors conquered the Throne with the sword and that I am not disposed to lose that inheritance without resorting to the sword."

The document with which the deputation armed itself appears, on the whole, to have been a moderately worded ultimatum aimed at the advisers of the Shah. It reminds the monarch that, under the existing circumstances, it is impossible to enforce two of the most important articles of the Constitution—namely, Article 44, which provides that the person of the sovereign is free from responsibility, and that the Ministers are in all matters responsible to the Mejliss; and Article 45, by which it is laid down that the royal Firmans will be sanctioned only when they have received the signature of a responsible Minister, in which case the Minister will be responsible for them. But, as the writer of the article points out, the "responsible" Ministers seem to have become irresponsible. "They hover in a body between the Bagh Shah and the Mejliss and do not receive much thanks at either place." Neither side, as a matter of fact, is in a mood to concede any point to the other. The merchants are joining the Constitutionalists, and have declared themselves anxious to fight to a finish on the side of the

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Mejliss; and, if this resolution is persisted in, it must follow that many other important classes whose interests are bound up with those of the merchants must follow an identical course. It is difficult not to sympathize with the struggle for liberty, even though the term is still misunderstood in Persia, but it is equally difficult not to find some palliation for the Shah's resolve to cut the knot of his troubles with the sword. He must realize, if civil war is the only way in which Persia can work out her own salvation, that the sooner matters are brought to a crisis the better for future peace and stability. Unfortunately civil war anywhere, but more especially in the East, implies an intense brutality of method, without quarter, without justice, and without shame. Whatever the price to be paid, it must not be forgotten that the past as much as the present is involved in the vengeance of liberty on despotism.

GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

London, July 10.

Mr. Nield asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether there were three new armoured ships approaching completion for which there were no crews; and whether there were more than a dozen battleships lying at the Channel ports because it had not been found possible to form crews to man them for use in the pending manoeuvres or to obtain the men for the purpose.

Mr. McKenna replied that the crews were ready for all armoured ships approaching completion. There were 14 battleships in home waters not taking part in the manoeuvres—the "Implacable," undergoing refit, and 13 older battleships which were on the active service list. More vessels were not required for the manoeuvres, and should it be desirable to commission these ships, the necessary rating of nucleus crews for active service were available. The balance of the crews could be got by calling out the reserves.

Mr. Lea (*Liberal*) put several questions to the Government respecting the rumours of strained relations existing between the commander-in-chief of the Channel Fleet, Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, and the Rear-Admiral commanding the First Cruiser Squadron, Sir Percy Scott, asking what steps the Government intended taking in this very serious matter.

Dr. Macnamara, Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, replied that a complete statement on this subject had been announced by the Prime Minister on the preceding day.

Upon Mr. Lea remarking that Admiral Beresford had given an order which, if carried out, would have resulted in a collision between the cruisers "Good Hope" and "Argyll," Dr. Macnamara replied that the Admiralty was without information bearing upon this rumour, but that Lord Beresford, who was at present engaged manoeuvring with his squadron at sea, would later furnish the Admiralty with full information upon the subject.

Mr. Lynch (*Liberal*) asked Sir Edward Grey to inform the House whether the Cossacks who had been watching the British embassy at Teheran had been withdrawn, and also to give an explanation respecting Colonel Liakoff's position. He recommended Sir Edward to negotiate with the Russian Government with reference to [the Russian officers who were suppressing right instead of maintaining order.

Sir Edward Grey answered that the Persian troops had been withdrawn, and that Colonel Lia-

koff, who was in the service of Persia, had acted as temporary Governor of Teheran during the siege and before the appointment of a Civil Governor. The Shah had expressed his intention of maintaining the constitution.

Mr. Dillon (*Nationalist*) enquired whether England had protested against the tortures and executions that had taken place in Persia, to which Sir Edward answered that no purpose would be served by such intervention and that he would not advocate any steps which would involve responsibility for the internal condition of Persia. The British Government had demanded the security and good treatment of refugees in the embassy, and an apology for the outrage on the embassy. A document embodying the latter was in course of preparation, but the matter was still unsettled.

THE KING AND THE LABOUR PARTY.

London, July 9.

Owing to the omission of Mr. Keir Hardie's name from the list of invitations issued to members of the Labour Party on the occasion of the Royal garden party at Windsor, the Labour members have decided to request the Court Chamberlain to strike the names of all Labour members from the invitation list to Court festivities until such time as Mr. Keir Hardie's name is reinstated thereon.

Commenting upon this incident a London paper says: The fuss that is being made by a certain Labour member as to his not being invited to the Windsor garden party is ludicrous in the extreme. It is suggested by some of his colleagues that he was not bidden because of the attitude he adopted in regard to the King's visit to Reval. Those best qualified to speak laugh at the idea of the King taking notice of such ignorant vapourings. As a matter of fact, there are many Unionist members who were not invited to the Windsor garden party.

NO MERCY FOR NEW ZEALAND STRIKERS.

Wellington, N. Z., July 9.

The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act Amendment Bill was introduced in the House of Representatives yesterday. Mr. Millar, Minister of Labour, clearly defines the term "strike," and makes it clear that those who aid or abet a strike act illegally. The Bill provides that every worker who is a party to a strike is liable to a fine of £10, and also of £1 for every week the strike continues. The penalty for lock-outs is £200 for each offence, and £50 weekly during the continuance of the lock-out. Every individual who incites, aids, or abets strikes or lock-outs, or assists any person to become a party to them, is liable to a fine of £10. If it be an industrial union, trade union, employer, or any person other than a worker, the penalty will be £200. The section of the Amendment Act of 1905 which enabled strikers to be imprisoned in the last resort is repealed. One of the most important clauses provides that any union convicted of aiding, inciting, or instigating a strike by any of its members shall have its registration suspended for any period not exceeding three years. Conciliation Boards are abolished. A Conciliation Council is created, to consist of one magistrate and two assessors.

AN ANGLO-AMERICAN BIGAMIST.

James Walker (45), described as a confectioner and doctor, of Bristol, was brought up on remand at Huddersfield this week, charged with stealing £50, the money of Fanny Henderson Davis and Minnie Davis, and £45, the money of Fanny Henderson Davis; further, with bigamously marrying Fanny Henderson Davis at Huddersfield in October last year, his wife, who now resides in New Jersey, being then alive. At the last hearing the prosecution alleged that the prisoner had married other women at Newcastle-on-Tyne, Lancaster, Gloucester, and Bristol.

In applying for a further remand, Mr. Sykes said the prosecution had ascertained that on January 12, 1899, prisoner married a woman at Wolverhampton under the name of Archibald James Franks. He was believed to be wanted at Barry and Colchester, and inquiries were proceeding as to his life in America. A report was being daily expected from the American police.

The prisoner was remanded until Wednesday next.

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