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W., Potsdamer
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Telephone:
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A., Struve
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Telephone:
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GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

CONCLUSION OF THE FREE TRADE CONGRESS.

London, August 8.

At the final sitting of the Free Trade Congress yesterday a resolution was passed for the formation of a permanent international committee, whose aim it will be to promote free trade principles and make arrangements for the assembly of a second congress in 1910, to be held either at The Hague, Brussels, or Antwerp.

THE NULLI SECUNDUS.

(From our own correspondent.)

London, August 7.

The new military airship, "Nulli Secundus," continues to excite interest, especially since it is now the only existing one of importance in Europe built on the balloon principle. From all accounts "Nulli Secundus" is, generally speaking, in the best of health, none the worse for her recent trial run, and likely to be brought out again for further experimental trips at any time considered favourable. There will be no formal notice given either to the Press or to the public; and Colonel Capper has laid stress on the fact that "Nulli Secundus" is purely and simply an experimental vessel, from which it is hoped much may be learnt.

At present Colonel Capper has no idea of making a long trip; plenty of practice in steering, trials of rudders and planes of different sizes and shapes, training of different officers and men in handling the airship efficiently round about Farnborough, and efforts at improvement in these and other directions practically form the programme for a time. Doubtless a little later, when the engines appear thoroughly tuned up, when weather and other conditions are favourable, a longer journey will be attempted, and Londoners may again see "Nulli Secundus" soaring over their heads.

Sir Hiram Maxim, in an interview with a Press representative, said he had no faith in the balloon-ship of the Zeppelin type, and thought that the problem of flight would be solved, if at all, by a machine heavier than air.

"I have studied the question of aerial navigation with a great deal of care during the last twenty years," said Sir Hiram Maxim. "I have looked at it from every standpoint, and I do not think that it is possible to construct a balloon that will be of the least service for any purpose whatsoever except as a plaything. There is only one way to navigate the air, and that is by true flying machines heavier than the air, which depend altogether upon dynamic energy. There is a great deal more danger that England may be invaded by butterflies from Italy or Bulgaria than by a European army with the aid of balloons."

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

MR. HEARST'S PARTY.

No reference to the Presidential campaign this year would be complete without mention of "the new national party," of which Mr. William Randolph Hearst is the founder and apostle. Under the banner of Mr. Hearst walk the legions who are discontented with both the Republican and Demo-

cratic parties, a rather hybrid set, comprising men of all nations, Socialists, Labourites, "reformers" of various kinds. They profess to believe that both the great existing parties have outlived their usefulness, and that industrial and economic conditions demand that "the workers" should combine in their own behalf. It was thought at Denver, and apparently by the Democratic nominee, that Mr. Hearst would support Bryan. That is now out of the question. The Independence League, which is another name for Hearst's agents, have nominated their own candidate, a man named Thomas Higsen. Mr. Hearst himself is a clever man and a millionaire; he is the proprietor of a chain of yellow journals stretching across the country, and has founded many political clubs. The birth and progress of his Independence Party marks one of the greatest uprisings that the politics of the Republic have ever known. Mr. Hearst does not like England, and tells his readers that England is "the traditional enemy of America." This profession of dislike is made partly to please the Irish-American crowd, and also the German-Americans, two of the most important factors in American politics. Mr. Hearst personally is not a very magnetic man, but he has the gift of choosing good lieutenants and of expressing himself in a clear, catchy way. He is very loyal to his friends, and denounces with venom everything and everybody supposed to be in opposition to "the people."

The "Independence Party," though not four years old, says a contemporary, has given evidence of power which it would be foolish to deny. In the judgment of many the "Independence Party" carried the city of New York at the mayoralty elections under the leadership of Hearst. Under the candidacy of Thomas Higsen it has outvoted the Democratic party in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in a fight for the governorship, and ranks now as the second party in that State. It has swept the great city of Chicago and elected Dunne as mayor in a great campaign. As its candidate William Randolph Hearst polled more votes in the State of New York outside the city than any Democrat has polled for twenty years, and was only defeated by the defection of Senator McCarren in Brooklyn and Tammany in New York. It is growing now with great vigour in the East, in the Middle States, and in the South, and is, we are told, "the party of the future."

According to Mr. Hearst, from whom we quote, the great purpose of the Independence Party is to restore the power of the Government to the people and make their will supreme in the primaries, in the elections, and in the control of public officials after they have been elected. The second purpose of the new party is to annihilate the power of special interests by destroying their principal weapon, the corruption fund. The third purpose of the party is to correct some of the obvious financial and economic evils of the day. The fourth object is to frame certain lines of great constructive legislation in the interests of all the people. To those ends the Independence Party seeks to bring under one banner "all the real producers of wealth"—the farmer, the working man, and the non-privilege-seeking business man—and place the government in their control.

The advent of this "new national party" in American politics—focussing all the militant forces which have lately been active in the old world as well as the new—is a factor of universal interest

that may possibly make the Presidential campaign for 1908 memorable. Mr. Hearst aspires to the White House, and the votes his party give this year may to a large extent determine his Presidential ambitions. We may also see to what extent the Hearst followers are likely to have a chance within a few years of fulfilling their intention "to carry all before them." Mr. Bryan's success or failure must apparently depend in a very great degree on their line of action. One may suspect that most of the votes given to Mr. Higsen will be taken from the orator of Nebraska.

Most of the big political questions—franchise, tenure of land, national education, State and Church, and the like—which still engage the countries of Europe, have long ago been thrashed out and decided in the United States, but in their place other questions quite as big, and vastly more perplexing, questions involving the rights and duties of capital and industry, trusts and consumers, municipal and State ownership, and the like, have sprung up and made politics more lively now than at any recent period in the history of the great Republic. Whether the general trend of things is for good or bad is a matter of debate, but that America from the standpoint of democracy still "marks the highest level, not only of material well-being, but of intelligence and happiness, which the race has yet attained," is the judgment not only of historians like Mr. Bryce, but of many other European critics, and, of course, is the universal view of Americans. But there are issues that are world-wide which no political system can evade, and with some of these the great Republic stands face to face.

SOUTHERN FREIGHT RATES AROUSE COMPLAINTS.

Washington, August 8.

The State Railroad Commission of Texas has lodged a complaint with the Interstate Commerce Commission respecting the abnormal increase in the rates charged for conveying freight on the South Western Railroad.

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FOREST FIRE.

Victoria, B.C., August 7.

Peat is feared at Fernie, owing to the conditions in which the homeless victims of the fire are dwelling. Two thousand women and children are gathered together, without provision for sanitation.

Two cases of small pox are reported. The heat aggravates the danger of the situation. Eighteen bodies have been recovered from the débris. The fatalities do not exceed forty. Michel is threatened.

OVER THE ALPS BY BALLOON.

Innsbruck, August 8.

Two gentlemen, Dr. Bröckelmann and Herr Härtel, intend on Monday to make a balloon ascent across the entire range of alps. The balloon has a gas capacity of 1,700 cubic meters. It is the chief intention of the aeronauts to take cloud photographs during the journey.

WEATHER FORECAST FOR TODAY

of the Royal Saxon Meteorological Institute.

Moderate northerly winds, bright and warm, with tendency to thunderstorms.