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THE CRUISE OF THE AMERICAN FLEET.

The warm welcome accorded to the American Fleet at Auckland, where it arrived this week, is another of the many symptoms pointing to the general tranquillity of international relations. Mere enthusiasms do not of course guarantee the stability of good feeling; but they do, at all events, raise serious obstacles against a too rash acceptance of hostilities in tending to disarm those mischief-makers who build rapidly and effectively on hasty expressions of national pride. The manner of Admiral Sperry's reception can leave no doubt as to the genuineness of Australasian sentiments towards America. This is more than a passing gust of sentimental hospitality. British citizens in Australasia realize, even more vividly than British citizens in the United Kingdom, that the blood relationship between them and the population of the United States is something real. If they are proud of having brothers and cousins in England they are equally proud of having friends in the United States who are also something more. It is not the case that Australasians hope for a more adequate protection from America than they obtain from England against a possible Oriental peril. They know how the Mother-Country is prepared to repay loyalty, just as they know that however the varying phases of British statesmanship may affect their aspirations, English justice remains stable and accessible. They feel perhaps that an Anglo-American alliance would suit their interests better than an Anglo-Japanese alliance; but that they should on that score long for independent alliances with powerful neighbours is an imputation, to use the direct language of Mr. Deakin, "too silly for words."

The political significance of the visit must not be made to stretch beyond the aspiration of a stronger Anglo-Saxon union of feeling in the world; for it has a significance of sentiment more than of policy. The welcome which is being prepared for Admiral Sperry in Japan should dispose to some extent of the hope, openly expressed in some quarters, that the increased warmth between Australasia and America implies an anti-Japanese, or anti-Oriental, movement common to both nations. The difficulties both of the American and the Australasian Governments in dealing with their respective labour questions calls for statesmanlike treatment other than is suggested in the speeches of thoughtless or mischievous agitators on both sides of the Pacific.

From a purely naval standpoint the cruise of sixteen ironclads round the navigable world is an event of unique interest. America is in the fortunate position, to which none of the Powers can at present aspire, of being able to despatch practically the whole of its fleet on experimental cruises without incurring risks at home. The recent cruise from the Atlantic to the Pacific, although it was the subject of much coxsure criticism, was accomplished without a hitch. In spite of the extraordinary demands which had to be made on the coaling and provisioning resources of many nations, in spite of the grave difficulties which are inherent in any experiment on the scale of the said cruise, especially when that experiment is made in an entirely new direction, everything fell out precisely as it had been planned. The fleet made the wished-for gain in efficiency which so vast an experience in the approximate conditions of actual warfare must effect. Both officers and men achieved all that was expected of them, and more; with the result that premature croakers everywhere received a decided rebuff from the actual facts. The present cruise is even more daring than the last, but there is every hope that the scheduled scheme will be carried into effect as precisely as it has been up to the present, and that the welcome which the Mediterranean squadron will afford to the American fleet will be at once an expression of good feeling and of sportsmanlike appreciation.

With their practical immunity from attack, their vast internal resources—adequate to the widest political ambition—their commercial interests in many quarters of the globe, and their great democratic traditions, the United States have every reason to be fortunate in their international relations. The cruise of the fleet round the world can only inspire confidence and cement good feeling. Espe-

cially desirable is it that all trace of misunderstanding between the United States and Japan—and it is worthy of emphasis that the misunderstanding was never official, but rested on popular rumours and prejudices—should be entirely removed. The Japanese, whether in the tone of their official communications, or in their press, or in the conduct of their private citizens, have always displayed a tact and consideration which are at once a source of admiration and suspicion in Europe. To put the matter brutally, however, we are not justified in suspecting the honesty of Japanese intentions until there is some proof of their dishonesty. Of such proof there has never been a vestige; nor, indeed, have the suspicions to which the Japanese have been subjected been able to show any stronger basis than a want of long acquaintance. That the only vulnerable point of America is exposed to the possibilities of Japanese attack must inevitably render the American nation less prone to sympathize with Japanese development than the British nation. But is it not wise and generous on the part of the United States Government to cultivate the friendship of this wonderful people? If the Yellow Peril is no bugbear, but a reality, then no amount of hostility, short of such annihilation as is unthinkable under modern conditions, will serve to remove it.

Repressive measures, in home and foreign policy, have ceased to appeal to the best minds of the political world. It is felt that not by coercion but by treaty must we hope to achieve stable results; and that to render treaty thoroughly practicable there must be mutual understanding and good faith. Such objects are served in various ways—sometimes by the meetings of sovereigns, sometimes by international congresses,—when these are really representative and self-respecting,—sometimes by the slow process of education, and sometimes by some overt and palpable form of friendly demonstration. It is under the last category that the cruise of the American Fleet must be placed. We earnestly trust that it will achieve its object as honourably and efficiently as last year's cruise round Cape Horn.

AN AMERICAN NATIONAL THEATRE.

(From our New York correspondent.)

The idea of an American National Theatre on the model of Government or Government-aided theatres in Europe has at last taken shape. It has existed and been talked over in art circles for many years, but it was only two years ago that the first plans were formulated. These plans are now so far advanced that the opening of a National Theatre in New York is expected in the autumn of next year. The institution will be devoted to the cultivation of dramatic art, but, if some of the American newspapers are right in their conjectures, its repertoire will consist neither of purely classical works nor of plays of a type that happens to be in fashion at the time. The theatre—it is to be called the New Theatre—will not cater, only for the amusement of a certain class of society; it will appeal to the whole intelligent theatre-going public and be guided by its verdict.

It is intended to make this New Theatre a thoroughly democratic institution established on a broad basis, something like the Comédie Française in Paris. The repertoire is to take pattern from that famous French stage. The best productions of England and other countries will be obtained, but the first object will be to foster American dramatic art by bringing out annually as great a number as possible of works by American authors.

Among the founders of the New Theatre are such millionaires and magnates as John Jacob Astor, Augustus Belmont, H. C. Frick, George G. Gould, James H. Hyde, Otto H. Kahn, Clarence H. Mackey, J. P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Henry Rogers Winthrop, and H. P. Whitney. It is said that the undertaking rests on a very sound financial basis. Profit is not looked for, but if any be realized it will be applied to the further development of the undertaking. In order to further the project, arrangements will be made for life leases of some of the boxes for certain evenings.

GENERAL NEWS.

KING EDWARD LEAVES FOR MARIENBAD.

Bad Ischl, August 13.

His Majesty King Edward left here this morning at 10.20 o'clock and is due to arrive in Marienbad at 6 p. m., via Attnang, Budweis, and Pilsen. He is expected to make a three weeks' sojourn at Marienbad.

A distinguished group gathered on the platform at Ischl to bid his Majesty farewell. The leaving-taking between the King and the Emperor of Austria was of a most hearty description.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE TO VISIT BERLIN.

HIS VIEWS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

Vienna, August 13.

According to the *Neue Freie Presse*, Mr. Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, accompanied by his friend Mr. Charles Henry, M. P., will go first to St. Blasien in the Black Forest and thence to Berlin. The object of his visit to the German capital is to study closely the law relating to old age pensions; he will probably reach Berlin towards the end of next week.

To a representative of the above-named journal who asked Mr. Lloyd George whether he believed in the possibility of an entente between Germany and England, the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that he would not say exactly that such an entente would be concluded today or tomorrow; but his own conviction was that it was the only way of putting an end to the general tension still existing in Europe, and particularly to the mutual fears that caused both Powers to go on increasing their fleets at enormous expense. Why should not England, Mr. Lloyd George remarked, come to an agreement with Germany when she had done so with France, Russia, and the United States? There was really no cause of dispute between the two countries. The agreement with Germany must be wholly and solely one limiting the building of battleships in future. To the observation of the interviewer that England was accused of conspiring to isolate Germany, and that it was suspected that an agreement between Russia and England was entered into at Reval which went far beyond the adjustment of frontier questions in Persia, Mr. Lloyd George replied that enough could not be done and written to eradicate that revolting suspicion.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

MR. TAFT'S FIRST SET-BACK.

The first important "incident" of the Presidential election campaign has occurred. It is to the disadvantage of Mr. Taft, and the Republican party managers are striving desperately to explain it away. It all happened at Hot Springs, Virginia, the famous health resort, where Mr. Taft is undergoing the weight-reducing cure, in readiness for the exhausting physical work of the campaign. A big evening party was given at the biggest hotel, preceded by a "grand march" of the guests into the great hall. Mr. Gude, the Norwegian Minister, who, with his wife, is staying at Hot Springs, was invited to the party, and accepted the invitation, but at the last moment he declined to attend, having ascertained that the grand march was to be headed by Mr. and Mrs. Taft. He had assumed that as a Minister Plenipotentiary he would, as a matter of course, have been placed at the head of the procession, and according to the newspapers he declared that he would not take second place to a mere private individual like Mr. Taft, who, of course, having resigned from the Cabinet on accepting Presidential nomination, has now no official rank whatsoever.

According to the New York correspondent of the *Globe*, efforts are being made to minimize the gravity of the incident. It is asserted, for instance, that the Minister did not attend the party for the simple reason that he had left his dress clothes in Washington, but the Democrats will not allow such a homely explanation to pass unchallenged. The squabble may seem ridiculous, but that will not prevent political use being made of it.

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