

Office:
Struve Str. 5, I.
Dresden A.
Telephone:
1755.

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PEACE OR WAR?

Up to the moment of writing there are, fortunately, no unmistakable signs that the unique situation developed in the Balkans by the stirring events of the past few days is to have its climax in a sanguinary struggle. But the most optimistic observer cannot deny that there is danger, very grave danger, of this deplorable outcome. A certain section of the Turkish population is hotly indignant with both Bulgaria and Austria in consequence of the political chicanery of these States, who have undoubtedly taken advantage of Turkey's present weakness to play unscrupulously for their own hand. The attitude of the Constantinople Press under these peculiarly trying circumstances is worthy of the highest praise. With every incentive to indulge in wild and inflammatory comment, it has contented itself with soberly reviewing the situation and urging the people to await the issue of events before forcing the hand of the Porte. The *Tanin*, the leading organ of the Young Turkey party, commenting on the Bulgarian coup and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, says: "There is no longer any doubt as to the attitude of Austria and Bulgaria. The masks have fallen." Continuing in a sober strain, the journal condemns the idea of war, and adds: "Whoever counsels war is seeking to ruin the country." It reminds its readers that war robbed Turkey of its constitution on a previous occasion, but says that this time such a task would not be so easy. In conclusion, the *Tanin* says: "Let us show ourselves worthy descendants of our ancestors, who had to struggle with courage against events even more grave." The Turkish Press during the present crisis compares very favourably with the newspapers of more "civilised" countries under far less provocative circumstances. It is not too much to say that an appeal to Turkish chauvinism by the united Press of the country would render war inevitable, but happily for the peace of Europe the able men who control that Press are actuated by a desire to conscientiously work for their country's ultimate good, rather than for an ephemeral victory involving eventual political degeneration. There is every reason to believe that the Turkish Government, which has throughout displayed so much moderation, will not allow itself to be provoked into taking any active measures of retaliation. Such measures could do no good to the new régime, which has already shown that its main objects are the promotion of peace both among the different elements of the empire and with its neighbours.

So far as can be gathered, most of the Powers signatory to the Treaty of Berlin are in favour of a conference at which the Balkan situation could be thoroughly discussed and the question raised of annulling the Treaty by mutual consent. The attitude of Great Britain in the present crisis may be summarised thus: The Government refuses to acknowledge the right of any European Power to abrogate the Treaty of Berlin, which recognised the independence of Roumania, Servia, and Montenegro, constituted Bulgaria an autonomous vassal State, entrusted to Austria the administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and promised reform to Crete and Macedonia. Germany (as will be seen from the despatches we print in our Berlin columns), assumes a strictly impartial attitude, and will certainly lend her support to any measure which promises to settle the problem by peaceful means. Russia is believed to be partial to the conference proposal, but has not yet issued any definite pronouncement as to her course of action. In the event of a war, Russian sympathies will doubtless be divided. Feeling for a kindred Slav race cannot make Russians overlook the fact that the Principality has not scrupled to provoke a most dangerous international complication at a time when Russia is absorbed by internal troubles. France falls into line with England, believing the Young Turks have the alternative of swallowing a bitter pill or of embarking upon a perilous campaign with the risk of being defeated, and even perhaps of being compelled to retire across the Bosphorus. The British Press unanimously insists that British conduct is clearly dictated both by general regard for international law and by precedent. When Russia took advantage of the Franco-Prussian War to declare that she was no longer bound by that part of the Treaty of Paris which had reference to the Black Sea, England was the

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first to affirm that the right of releasing a party to a treaty belonged only to the Governments who have been parties to the original instrument, and she has obviously determined to follow the same line of conduct with reference to the Near Eastern problem. Regarded from a purely practical point of view, it must be confessed that Turkey stands to lose little by being relieved of her hampering and useless suzerainties in the Balkans. She requires all her energies for renovating her internal affairs, which ever since the Midhat era have been hopelessly muddled. But, on the other hand, we can very easily understand that the cold logic of this argument may not appeal at once. To repeat the simile we made use of some days ago, the situation may be compared to a private householder who, busying himself with pressing affairs in his own immediate dwelling, is accosted by certain of his neighbours who tell him that in order to leave his hands entirely free they will relieve him of his outlying estates. It is not unlikely that his reply would be couched in particularly sulphurous language.

GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY'S ACTION.

London, October 7.
Reuter learns that the British Government has today received official notification, through the Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires, of the changes which the Austro-Hungarian Government proposes to make with respect to Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is reported that, before that notification was accepted, the attention of the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs had been called by the British Government to the protocol of the 17th of January, 1871, to which Austria-Hungary was a party. In that instrument the principle was laid down that no Power which was a party to the treaty could violate its obligations or alter its provisions without having previously arrived at a friendly understanding with the other parties to it and obtained their consent. According to a further report, it has been represented to the Austro-Hungarian Government that the British Government is not in a position to sanction any breach of the treaty of Berlin, nor to consent to any alteration of it, without having previously taken counsel with the other Powers and especially with Turkey. The British Ambassador in Vienna has laid these points of view before the

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Austro-Hungarian Government, and has pressed upon it the necessity of reconsidering its decision in this matter.

NEW HOME FOR GERMAN SEAMEN.

London, October 7.
The foundation stone of an annexe to the Home for German Seamen in South Shields was laid today by the German Consul-General for England, Dr. Johannes, in the presence of a distinguished assembly, including many German residents of towns on the north-east coast.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

A CHURCH FOR HOMELESS CORPSES.

(From our New York correspondent.)
The latest acquisition in New York is a "Funeral Church." It consists of a range of roomy apartments and a regular chapel. It is the product of the modern mode of New York life, and is destined for the "homeless rich," curious as the expression may sound. A third of New York's population is, to a certain extent, without a fixed home. The fact is that New Yorkers who could perfectly well have homes of their own are content to live year in year out in hotels or the so-called apartment houses, which are distinguished as well for their high rent as for the comfort they offer, and in boarding-houses. In these apartment houses a whole suite of furnished apartments can be rented, meals are brought into the room, and at the slightest nod a whole army of attendants are at one's disposal. For the American who wishes to spare his wife the worries and difficulties of a household of her own, the apartment house is the ideal dwelling place. The funeral church is intended for all these persons as well as for strangers sojourning in New York, if a death occurs in their ranks. A family which is travelling when death enters and robs it of one of its members, having no place to keep the body in, can hold the funeral ceremony in this church, and until the actual interment can live in the private apartments attached to the church. The inhabitants of the apartment houses who do not like having funeral ceremonies in their flats likewise avail themselves of the funeral church, and hither, too, are brought the bodies of strangers dying in hospitals, whose relations living outside New York have the funeral ceremonies performed there. The actual chapel is quite in the customary ecclesiastical style; it is 40 feet broad and 100 feet long, and lies in the second story of an absolutely fireproof building. It is reached from the street by a lift. The private apartments reserved for the mourners are finely appointed, with valuable pictures, statues, and mahogany furniture. Constant ventilation is secured by electric fans. The full light of day penetrates every room, but they are so situated that the mourners are undisturbed in their grief by the noise of the street. The doors of the church stand open night and day, and anyone, no matter what his creed, can find his last halting place there, should that have been his wish or that of his relations.

ATTEMPT TO LYNCH A NEGRO.

New York, October 7.
A telegram from Los Angeles says that during the trial of a negro charged with murder an attempt was made to lynch the prisoner in the presence of the judge. A sharp struggle ensued, but the officers of the law succeeded in keeping their prisoner, and the would-be lynchers were driven out of the court and a strong guard placed at the doors. The negro was subsequently sentenced to penal servitude for life.
(Continued on page 2.)