

ECHOES OF A GREAT CRUISE.

INTERVIEW WITH ADMIRAL SPERRY.

(From our New York correspondent.)

The New York *American* has just published the only interview which Admiral Sperry has granted since the return of the American battle fleet from its memorable world tour. In this the gallant Admiral spoke freely of the results achieved and the lessons learnt, strongly opposed the division of the fleet into Atlantic and Pacific squadrons, urged a bigger American Navy, and replied to the home and foreign criticisms which had been levelled at the fleet. The interview took place on board the battleship "Connecticut," just after the fleet had reached Norfolk on the end of its tour.

"Some day we are going to have a big fleet here," said the Admiral, pointing to where the famous duel between the "Monitor" and the "Merrimac" occurred. "Under our present arrangements most of our fleet is to be located here. We have not room in New York nor in Boston, nor in Charleston, nor in San Francisco for our fighting ships to stand. That is because Congress, in its superlative wisdom, has not seen fit to provide the navy with the accommodations that I think are needed. Mind you, I have no criticism to make of our representatives in Washington. The War Department is one of the greatest and most efficient departments of our Government. Little do the people at large know what it is doing, what it has done, and what it is trying to do for the nation's defence. But the War Department cannot go very far without money. We cannot build forts with sentiment or patriotism.

"The idea of dividing and sending half of the fleet back to the Pacific is a bad one," he went on. "Suppose Germany should get angry and want to fight? I do not say that Germany ever will desire trouble with this or any other country. Surely she is now our friend. But I am simply using Germany as an illustration. With our fleet cut in twain as now proposed, Germany could come over and smash the everlasting daylight out of us, couldn't she? This nation will be a secure and a peaceful nation when we have a large navy, when we excel Great Britain in numbers, guns, sailors, and ships. Until that time comes we shall be in constant danger. We should have a Pacific fleet, powerful enough to defy every nation. Japan could not now do us any harm even if she desired to do so. She has not any fighting force. She is not building any new battleships.

"The safest way to permanent peace," the Admiral went on, "is to be in possession of a big commanding navy, not a threatening one, but one that could go out and make the others run like a scared wolf if there was occasion. I have been in the service of the navy 48 years, since I was 14 years of age. I have in that period seen our navy rise from insignificance to grandeur. By constantly pounding away on Congress, we have at last got the nucleus of a navy. Suppose there should come a conflict tomorrow. How futile would be our efforts to protect Hawaii or the Philippines—that is, for the moment. I think that Congress should realise our position in this respect. We do not care for war, but one never knows."

The Admiral brought down his scrap-book. It contained newspaper stories of the fleet's voyage from the time it left Hampton Roads, December 16th, 1907, up to the present time. "The newspapers everywhere greeted us with marked cordiality," he remarked, as he turned the pages. "Here you will see what the Press of Australia had to say. Never in my life did I observe so much enthusiasm for a foreign flag. My opinion is that if we ever get into trouble west of the Hawaiian group, Australia would come running along to our aid with the speed of the wind. In all, we have travelled 45,700 nautical miles. Few were the accidents. The mortality among such an aggregation of men has been infinitesimally small. Our vessels have met with no accidents. Storms have rushed upon us, but we weathered them beautifully. Every battleship you see before you could turn her prow southward and go round the Horn again as soon as we could recalc. Some of the ships need their bottoms scoured, some of the engines demand repair, but at that we could get along. We could shove into San Francisco or San Pedro, or go back to Gibraltar, just as we went and as we came, with malice towards none. But, at the same time, taking no back talk.

"It has been an instructive voyage. I have no patience with those who criticise President Roosevelt for having ordered it. I do not know, I will not say, no one knows; but if someone tells you that the trip averted a scrap, don't call him a liar. Our trip has saved, or will have saved, the Government hundreds of thousands of dollars. We have made tests in coaling. On our return from Gibraltar we ran more cheaply than any fleet ever did before. I cannot now give out the figures, but in time the Navy Department at Washington will have some interesting information concerning the economy of making steam, and as for target practice, we have eclipsed all the world's records."

Forty-eight men died on the cruise of the Battle-ship fleet since it left Hampton Roads in December,

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1907, up to the time the ships left Gibraltar, according to the Navy Department's figures. The ratio of deaths to the 15,000 men composing the officers and crews of the fleet is probably lower than in the ordinary walks of life. Insurance companies regard sailors generally as good risks.

CRIME IN SICILY.

ALLEGED MURDER OF AMERICAN
POLICE OFFICER.

A murder was committed at Palermo on Friday evening which is likely to lead to sensational developments.

Four revolver shots were heard in the direction of the Piazza Marina, near the electric tramway station. There was a moment of panic, but soon a number of persons ran up and found on the ground a body, which the police and Carabinieri had already taken under their charge. The Public Prosecutor was summoned, and proceeded to establish the identity of the victim, who is alleged to be Joseph Petrosino, a well-known American police officer, described as the terror of the "Black Hand" organisation in New York.

Petrosino had lately come to Italy, but whether for any special reason is not known. Several documents were found on the body relative to some well-known ex-convicts of Palermo and Sicily. It is supposed that the murdered man was waiting for a tram at the Piazza Marina, in order to return to his hotel, when he was attacked. One chamber of his revolver had been fired, probably at his assailants.

RAILWAY MAGNATE AND CANADIAN MINING
COMPANY.

PECULIAR SITUATION.

The proceedings, at Toronto, at the annual meeting of Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company revealed the fact that Mr. James J. Hill, the American railway magnate, has obtained control of the company, which was formerly in the hands of Canadians.

It appears that one of the Canadians, without consulting his colleagues, sold enough stock to Mr. Hill to give him control of the company, which practically supplies all other than domestic coal to Ontario and British Columbia.

The Canadian officers, on the situation becoming known, declined to act on the board, and Mr. Hill's nominees took their places. The head offices of the company are to be moved to St. Paul (Minnesota), and it is suggested that Mr. Hill will now use his control of the company's mines as a lever to get coal admitted free from Canada into the United States over his British-Columbian lines.

JUVENILE SMOKING.

PROVISIONS OF THE NEW BRITISH LAW.

The Act of Parliament dealing with juvenile smoking comes into force on the first of next month. Briefly, the provisions of the Act are as follows:—

1. No person shall sell cigarettes, or papers for cigarettes, to anyone under 16 years of age. Penalty: First offence, fine not exceeding £5; subsequent offences, fine not exceeding £10.
2. Where there is any doubt about the age, no one shall serve a person "apparently" under 16 years of age.
3. If a constable or park-keeper find a person under 16 years of age smoking, he is empowered to seize any cigarettes, etc., in the possession of the offender. Boys may be searched, but not girls.
4. If it is proved in a court of summary jurisdiction that automatic machines which contain cigarettes are being extensively used by children, the court may caution the owner, or owners, of property on which the machine stands, and, if necessary, order its removal. For those who break such an order there is a penalty of a fine not exceeding £5 for the first offence, and a further fine not exceeding £1 for each day during which the offence continues.
5. The provision as to the seizure of cigarettes, etc., does not apply to juveniles in the employ of tobacco factories or shops so long as the carrying of the banned articles is due to their employment.
6. Cigarettes cannot be seized from a boy messenger in uniform in the employment of a messenger company, and he may be served with cigarettes, so long as the shopkeeper is satisfied that the tobacco is not for his own use. In such cases the boy must be in the employ of the company at the time.

WEATHER FORECAST FOR TODAY
of the Royal Saxon Meteorological Institute.

Variable breezes, generally overcast or cloudy, showers at times, little change in the temperature at first but somewhat warmer later.