

fire in the part of the vessel where the explosion occurred, at that time, and no work of a dangerous nature could have been proceeding without the knowledge of the commander. The incident recalls the destruction of a Turkish vessel on the Danube during the Turko-Russian war, by a Russian patriot who under the cover of night succeeded in evading the torpedo nets and the search light, fastened a torpedo to the hull of the cruiser and make his escape before the explosion took place. Still, the fact that the Maine was afloat for over an hour after the disaster is taken as conclusive evidence that it was not caused by a torpedo. There is a mystery connected with it which perhaps may never be cleared up.

The aid given the wounded Americans by Gen. Blanco and other Spaniards in Havana is graceful and chivalrous, particularly in view of the state of the popular feeling in Spain lately. There can, of course, be no suspicion that the Spanish officials are in any way responsible for the destruction of the ship. Only blind fanaticism could suggest to them such an outrage at a time of peace. Still, the promptness with which the Spanish authorities, presumably unsolicited, gave expression to their sympathy for the sufferers was timely. It will strengthen the feeling of good will between the two countries and help to soften the tone of the discussion of questions on which there is a difference of opinion and interests.

#### THE DANGER NOT OVER.

As a diplomatic move the decision of Japan to hold Wei-Hai-Wei is admirable. England and Russia are competing for the privilege of lending China money, watching each other with jealous care lest one should gain any advantage over the other. Japan quietly steps in and tells the "celestial" government that there is no need for further anxiety about the war indemnity; the mikado will occupy the port mentioned and consider the debt settled. A wonderful stroke of policy for a country the so-called civilization of which is not yet a century old!

It is apparent that the European powers are engaged in the game of carving up China. Russia is operating in Manchuria, and Germany at Shantung, while England has designs on the fertile Yang-tse-Kiang valley and France on the southern provinces. The plan is to sink China in debt until she can pay only by surrendering herself to the money-lenders. Hence the eagerness on the part of the powers to supply the money. England's scheme was excellent. She would furnish funds to China. These would go to Japan as payment of the war debt. Japan would build ships for the money and help England to stand Russia off. But Russian statesmen saw through the plan and prevented it. Probably the announcement of the permanent occupation of Wei-Hai-Wei by Japan is really the suggestion of England and the reply of the British government to the anti-English intrigues of Russia at Peking.

The quietude that has rested for some time over the situation in eastern Asia is seriously threatened by this new move. It shows that it is quite possible that the great international contest may yet result in a European blaze.

#### INTERNATIONAL MINING CONGRESS.

It will be remembered that this body, which sat in Denver last summer, fixed upon this city as its next place of meeting. By way of making suitable preparations for so important an assem-

blage, a circular has been prepared for distribution among prominent citizens, especially such as are interested in mining. It bears the signatures of Governor Wells, and of the following officers of the congress: John Dern, vice president at large; Angus M. Cannon, vice president for Utah; and W. D. Johnson, chairman executive committee.

The circular is as follows:

"Salt Lake City, Feb. 14, 1898.

"Dear Sir:

"A meeting will be held Thursday evening, February 17th, at 8 o'clock, at the Knutsford hotel, for the purpose of organizing and discussing plans relative to the International Mining Congress to meet in this city July 6, 7 and 8 next.

"The initial gathering of this organization, held in Denver last July, was largely attended, every section of our country, and several foreign nations, being represented. The great importance of the congress to the mining interests of the world and its power for good in securing proper and much needed legislation in our own country, looking to the fuller recognition and better protection of this, one of our most important industries, was fully realized by the thousand or more who gathered there.

"It is greatly desired that the coming congress shall, by virtue of the success already achieved, and with the active support of our public spirited citizens, exercise such an influence and accomplish such results in the interests of mining as will be felt throughout the world, and reflect the highest credit upon our own section.

"This is our opportunity; its bearing upon the welfare of our State cannot be too strongly emphasized, and your presence and hearty co-operation at this preliminary meeting are earnestly requested."

The "News" is pleased to give this matter prominence, and hopes to see such measures perfected as will cause the delegates to the congress to feel that this city has done justice to the occasion.

#### COST OF COAL OIL

The Standard oil trust pays to the producers of crude petroleum, that is to the owners of the oil wells, 55 cents per barrel of 42 gallons. It takes one and four-tenths barrels of crude oil to make one of refined. The cost of transportation to the refineries averages 11 cents, and of refining 16 cents, making the total cost of a barrel of refined oil \$1.04, or almost exactly two and a half cents per gallon.

When the trust sells refined oil in competition with the Russian product, it asks two and nine-tenths cents per gallon, but when it sells for consumption in New York City it asks nine cents per gallon. It is able to make such tremendous discrimination between buyers because it controls the output from the Pennsylvania and Ohio oil fields. The Philadelphia American, from which these figures are obtained, has a long article on "The Standard Oil Trust," in the course of which it says:

"Starting with nothing twenty-five years ago the Standard oil trust has today a capital of nearly \$100,000,000, with a market value of over four times as much, and upon which dividends are paid of something like \$20,000,000 a year. And these dividends represent far from the earnings of the trust, far from the sum of money that is exacted from the users of oil and divided yearly among the few who use this trust to prey upon the community, divided among the holders of the trust certificates and the leeches who draw tribute

from the trust, for the trust that sucks millions from the community, has its numerous suckers."

Such facts and figures emphasize the necessity of doing something to reduce the price of coal oil in Utah. Here the retail price is 25 cents per gallon, which is too high by half. With oil wells in eastern Utah and Wyoming, we ought to get relief. But the trust is probably seeing to it that relief to the Pacific states shall not come in a manner nor to an extent to break its monopoly.

#### WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN IOWA.

What has the appearance of a substantial advantage was won a few days ago by the woman suffragists in Iowa. The committee of the lower house of the state legislature reported favorably by a vote of 8 to 3 on the resolution for the submission of the proposition to strike the word "male" from the section of the constitution which prescribes the qualifications of voters. Commenting on the occurrence the Chicago Times-Herald says:

"The majority in favor of the submission of the amendment to a vote of the people is significant. It gives ground for indulging in the hope of ultimate victory in the house, for it is hardly probable that the house will reject the report of its committee when supported by eight out of the eleven members. If the senate concurs in the report the people of Iowa will be allowed to vote on the question of amending the constitution so that the elective franchise may be exercised by all citizens, regardless of sex, who possess the other necessary suffrage qualifications.

"A battle royal for equal privileges at the ballot box will then be fought by the suffragists throughout the state. All the suffrage platform artillery will be sent into Iowa to bombard the works of the enemy in every village, city and school house district. It will be a campaign of oratory and literature. The state is the chosen battle ground for the great contest of the decade on the suffrage question. Its final outcome will have much to do with the future of the equal suffrage movement in this country."

#### NO GENERAL STRIKE.

On Sunday last there was held a meeting in Boston which was attended by fifty-five representatives of textile unions, and it was unanimously voted to recommend that all unions call out the operatives in every cotton mill in New England. This action was mainly the result of a recommendation made by Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, and seems to have had for its object united action on the part of labor unions connected with the textile industries of New England looking to "some settled policy on the mill situation." Incidentally it was no doubt intended to assist New Bedford strikers.

Just what was the "settled policy on the mill situation" which Mr. Gompers had in view, has not been disclosed by the press dispatches; but the latter state today that his proposition for a general strike is not meeting with favor in the manufacturing centers interested. The operatives in those centers "do not see what they are to gain by it," and "they have pledged, in the best of faith, their financial help to carry on the struggle in New Bedford." If they strike they cannot furnish aid to the New Bedford strikers. It seems, therefore, that the trouble in the latter town will be settled before mill operatives in other New England towns go out.