

It is just five hundred years since the first cannon were used in Russia, and on the 21st of November the fifth centennial was celebrated with great pomp at St. Petersburg. The words of the Czar on that occasion have naturally attracted much attention, but they can give satisfaction only to those who do not look very far ahead in the world's politics. It is impossible for any humane person to contemplate war between nations, especially on the colossal scale, and subject to the wondrous conditions under which it must now be conducted, with other feelings than those of unspeakable antipathy and repugnance. There is no cure for a bloodthirsty politician so effectual as personal experience of warfare. Perhaps it was a beneficent arrangement that the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 brought princes and statesmen, as well as soldiers, into the actualities of the carnage. Perhaps this is the reason why the peace of Europe has been preserved as long as it has.

It is certainly a remarkable circumstance that, at the very moment Alexander III. is petitioning heaven to save him and his people from the horrors of war, his government is more active than ever in pushing forward those armaments which indicate that a terrible war is impending. Everybody knows that the army of Russia could be reduced to a peace footing without the Russian empire incurring any danger of invasion. Neither Germany nor Austria, nor Italy nor even England would seek to quarrel with Russia, invade her soil, or curtail her territories.

It is this which renders, not Austria alone, but the whole world, so exceedingly vigilant and sensitive in regard to Russian armaments. It is well known how enormous are the military levies of that vast empire, what immense sums are spent in perfecting her military organization, and what an imposing number of armed men she would bring into the field.

Even the maintenance of forces, such as Russia has kept under arms for several years past, has been incompatible with the theory that Russia is a pacific and conservative state, that respects either public treaties or territorial arrangements. Notwithstanding the professions of Alexander III., Russia is not content with the formidable military power she now holds, but is continually adding to it. The Russian minister of war has just issued an order for arming with heavy artillery all the forts in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azof, with the greatest expedition. Large additions are being made to the garrisons of Odessa and Kieff, and the Black Sea fleet is continually being strengthened by fresh gunboats and torpedo vessels. If Russia were threatened by the fear of wanton invasion, if Germany or Austria had at any time proposed to establish the ancient city of Poland or restore any of the conquests of Russia to their original owners, this attitude and their armaments

would be intelligible. As it is they cannot be reconciled with any genuine and passionate love of peace. Why France continues to devote such exorbitant sums to the development of her military power is well known to everybody, since she makes no secret of her determination to regain her lost provinces at the first favorable opportunity, and Germany may excuse her preparations as purely defensive. But Russia has no lost provinces to recover, no surrendered territory to reconquer, no injured military prestige to re-establish, no national self-love to console by future victories. Europe believes it is only in pursuit of fresh conquests and additional territory that Russia continues to increase her fighting force. The policy of Russia remains unchanged and that policy includes the assertion of Russian domination in the Balkan Peninsula and Russian influence at Constantinople, to the exclusion of every other power. And further Russia is rapidly preparing to enforce these assertions with the power of her arms, however much the Czar may express a pious hope for the maintenance of peace.

There is scarcely a school-boy who has not heard of Robinson Crusoe. Even those of riper years will remember with what rapture they read that narrative in their youthful days. With a relish akin to this feeling all Europe is now reading the adventures of Stanley, the great African explorer. The letters that have reached Europe increase and strengthen the world-wide sympathy with which his progress and adventures have been followed. His letters evince a terseness and modesty of literary style, wonderful power of vivid and picturesque description, strong determination, keen insight into character, the highest attributes of a commander, the skill and tact of a diplomatist—these are the qualities that Mr. Stanley has manifested. One sentence from his letters is sufficient to disclose the nature of his work, when he speaks of "that darkest region of the earth, one great compact of remorselessly sullen forest, the growth of an untold number of ages, swarming at intervals with immense masses of vicious man-eating savages."

Round the illustrious German whom Stanley went out to rescue, a great deal of interest and curiosity is gathered. What Stanley has to say of Emin Pasha will therefore be read with the utmost attention. The conference for the suppression of the slave trade is now in session at Brussels. The persons composing this conference have already resolved to continue their sittings or to adjourn from time to time until the arrival of Stanley and Emin Pasha. An interesting occasion is anticipated when Cardinal Laviege, representative of France, Emin Pasha, the representative of Germany, and Stanley who in reality is representative of both England and America, shall meet to compare notes and discuss the question of the slave trade, and the opening up of the Dark Continent to the forces of

civilization. Some surprise has been expressed in some quarters, especially by British journals, that Emin Pasha should have hesitated so long before accepting Stanley's proffered aid. But a moment's thought will be sufficient to show us that Emin's conduct was perfectly reasonable. No doubt Emin was personally very glad for the sympathy manifested toward him, but there were other considerations that caused him to vacillate for several months. Meanwhile Stanley's forces were rapidly diminishing, and it is a praiseworthy trait in Stanley's character that he waited so long, until it became manifest to all, even to Emin Pasha, that he had not only lost control of the country that he had held so long, but was likewise in danger of being killed by his mutinous troops. As is well known Emin Pasha was acting under the direction of the German government, and patriotic motives would make him reluctant to surrender those rich African territories to the control of the English. As a German, Emin Pasha would fain have carried out Bismarck's dream of a great African colonial empire.

The speech of King Humbert to the Italian Chamber of Deputies, on November 25th has called attention towards Italy. It is scarcely thirty years since Italy consisted of half a score of petty kingdoms, dukedoms, republics and principalities. The record of the struggles of Italian unity and independence between 1859 and 1870 is one of the most interesting of histories. King Humbert very tersely remarked in his late speech, "In my father's reign Italy achieved unity; in mine her citizens have obtained equality." It is noteworthy that Italy is the only European kingdom possessing universal manhood suffrage.

Visitors to Venice will remember the stone abutments in some places that were used to keep some of the walls of the ancient palace of the Doges in their position. Well, during the past summer the Italian government has been expending large sums of money to repair the foundations of this old Venetian palace. On November 21st the work was finished and the scaffolding removed, and now this grand old palace, that Mr. Ruskin has extolled as one of the greatest triumphs in architecture, stands just as it stood one thousand years ago. Not a carving has been changed nor form of a column been altered. In some cases incurably broken arches have been replaced by exact fac similes, and in order to preserve the uniformity of appearance, the very stains and marks of time and weather are reproduced. For the first time in centuries, the building has been relieved from the degrading aid of props and stays and stands as it stood in the days of the Crusaders—the purest specimen of Grecian architecture, the best illustration of those magnificent palaces that once adorned ancient imperial Rome.

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