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EUROPEAN COMBINATIONS AND COMPLICATIONS.

A SIGNIFICANT fact in connection with the present smoldering fires in Europe is the determination of Belgium to provide herself with a navy, a defense she has not had for a long time. She has an immense merchant marine, however, and the largest and best of her merchantmen are to be dismantled, steel-clad and equipped throughout as first-class men-of-war. This involves an immense expenditure, one that no nation would take upon itself for the sake of merely having such vessels on the seas. Belgium has all along been able to maintain a neutral position when great wars have been distracting Europe, and could doubtless continue in that line of policy, importing, exporting and trafficking generally while the others were fighting, if she felt disposed to do so. But she does not, her sympathies, or at least her interests, are with Germany and she will doubtless join the alliance which now includes that nation, Austria and Italy, as soon as hostilities actively commence. This appears to be somewhat unnatural, in view of the fact that Belgium is geographically as much a part of France as Alsace and Lorraine are and the greater part of its population—nearly all of those in the southern and western part—speak the French language. Affinities, blood and a common tongue do not, however, seem to count for anything when pecuniary interests and general safety are at stake; this is the case with the generality of individuals, and individuals make up nations.

One other step taken by Belgium serves as at least a straw to show which way the wind blows. She has discharged her English captains and filled their places with Germans. Regarded as purely a matter of usefulness, this would amount to nothing; but in connection with the conversion of merchantmen into an armed flotilla it means that England is to have no representation in the affairs of her neighbors, that she is dis-trusted, and that the most they expect from her is to keep out and let all parties to the strife alone.

What with the active preparations going on in Austria, the admirable status of the German forces and Russia's sullen but subdued demeanor, the theatre of the coming conflict may be said to be pretty well mapped out already. That is, the beginning of it. It took only a few weeks to completely and permanently transfer the initial seat of the last struggle between France and Germany and the same can be said, except as to time, in regard to the more recent war between Russia and Turkey. It looks as if the first gun would be fired near enough to the eastern border of Silesia or Galicia to startle some of the inhabitants at least, but where the contest may ebb and flow after that is another question. One thing is well settled—it will break out on the territory of one of the disputants before many months have passed and every nerve is being strained in the united effort to hold back the dogs of war. Neither party will be use to pick up the gauntlet, but so far there is some hesitancy as to who shall throw it down.

It is not to be expected that Russia will fight the four allies single-handed unless she were to count on the battles being all on her own soil, which would make it, on her part, a defensive war. It is not the Russian mode of procedure. She must advance continually or collapse. Numerically she is nearly as strong as all of the others, and on her own soil could perhaps defeat them in the end; but she lacks money and wants control of the Black Sea. The former would have a tendency to restrain her to defensive operations, but the latter would impel her to offensive measures in more respects than one. It is suspected that a quiet "deal" has been entered into with Turkey by the Muscovite, the terms of which are the obliteration of Austrian and German representation and influence in the Turkish provinces and their control by Russia and Turkey jointly, and the undisputed control of the seaboard by the former.

This would be a strange combination, but war, like politics, makes strange bedfellows. Of course the Ottoman government realizes that its complete disruption and the parcelling out of the remainder of its territory in the absence of a giant ally somewhere in Europe is only a question of time and a short time at that, and it is better to satisfy Russia at once and convert her into a friend than to be on guard and in a state of con-

stant alarm for fear of what is wanted being taken without the consideration of friendship. Unitedly these two could make it exceedingly interesting for the southeastern part of Austria, and if France should set it to take a hand, the position of the former nation would be extremely critical. She would be completely hemmed in and stand in a similar position to that occupied by the State of Missouri in the early part of the late rebellion—overrun by first one party, then another, and plundered and ravaged by both. However, up to this time, it is not France's quarrel, and she shows no present disposition to make it such. But there is an element there, and it is composed of the overwhelming majority of the population, whose only ambition is the reformation of the eastern frontier of their country, and what better time could be selected for expelling the Germans from Strasburg and Metz and trailing their banner in the dust in the presence of the defiantly floating tricolor, than when Germany has her hands full with her eastern neighbor and could not spare enough men nor enough munitions to drive the Frenchmen forth again? Indeed, history has shown that these two nations are tolerably evenly matched, and the talk of a portion of either overcoming the entire army of the other would be absurd. But France could not do this and escape the vortex of the struggle; to recapture Alsace and Lorraine would be to declare war upon Germany at once, and we all know what that means.

PENETRATING THE PYRAMIDS.

In the January number of *Scribner's Magazine* is an interesting illustrated article on the great pyramid of Cheops in Africa. After writing the matter up descriptively in an entertaining and instructive manner, the author goes on to say that excavation about the pyramid is still continued, and that even as he writes information comes to him of further discoveries. A Mr. W. L. Morton, of Manchester, England, writing to the *International Standard*, says:

"There is a passage leading from between the paws of the Sphinx, running diagonally to the great pyramid, the entrance to which is covered by a large stone. Underneath the pyramid is a spacious chamber supported by carved pillars. There is also an entrance to the pyramid in the west side. In the King's chamber there is a stone behind the coffer which revolves on a pivot, but which is fastened on the outside by two bolts. This is on the west side." (The old entrance is on the north side.) Again Mr. Morton says, "We have chambers on the twenty fifth and fiftieth layers of masonry; why not on the seventy fifth?"

It is suggested that by hammering and firing guns within the various chambers of the pyramid and having listeners stationed at various points outside, that clues may be obtained to further discoveries that will throw greater light on the mystery, which, in spite of past explorations and the various theories advanced, still shrouds the object of the builders in the construction of the great pyramids of Egypt.

IRRIGATION DISTRICTS.

The communication signed by "A Subscriber," which appears elsewhere in this issue, and treats of the unsatisfactory condition of things in Providence and Millville, in respect to irrigation, was accompanied by a request that the News explain the law on the subject, in a manner to throw light upon the points of difficulty referred to by the correspondent.

The giving of three directors to Millville and of two directors and the secretary and treasurer to Providence, appears to be an arrangement tacitly agreed to in the interests of justice and fairness, as between the two settlements, and so far as it is just is commendable, though the law makes no provision for it. The land holders of the district have the legal right to elect the men of their choice, without regard to the residence of those elected. But justice, and the best interests of all concerned, generally make it advisable that directors of an irrigation district be chosen from different parts of it, that the landholders in different sections of it may be properly represented.

The present law providing for the formation of irrigation districts was passed in January, 1865. At that time it did not contemplate affecting vested rights, nor the irrigating streams, ditches, etc., then in use. Its purpose was to provide for the construction of new canals, etc., and the management of waters not previously appropriated. But among old settlers there existed much confusion in regard to the control of irrigating streams, the repairing of ditches, etc. No system existed for securing justice and good order to such settlers as had constructed and were using canals, etc., in common. Therefore, in January, 1866, a section was added to the law, providing that settlers who had already constructed irrigating ditches, etc.,

might organize under the provisions of the statute.

But to consolidate old settlers who had already constructed dams, ditches, etc., with new settlers who were just commencing to locate upon farms, and tax all equally for the construction of canals designed for the benefit of the latter alone, would be unjust. Old settlers would ordinarily be justified in objecting to such an arrangement, and if new canals are needed in Providence or Millville, which were not contemplated at the time those two settlements were organized into a district, the owners of the land to be benefited by such new canals should be organized into a new district, or districts. The old settlers who do not need new canals should not be taxed for their construction.

A wide discretion is conferred by the law upon the trustees of an irrigation district. They have power "to make by-laws, rules and regulations necessary to carry into effect the objects of the people." The question might be raised, whether or not the trustees of an irrigation district could, under this clause, take such action as would, in effect, lay upon some of the landowners of the district a heavier tax than others were required to bear. We think not. An elementary principle of law relative to taxation of all kinds is that a tax to be legal must be equal. An irrigation district once organized pursuant to law must be regarded as a unit. Neither the trustees nor landholders of it can cut it up into sections for the purpose of taxing one part of it more heavily than another. The total cost of running the irrigating machinery of the whole district is a burden upon the whole of it, to be borne by all of the landholders in it equally, in proportion to the number of acres they irrigate respectively.

Hence, where two or more towns are embraced in one irrigation district, the tax on the land in each must be the same. To say that one part of the district may be taxed at one rate and another part of it at a different rate, is to introduce confusion and consequent strife, destroy organization and defeat the objects of the law, which are order and justice.

As with the tax, so with such by-laws and regulations as the trustees may make for the government of the district. They should be uniform in their application to all landholders in the district, at least so far as practicable. In this regard, however, the courts, on a question of sustaining a rule established by the trustees, would probably take into consideration the equity as well as the uniformity of the rule, for it is quite possible for a necessity to exist for the establishment by the trustees of a rule applying to only a part of the district. If any such rule could be shown to be necessary and equitable, doing good to some of the landholders and actual injury to none, it would probably be sustained, under the clause above quoted, which confers considerable power on the trustees.

The course of some of the landholders in an irrigation district, who take into their own hands the control, repairing, etc., of the ditches which they use, without regard to the authority or action of the trustees, or the action of a meeting at which a tax has been fixed, is, to say the least, irregular and not contemplated by law. Such landholders can be taxed the same as the rest in the district.

Our correspondent says that regulations prevail in Providence different from those in Millville. It is the duty of the trustees to establish uniformity so far as justice and the best interests of the district require it. When trustees do not all see eye to eye, as sometimes happens, a majority rules.

There is one fundamental principle of law applying to irrigation in all the territories and some of the states, which the trustees of no district can override and disregard, and which even the Territorial Legislature cannot abridge. It may be thus stated: Title to water, flowing in natural channels, originates with the act of prior appropriation. When the ownership of water has been thus acquired, the water becomes private property in the same sense as the land does when the government patent issues. A section of the statute to which this article has reference recognizes, in express terms, this principle, and if it were always kept in sight much trouble might be avoided.

RUSSIA AND FRANCE.

THE report of a Russian ambassador arriving in Paris, as published in our telegraphic news columns today, is full of interest, and as it seems to be true is very significant. He does not come for the purpose that foreign ministers or agents usually pay visits, for Russia already has a strong and well appointed embassy in Paris fully capable of attending to all the requirements of that service, but for the purpose of perfecting an alliance between the two powers. A union of purpose and sentiment already exists to some extent, but the design is to have this fully defined and understood, that the reliance which one places upon the other may not depend entirely upon sympathy and opportunity. Of course no such arrangement would be sought if the parties were looking forward to a continuance of peace, for peace obviates the necessity for entanglements of that or any nature; in fact, it would be difficult

to outline a common purpose for two nations in the absence of war or the prospect of it that would not be burdensome, irksome and oppressive at times if not altogether. So it is safe to conclude that the Muscovite proposes heading off the union of Germany and Austria by blending the interests of France with his own, and looking forward to an early declaration of war. Not only this, but England is to be appealed to to bear her part of the struggle having in view the shifting of the burden of power in Europe, and the appeal may not be in vain, though that nation will probably preserve a dignified neutrality until events take such a shape that her intervention will be an immediate necessity.

The war cloud grows darker from day to day. The perfection of combinations and other warlike preparations going on speak so plainly of an impending crisis that he that runs may read the warning. A rather gigantic conflict it must be with such great alliances on both sides, the greatest perhaps the world ever saw.

REMARKABLE DISCOVERY IN KENTUCKY.

THE discoveries of relics of the ancient dwellers upon this continent have been remarkably numerous of late, and decidedly interesting. A special to the *Chicago News*, from Bloomfield, Kentucky, Dec. 26th, gives particulars of one of the latest. It says:

"J. A. Allen, of this place, while excavating a foundation for his new grist-mill struck the dome of a cavern of immense proportions, from which a strong current of cold air issued with great force as the workmen made the opening. Torches were procured and Mr. Allen and Mr. Gainhurst were lowered down by means of a windlass. It was about sixty feet from the surface to the floor of the cave, which they found to be level and sandy, as if it were once the bed of an ancient subterranean stream. They followed the main avenue for a distance of over two miles and discovered an opening in a cliff on the farm of Benjamin Wilson, and a well-beaten path was easily discerned that was once trod by human beings, although it is now in many places covered with forest trees and undergrowth.

Mr. Allen and Mr. Hurst, after emerging from the cave, started back to town and reported the result of their discoveries. A large party was at once formed, which entered the opening of the cliff on the Wilson farm. On one of the main avenues numerous evidences existed that the place had evidently been the abode of cave men, as numerous relics were found in the shape of pottery and bronze bric-a-brac. A regular door was discovered in a large niche on one avenue at right angles with the main avenue, and in it were numerous mummified bodies, 100 or more being in place.

Three of the mummies were removed to town, where they excite great curiosity. The formations in the cave are beautiful beyond description. Stately towers of stalagmites, suggestive of grotesque and unique figures are encountered all along the wonderful subterranean avenue. There is a beautiful little lake with water as pure as crystal, and as usual in cave streams, it is full of tiny, eyeless fish. The avenues of the cave will measure, in all probability, about seven miles, so that it may fairly be considered another rival to the Mammoth cave, and certainly one of the great cave wonders of Kentucky, the land of caves."

A GREAT VENTURE AND LOSS.

THE greatest raft that was ever put together, so far as records go, was recently launched in Nova Scotia. Its weight was 11,000 tons, so the reader may form some idea of its immensity. In proportions it was nearly as large as the *Great Eastern* steamship; its destination was New York, and it was being towed by the *Miranda*, a 1500 ton steamship of the Red Cross line. The second day out, when near Nantucket Shoals, the cables parted through the monster's constantly wallowing in the trough of the sea and being difficult to pull along. There was a heavy fog and it got entirely away. Search has been made constantly for the raft, and though it was once sighted afterward, it got away again, and no indication of its whereabouts was received until Tuesday last, when, as a dispatch informed us, a vessel discovered an immense lot of stray logs drifting about loosely on the waves, and it is believed that these were fragments of the great structure, it having gone to pieces and floated apart.

The raft was in the shape of a cigar with the ends cut off and flat on the top and bottom. It consisted of sixty-seven layers of logs, amounting in all to 27,000 trees, the ends pointing toward the centre and the reverse these being held in position with chains. It amounted to 1,700,000 feet of pine and 500,000 feet of hard wood lumber, was 385 feet long, 62 feet wide at the centre and fifteen feet in diameter at the ends, and was valued at \$150,000. It was designed to revolutionize the transportation of timber and lumber, now so difficult and expensive a proceeding.

If the plan had been successful, the change would have been very great and the saving to shippers and consumers enormous, as an instance of which the difference between the freightage in the prevailing way and the one that unhappily failed was computed at \$25,000, or one-sixth of the value of the entire cargo, in favor of the latter plan. The raft was not insured and will probably be a total loss.

COUNTING CHICKENS TOO EARLY.

THERE can be no doubt in the mind of a careful reader and studious thinker that the political battle of next year will be fought on the single issue of tariff reform vs. protection, or that the leader on each side is virtually chosen. The President's message had the effect of making party lines well defined, but just how the respective strength of the parties stands is another matter. In the west are a large number of wool growers and mining men whose financial interests will cause them to ignore party affiliations and vote for the candidates who favor the retention of the present tariff on wool and lead, and this will be an immense augmentation for the Republicans in California, Nevada and Colorado; it will also have its effect in a less degree in some of the other States, and upon this showing made so far in advance the Republicans are or profess to be jubilant. But are they not in some degree reckoning without their host? Even if it be conceded that such strength will be gained for them in the States named and in all the Territories, it is still well to remember that none of the States west of the Missouri cast their electoral votes for Mr. Cleveland three years ago and that the Territories have nothing to say in the matter. Besides, there is a certain quantity of tariff reformers in the Republican ranks which in Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota amounts to a host; so it would seem that that party will only be gaining where gains are not particularly needed and losing where it is necessary to be on the keen lookout. It fact, a prominent politician recently made the declaration that Iowa, which has never yet failed to cast its vote for the Republican Presidential nominee, and which gave Gen. Grant 80,000 majority when he first ran, had been completely revolutionized by the President's message and the temperance issue, and would next year choose Cleveland electors. This, of course, is only a prediction; but it is based upon logic and experience, and shows that in the minds of a great many people, the position in which the President is placed is best expressed by the old saying—"The loss of one is the gain of a dozen."

A CASE IN POINT.

A few days ago Mr. Thomas Batt, of West Jordan, called at this office and expressed hearty concurrence in the sentiments contained in a communication from John Done, Esq., of Payson, in reference to trespassing stock, which appeared in a late issue of the News. Mr. Batt cites his experience as an illustration of this evil, and of the inefficiency of the present law to afford protection from it. He states that he has been compelled to cease operating a farm in West Jordan because it was so over-ridden with trespassing stock that everything produced upon it in the shape of a crop was destroyed.

Probably the law upon this subject might be simplified and improved. But the evil, in a country like this, is not an easy one to abolish. A very large proportion of the inhabitants own live stock, and occasionally the animals of the most careful owners will get loose, and do damage. To follow an accident of such a character with a heavy pecuniary penalty would not be in the interests of public justice. And yet a speedy and simple method ought to be provided whereby a man whose crops have been damaged by trespassing animals can obtain a just indemnity. The subject is worthy of careful consideration by the Legislature. Farmers and others whose experience with the present law enables them to suggest amendments to it, would do well to communicate their views to that body.

AN UNBLUSHING IMPOSTOR.

SALT Lake people will remember a fellow of infinite cheek who some time since established a sort of medical and surgical institute in this city, giving his name as Dr. Foote, Jr., son of the well known practitioner and author of that name who resides in New York. He had not been here long until he began to show unmistakable symptoms of being a fraud of the first water. His discomfiture was completed when the veritable Dr. Foote, of New York, arrived in this city and exposed him as an impostor, there being not only no relation but not even the slightest acquaintanceship between the two. The impostor's game being up he departed for parts unknown, leaving behind him a decidedly unsavory alluvium.

This game character bobs up serene-