

to change the political map of the world. Undisturbed the great giant continues to close in his embrace the part of Asia on which he has set his heart, and at the same time to strengthen his position at home with a view of making it, finally, unassailable.

The latest project under serious consideration is the construction of a canal to unite the Baltic and the Black sea, with a view of affording an outlet to the Black sea fleet, as well as a short route for the Baltic fleet to the Euxine. This is an undertaking perhaps as great as the trans-Siberian railroad, but as it can be put through without any debates by parliament or press, it can be commenced as soon as the government thinks the time has come.

The Baltic end of the canal, it is said, will be at Riga, and the opposite terminus at Kherson, on the Black sea. The entire distance will be 1,000 miles, but artificial excavations will have to be made for only 125 miles. The Dwina will be used as far as Dunsburg. From there a canal will be cut to Lepel on the Beresina, and that river which flows into the Dnieper, and the last named river itself will finish the course to Kherson. The beds of the Dwina, Dnieper and Beresina will be deepened and broadened, so that the waterway will have a uniform surface breadth of 216½ feet and a bottom breadth of 116½ feet. The depth of water in average seasons will be 28 feet so that heavy-draught ships can sail the entire length. It is believed that the work can be accomplished within ten years, and at a cost not to exceed \$25,000,000.

The canal will be of great value to the commercial interests of Russia, as it will bring half a dozen centers of the grain trade into close touch with the sea and reduce the cost of transportation, but its strategic importance probably will have more weight with the czar's advisers, and insure its completion in the briefest possible period of time.

A GLORIOUS VICTORY.

It was a great victory. Where is the Homer to write another Iliad, this time depicting in vivid word-painting the wrath of Commodore Dewey instead of Achilles? Where is the poet to immortalize the furious combat of modern ironclads, hurling at one another the thunderbolts of Jupiter, as it were, instead of the primitive spears and arrows? The naval battle off Manila was an epoch in the history of the United States.

The full details have not yet arrived, but judging from the accounts published, the victory of the American squadron was by no means an easy one. The Spaniards, it seems, were equal in numbers and equipment, if not superior, to the attacking force. They had selected a well protected position and were supported by the batteries on shore. They were brave and determined, keeping up the fight until impossible to do so any longer. Yet, the boys under Commodore Dewey all but annihilated them in a few hours. It must have been a grand spectacle, awe-inspiring, terrible. That the loss of life on both sides was great is not to be doubted, but the whole story has not yet been told. When all is known, the valor, the daring and the loyalty of our sailors will be fully understood, for, if we read dispatches correct, it is evident the victory was not a cheap one.

Those interested in the naval affairs of the world have anxiously been looking for an event of this kind. They wanted to see modern engines of destruction at work in earnest, so as to be able to judge of their practical value for defense and attack. Doubts have frequently been expressed as to

the utility of the complex machines of which modern navies consist. The battle has taken place and the questions involved are presented to the world for critical study. One lesson stands forth with unmistakable clearness above the smoke and din of this engagement, and that is this, that the personal qualities of the men that meet in battle count for everything, now as in ancient days. Physical and intellectual superiority decide wars now as much as in the days of the grapplehook and battle-ax. The Spanish admiral cabled his government, it seems, that his fire kept the American ships moving all the time, unconscious apparently of the fact that this was part of the tactics of our commander for the purpose of rendering the aim of the enemy less certain. And yet, who can tell to what extent the glorious victory was due to this simple maneuver? In the battle off Yalu between the Chinese and Japanese, the former had a numerically somewhat stronger force; but the Japanese commander by a dexterous movement succeeded in getting out of range of about half of the opposing squadron, thus attacking one-half at a time and destroying it. Modern engines of war are truly wonderful machines, but they are effective only when controlled by the still more wonderful intellectual forces with which man has been endowed.

An early effect of the victory of Commodore Dewey is some talk of European interference in the quarrel between the United States and Spain. Such interference can hardly be regarded in this country with feelings of unmixed satisfaction. It all depends on what form it takes. European pressure on Spain to yield to the just demands of the United States would be all right, but if some of the European powers approach the question under the impression that in dealing with the United States they have another Turkey or Japan to dictate terms to, it might be considered necessary, now while we are at it, to dispel that illusion, in our own interest as well as that of others. Then serious complications might arise.

THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

The Straits Settlements is the collective name given to the British possessions on the Malay peninsula which projects into the Chinese sea from the western part of Siam, with the Strait of Malacca on the other side, the most important gateway between India and China. These settlements consist of the island Singapore, where the government seat is, the town and province of Malacca, the territory and islands of the Dindings, the island of Penang and province of Wellesley with their dependencies. The Keeling Islands, formerly belonging to Ceylon, were transferred to the Straits Settlements in 1836. The governor is appointed for six years and is assisted by an executive and legislative council, and since 1874 British residents exercise supervision over the native courts. The population consists of about half a million souls—Europeans, Malays, Chinese and natives of India.

Singapore is the most important of the settlements. It consists of an island 27 miles long and 14 broad. It is separated from the peninsula by a strait less than half a mile wide at the narrowest point. The only town in the settlement is the city of Singapore, the capital of the Straits Settlements. It is a picturesque, prosperous town with a large European population.

It is probable that as events in the Philippine islands develop the names here mentioned will become more familiar to the American public.

It is a severe reflection on the Span-

ish government of the Philippines to contrast the conditions on these islands with those of the Straits Settlements under a more humane and rational rule. The inhabitants of the Philippines should be as much capable of civilization as the natives of the Malay peninsula and surrounding islands, and yet, what a contrast!

PRICES ADVANCING.

Probably the first of our producers to realize anything as a result of the American-Spanish war will be the sheep raisers and wool dealers. Both industries are largely represented in this State, and from both have complaints occasionally been heard that the results of the business do not reach a sum sufficiently large to justify the original outlay, incidental expense and inevitable losses through death, exposure and theft. Now, however, things look favorable for that fraternity, not only in this State but all others. The United States has made a call for large amounts of woolen fabrics for soldiers' clothing, also for blankets, etc., the call being considered heavy enough to give an immediate upward impetus to the wool business in all its phases, but if the war continues long there will have to be many more such issued. Meanwhile, the regular market will fall off very little if at all, not enough to neutralize the advance which the government's requirements are sure to bring about, and altogether the growers and handlers of fleeces will undoubtedly be in clover for awhile at least.

It is not necessary to engage in verbal speculation regarding the cattle business. It is one of the firmest quotations on the market, with a tendency to raise rather than recede. This may not be very cheering information for home consumers, however, who in most cases pay the bills finally, but is a fine thing for those who have stock or sheep to sell. As the old adage has it, 'tis an ill wind that blows nobody good.

WILL SPAIN QUIT NOW?

Senor Silvela's speech in the Spanish Cortes Monday would not possess the significance it does had it been made at any other time or in any other place. For a Castilian—a loyal Castilian, at that—to publicly assert in the presence of his fellow legislators and large numbers of the public that Spain will be unable to hold on to her transatlantic possessions is looked upon as very significant. Over here such a statement is regarded as merely a recital of what is inevitable and what any one can see whose eyes are not closed to unpleasant truths because they are unpleasant; but coming from such a source they come very near bordering on the startling. Bluster and brag are shown to be abundant factors in the Spanish stock in trade, and a candid statement amounting in effect to an admission that that country has permitted itself to be drawn into a useless, hopeless conflict does but show the exception which establishes the rule, that the Spanish as a class are not sufficiently liberal in their use of veracity.

Silvela must be a man of wondrous nerve as well as unusual frankness to be able to make such a concession under the circumstances. Had there been more of his special qualification reposing in the system of Premier Sagasta, the Spanish might today be in undisputed possession of some twenty ships which have been captured or destroyed by the forces of the United States government also of large sums of money which have been sacrificed and lost, and perhaps 500 or more of her fighting men who have been slain in battle with "Yankee pigs." But he and his associates were sadly deficient in the re-