

yachts, and the occasional visit of the coast steamers. The shore is not very rocky, the weeds are few, and far between. A keen observer may "do" the marine attraction in a few hours. Not so the attractions on land; for the mountain canyons and the many nooks and corners are bristling with attractions that the wealthy pleasure seekers only can ferret out. A dying sinner may well regret having to leave this earthly paradise for the slim chance of a better world beyond—so the real estate men say.

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## EUROPEAN TOPICS.

One of the remarkable "signs of the times" is that the movements of diplomatic agents seem to have lost their terrors. There was a time, and that not very long ago, when the visit of a Bismarck to England would have been considered a grave event. Not so at the present moment, which does not seem favorable to an extension of power by political alliances. It is only necessary to cast a glance at the map of Europe to be convinced of this. On all sides the present system of political alliances is falling into pieces. In Hungary, in the Balkan Peninsula, and even in Italy, there is irremediable disaster. In these countries the policy that hitherto governed is now pronounced a failure, and its exponents see power falling from their hands. On the other hand, the good understanding between England and Russia—which the much abused Sir Robert Morier seems to have brought about—has certainly put a check to any aggressive movements in Central Europe.

The value of the Triple Alliance has been hotly discussed in both Austria-Hungary and Italy and its advantages and disadvantages compared. There are those who see in the heavy armaments of Europe a sign of impending danger; but whether it is so may be doubted. On the contrary, the very fact that all European nations are armed to the teeth and are pretty much on equal terms as to equipments is rather favorable to peace than otherwise. A belligerent nation has the heart for prancing about *a la militaire* taken out of her, when she is met on all sides by forces equal to her own. In the case of a nation able to crumple up her adversaries like a piece of paper, she might find the temptation to break the peace of Europe too strong to be resisted. The consciousness that any contest must be upon equal terms, therefore, unquestionably makes for peace. The attempt of any nation to make itself the dominator of Europe has already proved itself an egregious failure, despite the Triple Alliance, which looks more fierce on paper than it is in reality.

The meeting which has just taken place between Queen Victoria and Queen Christina has evidently no political significance, except so far as it shows that Spain has at length entered definitely into the European system, and that Spain has before

her a prospect of steady government. Queen Christina has shown herself an able as well as a popular ruler, and her unimpeachable private life has told in her favor with a nation not accustomed to regard their rulers as models of virtue and duty. In her business of sovereign, Queen Christina has been ably supported by Senor Agasta, who has performed wonders in keeping together the warring sections of the Spanish liberal party. On the other hand, the chief of the conservatives, Senor Canovas del Castillo, has displayed an amount of forbearance, and self-abnegation, quite unusual in a Spanish political leader, and has given an honest support to a liberal government rather than peril the regency by insisting on his political claims. During the past few years Spain has been fairly prosperous, and has made considerable political progress, no small portion of which is due to one of the best and most correct of Spanish sovereigns.

In the death of Edmond Scherer, France has lost one of her purest *literati*, and one of her most thoughtful and patriotic citizens. In 1842 he became connected with the *Oretoire* in Geneva, the president of which was the celebrated Merle d'Aubigne, the historian of the reformation. Professor Scherer was without doubt the ablest teacher in that institution for many years. His subsequent career in Paris as a writer, as one of the literary editors of *Le Temps*, and as a statesman, are too well known to need a eulogy. The fact that Mathew Arnold, the great English essayist, so often refers to Scherer's judgment as a kind of touchstone to correct the bias of English and German writers is sufficient to indicate his intellectual standing. Here is what Mr. Arnold says of him in one of his latest essays: "M. Edmond Scherer is an exceptional Frenchman. He is senator of France and one of the editors of *Le Temps* newspaper. He was trained at Geneva, that home of large instruction and lucid intelligence. He knows thoroughly the language and literature of England, Italy and Germany as well as of France. Well-informed, intelligent, disinterested, open-minded and sympathetic, his death would leave a gap in the commonwealth of letters."

The German criminal code is at this present time being critically examined by the Federal Council, with the view of increasing the stringency of its already stringent provisions. The new bill would place all newspapers whatsoever at the mercy of the government. Should the proposed bill become law, the German press would then be in the same position as that of Russia, where a free parliament does not exist, and where the gag is universal. It is quite possible that when the bill is presented to the Reichstag it will be rejected, despite the enormous influence which will be exerted in its favor.

The influence of the German language and German literature is beginning to be felt among Oriental nations. Since the beginning of the year there appears at Tokio, Japan,

a scientific monthly in the German language entitled "From West to East," entirely edited by Japanese, former students at German universities, for the purpose of "promoting the German language in Japan, of acquainting their countrymen with German manners, customs and ideas, by the reproduction of German works and translations into German of original Japanese works."

The properties of that wonderful metal aluminium have been long and favorably known; but some intelligent persons may not be aware that it is most useful when alloyed with copper, in the ratio of from seven to ten per cent of the latter metal. When mixed in this proportion the compound is less than half as heavy as iron, as strong and tough as the best of steel, and in color resembling gold and capable of receiving a very high degree of polish. Until lately the price of such a compound has been about five dollars a pound, and this fact has prevented the metal from coming into general use. But the discovery that it can be made from common clay at the rate of twenty cents a pound or at a still less price will make a revolution in the manufacture of many articles. The Swiss government has experimented with cannon made from this metal and found these cannon both lighter and stronger than similar articles made from brass or steel. As this new compound is so very light, strong, and not liable to rust, it seems destined to become a favorite in the manufacture of farmers' and carpenters' tools, household utensils and the thousand and one articles where brass, nickel or copper is now employed. The Swiss arms manufactory at Newhausen is now experimenting with this compound with the idea of using it in the manufacture of rifles, pistols, etc., for the Swiss Federal army.

The greatest difficulty hitherto encountered in the manufacture of aluminium is the great heat required in order to melt the clay from which the metal is formed. The heat of the ordinary furnace as used in the melting of iron is totally inadequate. The heat produced by electricity is the only artificial heat known to man that is sufficiently intense. Preparations are now in progress to utilize the great falls of the river Rhine—the greatest water power in Europe—in order to produce sufficient electricity to heat a smelting furnace for the production of this metal. A great turbine wheel, or rather a series of turbine wheels, the largest the world has ever seen, will be here built for the purpose of driving dynamos for the generation of electricity.

What a strange idea indeed, when one only stops to think of it, to use the waters of a mighty river to produce a heat—with the exception of volcanoes—the most intense that man has ever seen.

During the month of March the countries on the north shore of the Mediterranean experienced some strange vicissitudes of weather. Even far down on the peninsula of Italy between the Adriatic and the