

Popocatepetl, which, it really in progress, is the first occurrence of the kind for nearly four hundred years. Popocatepetl, if not the highest, is at least next to the highest mountain in North America, the doubt being rather in favor of Orizaba, another Mexican volcano.

Readers of history will remember that the "great smoking mountain," as its name means, was reputed to be in active and disastrous commotion about the time of the Spanish conquest of the Aztec land. Since then it has been quiescent, though keeping up a peaceful and continuous smoking. The column ascending from its cone has at times been visible for great distances, but there has not usually been anything to interfere with a descent into the crater or with the operations of the laborers engaged in collecting sulphur there. The Boston Herald, describing the vast fields of lava and the hundreds of extinct cones in that part of Mexico, argues that these all show that at a period of comparatively recent date, in a geological sense, there was a terrible volcanic activity. One great bed of lava runs far towards the Pacific coast from the peak of Ajusco, the third highest elevation about the valley of Mexico. Many scientists have regarded it as not at all unlikely that Popocatepetl should break out very actively some day. Mexico has two very active volcanoes: The peak of Colima, near the coast, and the comparatively slight eminence of Jorulla in the state of Michoacan. These are both remote from lines of travel. As Popocatepetl is very near the City of Mexico, with railway lines across both its western and eastern flanks, it would offer an unrivaled opportunity for tourists to see a "live volcano," should it really prove to be in active eruption.

### THE EUROPEAN SITUATION.

The recent news from Europe is of a rather serious character. As startling as a peal of thunder from a clear sky came the intelligence that three English officers and sixteen black soldiers in the British service had been killed by Frenchmen in Africa, somewhere in the Niger valley. The nightly encounter was thought likely to result in serious complications, but as it was explained that the affair was the result of a mistake of the commanding French officer, who also was killed in the encounter, it is expected that the payment of an indemnity and an explanation of the circumstances by the French will appease the wrath of the British lion. However, the affair is not calculated to strengthen the friendly relations between the two countries, already rather strained since the Siam affair.

Still more startling rumors come from Italy. The scanty telegraphic advices tell of the revolt on Sicily and the mobilization of troops all over the kingdom, but particularly on the French frontier, from which the inference may be drawn that not all, by a long way, is told. Special correspondents to foreign papers say that Italy is on the verge of a revolution and that matters have gone so far that the king has transferred his private cash amounting to about \$29,000,000 to London bankers, as if preparing for the

possible emergency of having to leave the country a fugitive.

Should these rumors prove true, the situation in Italy may be compared to that of France before the last war. The rottenness of the administration had become so obnoxious to the people, that the only resource left the imperial government was to divert the attention to other matters, in which said government succeeded so well that the popular outcry against the emperor was changed to one yell against Germany. It is already stated that the present Italian rulers are prepared to try a similar plan. Subsidized paper-tell of French intrigues in Sicily and hostile intentions against the kingdom. There may be truth in such rumors but they harmonize with the popular anti-French sentiment and serve to keep the embers glowing ready for a big blaze at any time.

It is significant that while Italy is working up a strong feeling against the French, German papers are equally busy against Russia. The story of the massacre of Catholics in the church at Kroshe serves this purpose admirably. The condemnation of this fiendish affair, the particulars of which have appeared in the News, can hardly be expressed in too strong terms, and it is used with effect.

In Austria, the third power of the Triple Alliance, a story is circulated to the effect that a Czech conspiracy has been discovered in Bohemia, paid for and stimulated by French money. All this certainly looks like a concerted effort to unite firmly the three powers of the Triple Alliance by strengthening the hostile sentiment against France and Russia.

When the present state of affairs in the old world is considered, the keen statesmanship necessary to keep the equilibrium undisturbed may be conjectured. How long, we may well ask, shall the nations suffer their rulers to keep them on the edge of a burning volcano, threatening eruption every minute? How long before it will be seen that the best interests of all are best served by everybody attending to his own affairs, and all striving to excel in the pursuits of peace and the promotion of individual happiness on the basis of the great principles of that religion which all Europe confesses!

### POLISH SUGAR-MAKERS.

A New Orleans weekly, sailing under the tremendous title of *The Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer*, is a bright and newsworthy exponent of the interests that such a periodical might be expected to look after. Its range of information seems to be wide as the earth, and it gleams and gathers from various climes with much skill and freedom. California, as "the paradise of the sugar beet," and some of the work done in that great state in sugar-making, come in for prominent mention, and among news items is the following reproduced from a Pacific coast paper:

The Poles are after the persimmons in spite of the danger to the bounty. It is telegraphed from Omaha that Count Lubinski and other Polish capitalists have been there for months investigating the

best sugar industry with the view to establishing large factories. They have decided to establish a factory and a refinery at a cost of \$1,500,000, and will bring over a colony of Polish bee-sugar farmers.

### A GREAT PAWNSHOP.

Plans for the relief of the poor—practicable, visionary, and other kinds—have probably excited more attention from philanthropists and publicists during the past three years than at any previous time in all the world's history. The schemes proposed range all the way from the fundamentally correct idea of furnishing work to the unemployed, up to the wildest vagaries of some calling themselves Populists, and to the bloodiest mutterings of the anarchists. There is no doubt that the generosity of the classes, employed through organized charity, has been adequate to the relief of millions of deserving poor. On the other hand it is undeniable that vast sums have been squandered in improper distribution, and that thousands of the beneficiaries are undeserving according to any definition that law or morality or common sense is acquainted with.

It now appears that in thickly populated eastern sections of our country the actually needy are not confined to the ranks of those usually regarded as destitute. The wants of the latter can be seen at a glance; receiving no income from any source, and with nothing to sell, not even their labor, their only recourse is to the charity of the state or their better-supplied fellow-men. But evidence is accumulating that among those formerly held to be tariffy and well-to-do, continued loss of employment has reduced many to the severest straits, and is surely and rapidly absorbing not only their little savings but personal possessions which are commonly regarded as indispensable. How best to aid these really deserving persons—who require only temporary assistance, not regular charity, is a new feature of the grave problem of the day. One solution is offered by the *New York Tribune*, in the establishment of a great pawnshop. That paper argues that since an immense amount of money and supplies is sure to be provided by the benevolent people of New York, and there is danger that it will not only be largely wasted but that its distribution will develop permanent evils, every citizen is bound so far as he can to avert these consequences by seeing to it that his own gifts are not unwisely bestowed. It continues, that of a different sort, though directly suggested by these considerations, is the relief that might be furnished by the creation, under proper regulations, of a great pawnshop similar in organization and administration to the *Mont de Piete* in Paris. In New York, as in all great cities, the pawnbrokerage system is little better than an instrument of rapacity; and the *Tribune* maintains that no greater service could be rendered to the deserving poor in the present emergency than by the establishment of an institution for loaning money to them upon the miscellaneous articles which they could spare now and which they might redeem upon payment of reasonable interest hereafter. By that means