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The Week in Review

At Berlin.

KING Edward and Queen Alexandra's visit to Berlin will probably have the effect of still further Anglicising the manners and customs of society in the German capital. With all this professed hatred of the English and English ways, Continental countries are very fond of copying our methods, and the gilded youth loves nothing better than to be thought an authority on English sport and English social customs. It is not very long ago since the Kaiser sent the Crown Prince to attend a regular course of studies at the Berlin Technical High School. That a scion of the Prussian dynasty should leave the beaten track of military exercises and military tactics to learn matters technical, such as electricity, mechanics and engineering, was a thing previously unheard of and many remonstrances were made. But the Emperor defended his action by pointing out that a modern monarch should be equipped with a practical turn of mind, and he contended that a great deal of the political and colonial success achieved by Englishmen was due to their gift of viewing matters squarely and soberly, unhampered by theories.

The Anglicised German.

In matters of sport the Germans have shown themselves only too anxious to copy the English people. They have founded rowing clubs, football associations, and kindred institutions. Tennis is quite the vogue, and the Berlin West-end Tennis Club is one of the most exclusive and fashionable clubs in the City. English nurses are engaged for the babies, English Governesses for the children, and English tutors for the boys. Furniture is imported from London, and the men order their clothes from London tailors. The big hotels, such as the fashionable Hotel Kaiserhof and the Kaufhaus des Westens advertise "English Five o'clock Tea" in their prospectuses and bills. The mid-day meal or "mittagessen" has given place to the English luncheon, and a stylish dinner has replaced the cold supper of former days. The fashionable young German even goes so far as to try to imitate the Englishman's drawl, and his highest ambition is to be taken for an English University man. The Kaiser has undoubtedly given a great impetus in this direction, and the military caste view some of his recent actions with grave mistrust. Bismarck's great aim was to discredit all things English, and such a reversal of his policy does not meet with ready acceptance from those who follow in his footsteps.

The Penguin Victims.

The funeral of the victims of the Penguin disaster was one of the most solemn and impressive sights ever witnessed in the Empire city. Five lorries draped with Union Jacks were used to convey the coffins, which were also covered with flags. There were innumerable wreaths of immortelles, roses, and white sweet peas, and in front of the lorries came the Mission Band with muffled drums, and long lines of cabs followed. Many people followed on foot, and many walked alongside, while the streets were lined with people standing bareheaded. The bodies were interred in two rows of separate graves, at the north end of the cemetery in the presence of a large crowd. The services in each instance were brief,

the clergy realising that it was desirable to conclude the obsequies as early and as reverently as possible. Even as it was the services which had commenced soon after 10 a.m. extended well into the afternoon. A solemn requiem mass was celebrated at the Sacred Heart basilica, when Archbishop Redwood preached an eloquent sermon expressing the universal sympathy felt in all parts of the Empire with the families that had been so suddenly bereaved.

"Fighting Charlie."

Everybody will regret the retirement from active service of Lord Charles Beresford. He has always been popular with the English people, who have found in "Fighting Charlie" their ideal of the dauntless naval officer. When only occupying the rank of lieutenant, he was selected to accompany the King on his trip to India, and he has always been a favourite with his Sovereign. His first great achievement was at the bombardment of Alexandria, where he was in command of the Condor. His bravery earned for him a signal, "Well done, Condor," and he was specially mentioned in despatches. He served with great distinction on Lord Wolsley's staff in the Nile expedition of 1884, and received the thanks of Parliament. In the House he has been a keen critic of naval policy, and has persistently advocated the necessity of keeping up the strength of the fleet. His relations with some of his colleagues became somewhat strained last year, and it is probable that he has been retired owing to his indiscreet criticisms of his superior officers.

The Wool Sales.

The Auckland February wool sales produced brisk competition, and prices were firm and all sorts in fairly strong demand. The better types of wool realised about the same rates as in January, but the stained and bush wool sold exceedingly well at an advance of from 4d. to 5d., and more demand was shown for locks and pieces. There was a total catalogue of 1,700 bales as against 918 for the corresponding sale of last year. A good illustration of the value of sorting was offered in the case of a line sent in by Messrs. G. W. Binney and Sons. In January last they submitted ten bales, and these were passed in at 6d. In the interval it was reclassified by the firm's classifiers, and at the sale last week it was sold as follows: One bale half-breed 83d., two bales fine crossbred 84d., five bales crossbred 85d., one bale dingy crossbred 55d., one cotts 55d., the gain to the vendors being well worth the labour expended.

Pauperism and Charity.

The English Local Government Board states that there has been a large increase in the number of inmates of the workhouses, though the cost of providing for them has fallen by £50,000 since the Poplar Union disclosures. In 1908 there were nearly a million persons in receipt of indoor or outdoor relief, and these were supported at a cost of over fourteen millions a year. In London the cost per head was exactly double that outside, being £28 18/10, as against £13 9/6. The inspectors appointed by the Board commented on the large amount of alcohol consumed in the provincial workhouses. One ward cost 53s. per head yearly for beer and spirits. The inspectors are also unanimous in the opinion that the Unemployed Act has produced a bad effect, and they consider that it is sap- ing the spirit of independence and self-

reliance and teaching people to rely on public funds rather than on individual effort.

Difficulties of the Act.

One of the results of this Act was the establishment of labour colonies at Holmesley Bay and Panbridge. The result has certainly not been encouraging. Before the Holmesley Bay estate became public property a steward with eighteen farm hands was able to make a small profit or incurred a small loss every year. Since it became a State-relief work, with 250 men engaged on it, it has shown a net loss of £22,000 a year. The net cost per week per man is from 30s. to 32s., whereas local wages are from 17s. to 18s. a week. It is said that it took 67 able-bodied men ten days to dig an acre and a-half. Many an agricultural labourer could have done the task single-handed in very little longer time. These labour colonies have resulted in an enormous waste of public money, and have encouraged workers to believe that relief work is easier and better paid than work done outside.

A Distinguished Visitor.

The proposed visit of Sir Charles Lucan, Assistant Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office and permanent head of the Dominion's Department, to Australasia and Canada cannot fail to bring about a better understanding between the Colonial Office and the colonies. It will be remembered that at the last Premiers' Conference Mr. Deakin urged that something should be done by which officials at Home might have an opportunity of acquainting themselves personally with the countries with whose affairs they had so frequently to deal. Mr. Chamberlain may be said to have been the first English statesman to try and get in touch with the colonies, and before his time it was not easy to get even intelligent consideration of vital questions of colonial policy. Six months is not very long for a tour of Canada and Australasia, but Sir Charles will be able to gain some practical knowledge of our affairs, and it is to be hoped that similar tours will be arranged in the near future.

Unruly Gods.

Frequent complaints are made from time to time regarding the conduct of certain roughs who attend our theatres. Quite recently at the Auckland Opera House an occupant of the gallery threw a beer bottle into the stalls, and an act like this might easily result in the infliction of serious injury, or even loss of life. Mr. G. H. Smith, the manager for the J. C. Williamson Company, in the course of a letter to the Press, says:—"The galleries in Auckland are noted for the misbehaviour of some who regularly attend them, with the idea of airing their common vulgar wit (if the term may be used), by now and then during a performance throwing out some rude, filthy interjection when the artists are (in most cases) engaged in some earnest, tense scene. I am prepared to say that even in the midland and northern towns in England (where one looks for the galleryite to be a more rough and uneducated person (speaking generally), much better behaviour exists. Such a thing as rude interjections, cracking of nuts, etc., during a quiet scene, is met with by instant expulsion."

He goes on to say that his request for a special constable to keep order in the gallery met with a refusal on the ground that the smallness of the force made it highly inconvenient to spare a man for special duty. The pleasure of the audience is frequently spoilt by the stupid and vulgar interjections of some of the occupants of the gallery, and the throwing of bottles from the gallery into the stalls, adds a distinct element of danger. If the police force is too small to

enable it to attend to the duty of maintaining order in public places, then it is quite time that it should be increased, or that special constables should be sworn in for this duty. If men can be spared to act as art censors, to read and criticise the literary work of modern novelists, and to spend hours in the endeavour to persuade a licensee to supply a drink on Sunday, surely one could be found to attend to the duty of preventing rowdiness at public entertainments. It need not take the whole of his time. He could take with him a copy of "Le Nu au Salon," and Mr. Ernest Rhys' excellent monograph on the classical art of Lord Leighton, together with a batch of the latest novels. There would then be no reason why keeping order at the theatre should interfere with the ordinary routine duties of the force.

The King's Speech.

The King's Speech dealt with several matters of great importance, and fore-shadowed legislation that is likely to be keenly contested. Owing to the adoption of old age pensions, and the increase in naval expenditure, there will be an excess of expenditure over receipts during the coming year. The estimated cost of the pension scheme was £6,500,000, but Mr. Hobhouse, one of the Parliamentary secretaries to the Treasury, stated last week that the cost would be nearly £9,000,000, or £2,500,000 over the estimate. The Navy estimates totalled £32,319,500 being an increase of £900,000 on the previous year. As the prospective surplus in the Budget was only £241,000, it will be seen that the pension scheme alone will entail a considerable deficit. The Welsh Disestablishment Bill brought over from last year, is to be proceeded with. Mr. Asquith has pledged himself to do his utmost to carry this through. In replying to a deputation which waited on him last July, he said: "He sat a year ago with the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in that room, listening to the deputation of Welsh members, and he then said he would regard it not only as a matter of disappointment but of reproach if this Parliament came to an end before a Disestablishment Bill had been carried through the House of Commons. He thought so still. It was their home, and it was their intention, to submit next session to Parliament proposals dealing with the matter. That hope might be frustrated, and their intentions might be defeated. If they were, it would not be through any act or default of theirs. It was hopeless to depict what the fortunes or the progress of the bill might be, but he thought they would be satisfied to have the House of Commons put in possession of their proposals before the end of next session."

England and Germany.

Turning to foreign affairs, the speech contained much of great interest. Reference was made to the visit of the King and Queen to Berlin, and the confident hope was expressed that it would do much to strengthen the amicable feelings essential for the mutual welfare and peace of foreign relations. Affairs in Persia had caused anxiety as the present troubles endangered the numerous commercial interests of Great Britain and Persia. The two Governments were exchanging views on the matter. The joint note presented by the Russian and British representatives at Tiflis last September has not been given effect to by the Shah, and doubtless further pressure will be brought to bear to compel him to safeguard the interests of those two Powers. The situation in the Balkans was regarded as most promising, and satisfaction was expressed with the steps being taken to quell sedition and improve the administration of affairs in India. It will thus be seen that while there are