

The Wide World.

CABLE NEWS IN BRIEF.

IMPERIAL.

THE British elections, begun last Saturday, are still in full swing, and the final results will not be complete until Tuesday next. So far all the "front bench" men on both sides of the House have been re-elected, but the wide disparity between the two main parties will not be perpetuated in the new House. The most notable defeats have been those of Will Thorne and Will Crooks, the Labour leaders.

The tariff and the navy have boomed large in the battle, and Mr. Balfour, in a plea for preference, said that the Government had turned a deaf ear to the pleadings of the oversea dominions. He trusted that we would not for long turn an unheeding ear, while the method of framing tariffs adopted by our rivals was such as would compel the colonies, unless we altered our policy, to come to some arrangement with those with whom they were doing business. Mr. Will Crooks made the surprising statement that the colonies laughed at and scorned the idea of any preference from Britain. The Federal Minister for Customs took the first opportunity of denying this, remarking that no sentiment was more popular throughout Australia, and that last year the preference extended by Australia had meant a voluntary gift of £828,000 to British merchants. A straight out threat as to what would happen if preference were granted was made by Herr Harden, the noted editor of the "Zukunft," who said: "Every chancellery holds that an Anglo-German war is probable. There are people in Germany who declare that a Customs tariff closing the British Empire to German goods will have to be pierced by the German sword. Mr. Asquith says that the naval power of Britain is complete and unassailable, while Dr. J. Macnamara, Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, stated at Hastings that he would stand by the following forecast concerning the respective strength of Britain and Germany in April, 1912:—Dreadnoughts 20 to 13, pre-Dreadnoughts 40 to 20, cruisers 35 to 13, a total of 95 to 48.

The "Daily Mail" reports that the War Office census of horses reveals an alarming deficiency owing to the activity of foreign buyers. The census enumerates 156,000 horses, being the maximum required, but leaving no allowance for reserve.

It is expected that the trouble over the Eight Hours in Mines Act, which threw over a hundred thousand Northumberland and Durham miners idle, will be settled by conciliation. Meantime three-fourths of the men are now at work.

FOREIGN.

A tariff war is threatened between America and Germany over the Payne tariff. The reciprocity treaty having expired, America demanded as an irreducible minimum the free entry of meat into Germany. This the agrarians would not concede, and America threatens the maximum tariff on April 1, while Germany replies that her maximum will automatically operate against America on February 7. England will secure the advantages of the minimum tariff, but the preference her colonies grant her detours them from the minimum, and another tariff war between Canada and the United States is likely.

President Taft, in a message to Congress, advocated conservation of the natural resources of the United States, and asked the withdrawal from private settlement of such public lands as contain timber, coal, minerals, or phosphates, or which border on water. The President applied for 30,000,000 dollars to complete irrigation projects already begun, and for 60,000,000 dollars for the deepening of inland waterways. The Sultan of Turkey's palace which cost four millions to build, was destroyed

ed by fire on Wednesday, many of the archives of the Ottoman Empire being burned. A disastrous fire in a clothing factory in Philadelphia resulted in twelve women being killed jumping from high windows, others being killed when the roof fell in.

THE COMMONWEALTH.

Serious floods affected the inland districts of New South Wales, the rivers rising to record heights. Many townships were isolated and hundreds of settlers have been left homeless. Over a dozen lives were lost, and the damage to property is enormous. Relief funds have been opened.

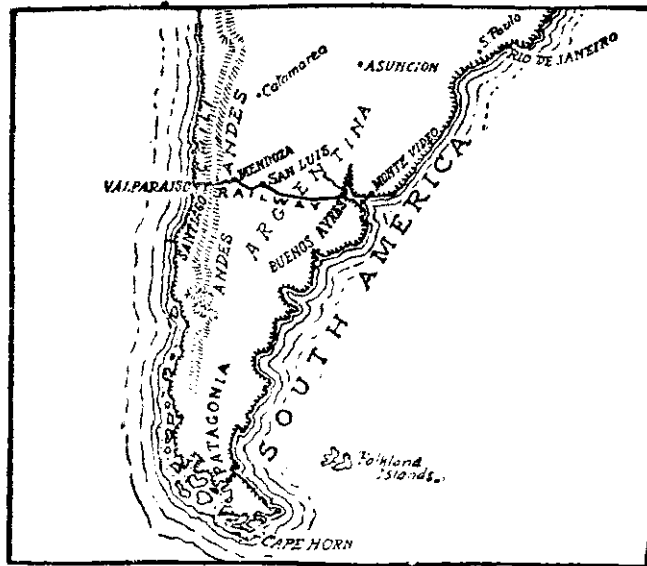
The Newcastle strike still continues, and hopes of a settlement are still distant. The Southern miners balloted, by a small majority, in favour of a Compulsory Wages Board, but they will not return to work till the demands of their northern fellow-unionists are satisfied. Peter Bowling proposes a scheme of conciliation, but it is not considered likely that the employers will accept this.

Lord Kitchener has carefully inspected the defences of Melbourne and the forces of Victoria, after which he had a lengthy conference with the Federal Ministry. Mr. Deakin subsequently remarking that by the help of Lord Kit-

pointment of a committee of six distinguished scientists to examine Dr. Cook's papers was intended as a concession to public feeling, which regarded the national honour and prestige as seriously involved in the dispute. When this Committee reported that it had received from Dr. Cook only a type-written copy of the "story" that he supplied to American newspapers, and "a copy of note-books which contain no astronomical records," the scientific world practically washed its hands of Cook; but Denmark has been waiting anxiously for the official pronouncement of Copenhagen University, which has carefully examined all the documentary evidence in secret. Cook's friends will doubtless attempt to make capital out of the fact that this last report contains no reference to the "faked" observations which Cook was recently accused of purchasing; but in such a case as this, nothing but definite and conclusive proof of the explorer's good faith and his success could have saved him. Such proof is manifestly wanting, and we are driven, however reluctantly, to accept as probably accurate the charges brought against him of falsifying his Mt. McKinley records and photographs and attempting to procure spurious observations, "the same with intent to deceive." The facts speak for themselves, and alienists and other students of morbid psychology will probably entertain themselves for some time to come with attempts to diagnose this extraordinary case and to decide whether Cook's gigantic swindle was the outcome of vulgar dishonesty, or was due to mental derangement induced by the terrible hardships which he had suffered, and the terribly nervous strain to which he has been exposed.

other necessary of life, has from time to time given place to a definite grievance, and thus to a resolute determination to resist to the uttermost such an encroachment upon the rights of the people to a fair share in the means of living. And so by an easy process of development we reach the situation that has arisen in the Eastern States where the rise in the price of food has induced the consumers to combine in a boycott against the depredations of the irresponsible capitalists who are ruthlessly exploiting the needs of the poor.

We need hardly labour to prove the generally acknowledged fact that the American meat supply is practically controlled by a few great houses—Armours, Swifts, Morris, the National Packing Company—and it is almost universally admitted in the United States that the great combine into which these firms have been organised has secured its impregnable position by illegitimate means. However, the knowledge of the existence of a dishonest monopoly is not enough to arouse public resistance, so long as the individual consumer does not feel the burden pressing too heavily on his own shoulders. But in America the Meat Trust seems to have made the mistake of allowing its greed to outrun its discretion; for there is no doubt that it has been steadily raising retail prices against the consumer for a long time past. Four years ago Mr. C. E. Russell, in his famous attack upon the Meat Trust, showed that while the cost of cattle had fallen, the price of meat had risen everywhere in the markets that the Trust controls. It takes some time for facts of this kind to impress themselves upon the public imagination; but the Americans appear to be realising at last that they are being systematically forced to pay extortionate prices for their food to swell the profits of a handful of plutocratic law-breakers. When once the nation fully grasps this truth, we may safely trust the courage and capacity of the Americans to find a way out of the difficulty. But the position of America in regard to the Meat Trust to-day may be our own to-morrow, and the experience of the United States should be enough to persuade all democratic nations that it is the duty of the State to protect the people against any attempt on the part of monopolists to secure control over the sources of the food supply.



THE ANDES PIERCED BY A RAILWAY TUNNEL.

Map showing the situation of the tunnel which has pierced the Andes, between Argentina and Chile. The two sections of this huge tunnel, which is 3280 yards long and about 11,000 feet above the sea, were joined recently. The railway will be at once constructed, and by next March passengers should be able to travel between Valparaiso and Buenos Ayres without going round Cape Horn. The completion of the tunnel is a great triumph for the British engineers who have carried out the work.

chener's judgment and knowledge, Cabinet hoped to revolve a defence scheme which would stand to them without idle sacrifice of their young manhood in the last emergency.

The Cook Fiasco.

The verdict pronounced by the Council of the Copenhagen University upon Dr. Cook's diaries must be regarded as disposing finally of that extraordinary man's pretensions. Copenhagen, having received Cook with high honours on his return to civilisation, and having thus committed itself to some sort of recognition of his claims, has naturally been much interested in the controversy that has raged round him, and the ap-

Food and the Trusts.

From time to time the nations have been solemnly warned of the danger in store for them if they allow their supplies of food to fall into the hands of a few powerful monopolists; but so far the ominous predictions of economists and demagogues have produced little effect. It is still open to any man or corporation rich or powerful enough to secure control of a country's stock of meat or corn or coal, and by raising prices at his own discretion to make profit out of the necessities of the general public. In America, however, where the principle of commercial monopoly has been most effectively carried out, the vague apprehension of a "corner" in grain or some

What Is a Gentleman?

One of the world's great sayings is that which Carlyle made famous. "How did you know he was a gentleman?" "Oh, he kept a gig." But the beauty of that does not solve the problem of the definition of the grand old name of gentleman. Somewhere or other a lady is made to say: "Show me a man, and I'll tell you whether he is a gentleman or not. But I can't define the creature." And it is to be feared that the feeble intelligence of the human race is not likely to get much further than that. At all events the latest police-court definition will not help us. A gentleman, it was stated at Westminster, London, is "a man who smokes sixpenny cigars."

"If you walk into a criminal court and bet 9 to 1 that the case being heard arose from drink you will win money," said Judge Rentoul at the Old Bailey, London. "Ninety per cent of the cases heard here and 97 or 98 per cent of the cases of bodily injury arise from drink."

I noticed in the Wellington newspapers that at a graduation ceremony there was much disturbance by students. For the sake of University education in New Zealand this is much to be deplored.—The Chancellor of the University of New Zealand (Sir R. Stout).

Under the circumstances, with so much concern being manifested, and so much interest being taken in the matter, I think some sort of inquiry should take place.—Mr. G. M. Poole, M.P., on the Knyvett case.