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## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

It seems that the "deterrent effect" is received as THE "DETERRENT sound not only in the policy of Lord Salisbury, but EFFECT." generally in all matters relating to the necessities of government. So long as any severe measure is carried out in accordance with the laws of any particular realm, and with the end of serving the interests of a government or a dynasty, it is deserving of approval. This is the lesson we learn once more, this time from the opinions pronounced in authoritative quarters on the late doings of the Ameer of Cabul in Afghan Turkestan. The Ameer had been accused by the Russian Press of having travelled into that particular province of his kingdom, which was more or less disaffected towards him, and where a little before a perfidious lieutenant governor, named Ishak Khan had rebelled against him, for the purpose of initiating a movement against the Russians on his Southern frontier, and in alliance with the Emir of Bokhara proclaiming against them a "jihad," or holy war. This, however, is denied by some correspondents of the London *Times*, who are looked upon as authorities on the subject, and who explain that the object of the Ameer had been to subjugate and punish disaffected subjects over whom he rules by methods that cannot be described as those of "rose-water." "In establishing his authority," comments the *Times*, "whether at Cabul, Candahar, or Herat, he has never been restrained by European motives of humanity. He would regard all such notions as mere weakness, certain to end in his downfall; and very probably he is right, Afghanistan being what it is. . . . No one can blame him if he does all in his power to stamp out the influence of Ishak in Afghan Turkestan, and to overawe those who might be tempted to become his partisans." The doctrine of the "deterrent effect," then, holds good whether it be applied to Afghanistan or to Ireland. In fact this doctrine explains and excuses a good deal that has been laid to the charge of various countries and various times, and otherwise explicable only on evil principles and quite inexcusable. The "deterrent effect," however, also has its other side. When an Ameer of Cabul, for example, digs a row of graves and ranges in them all alive a row of culprits—charitably cutting their throats before he covers them in—he produces the "deterrent effect" in a way for which seeing his necessities, no one can blame him—according to the *Times*. But when an Irish community boycotts some self-seeking interloper who backs up an evicting landlord by taking the land off which the unfortunate tenants have been mercilessly driven, the "deterrent effect" is produced in quite another manner, and is inexcusable and justly penal. The "deterrent effect," nevertheless, as applied to the ends of government, whether they be just or unjust, and whether with Afghanish barbarity or English oppression, enters into the most useful and most approved methods of the day.

THE rumour that the Czar will visit the exhibition A SIGNIFICANT at Paris if it be true is of some import. The late VISIT. attendance of his Majesty, with the Czarina and their court, at a ball given in St. Petersburg by the British ambassador, Sir Robert Morier, was taken as having a double meaning. It was first taken to signify the desire of the Czar to show that, in face of the reports as to the aggressive intentions of the Ameer, prevalent at the time, he was unwilling that anything should occur to cause a misunderstanding between Russia and England. The second meaning referred to an accusation brought against Sir Robert Morier by Count Herbert Bismarck, to the effect that, at the time of the Franco-German war, he had taken advantage of his diplomatic position at Berlin to give information to the French. Sir Robert Morier had denied this, and a correspondence had taken place in which he was understood to have thrown some discredit on Prince Bismarck and his son. It was, therefore, said that the Czar by personally visiting Sir Robert Morier intended to show his satisfaction at the discomfiture of the Bismarcks. But, when we consider that the exhibition at Paris is intended to commemorate the revolution,

a movement of all others most abhorred of monarchs, and above all of absolute monarchs like his Majesty of Russia—who, besides, has during all his reign been the victim of revolutionary attempts, it is evident that some extraordinary reason only can explain his Majesty's intention to visit the exhibition. The explanation, however, does not seem far to seek. Recent reports, for example, have made us acquainted with the fact that a reconciliation has taken place between Germany and England, and that it has been brought about through the personal diplomacy of Count Herbert Bismarck. It is evidently this which has proved strong enough to move the Czar to so seemingly inconsistent an intention, and we may therefore perceive in the matter a pledge of the Russo-French alliance which has been so long talked of, and which has now apparently been finally determined on. Indeed, at the time his Majesty paid his visit to Sir Robert Morier, it was also said that he meant to mark his friendship towards France by honouring the statesman who had tried to aid her in her need, and possibly this, as well as hostility to Prince Bismarck and his son, influenced him. At any rate it seems probable that Lord Salisbury's recent policy, and the reconciliation with Germany arranged by him and Count Herbert Bismarck, have made the alliance between France and Russia a settled fact. As to what the results are to be we have yet to learn.

MEMBERS of the Church of England who frequent PAST PRAYING the gambling tables at Monte Carlo are, it seems, FOR. to all intents and purposes excommunicated. There is a Bishop at Gibraltar whose diocese, we are told, extends all the way from Bilbao to Constantinople, and is, therefore, more remarkable for the presence of a flock refusing to have anything to do with the Bishop, so far as they know of his existence—and that is certainly not very far—even than it is for the absence of a flock paying spiritual allegiance to his Lordship. We are not sure if it is within the confines of this diocese or that of a Bishop residing at Malta that Rome is situated, and the Pope himself is reckoned a disobedient spiritual subject of Anglican authority. The Bishop of Gibraltar, whose diocese includes the Principality of Monaco, has determined against the erection of a church or the appointment of a parson to look after the spiritual interests of the residents or visitors at Monte Carlo, and has given them over wholly to the reprobate's doom. His Lordship's argument is that, either the clergyman ministering in his church must daily protest against the gambling carried on, which, for some unexplained reason, he could not be expected to do, or that he must hold his tongue, and, by doing so, sanction it. The Bishop, therefore, as a "standing protest," refuses to permit of the establishment of an English church within the condemned boundaries. What, therefore, are those gamblers who desire to join the delights of the gaming table to the calmness of a conscience set at ease by attendance on the Anglican ministrations of the gospel to do? Such a class only, it seems, are likely to be affected by the Bishop's determination, and some doubt may perhaps arise as to their number and importance. The figure, however, of an English gentleman in lawn sleeves, erect upon the Rock of Gibraltar in a state of protest against the gambling at Monte Carlo, should be a noble one, and if its protesting shadow fails to fall on all that lies between Bilbao and Constantinople, that we may take as arising from the ignorance of the inhabitants, who have for the most part heard no more of the Anglican Bishop under whose jurisdiction they are placed, than they have, perhaps, heard of the famous ape of the Rock—which lay no claim to jurisdiction—or probably even less. But are the gamblers of Monte Carlo to be completely given over to perdition? General Booth, for example, might be consulted as to whether there also a squad of the Salvation Army might not be introduced, as elsewhere, to perform the work which the Church of England has been unable or unwilling to undertake. "Wouldn't I have fetched him?" were the striking words once called out by an energetic lady among the audience, when a celebrated vocalist of his day was singing a pathetic song called "The Gambler's Wife." There seems to be no fetching power, however, about the Church of England, as explained by the Bishop of Gibraltar, and the gambler must take his chance uninterfered with.