

England and the Canal.

In a recent number of the London Spectator there was an article of great importance on the relation of England to the proposed Nicaraguan canal. It advised an abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty in that portion defining the rights of England and the United States when such a waterway should be built. Even then (1850) the project of an interoceanic canal was regarded in both countries with great interest, and it was believed that it should be built in common by the two great Anglo-Saxon peoples with equality in governmental management. The express form of agreement was that neither should undertake to build such a canal independently or to maintain exclusive control.

The Spectator, in its revision of the argument of 1850, concedes that, however important to Great Britain, it is still more so to this country. England would get her full share of the benefits under American management and could trust that control in the rights of international equity. The only reason for opposition by England would be the possibility of a war with this country when the possession of the canal would command such strategic advantage. In regard to this The Spectator makes a forcible presentation of a new phase of sentiment, which has recently shot to such a lusty growth. No country would veto an important project, otherwise desirable, for fear of a civil war in the future. A war between England and the United States would be of the nature of a civil war. England would not be justified in failing to favor a great advantage to the United States and herself (as incidentally also to humanity) on the ground of a possible conflict.

Following this line of thought, the great organ of English liberal thinking proposes that Great Britain shall voluntarily propose such a modification of the compact of 1850 as will resign all shadow of a claim to any treaty rights, thus proving the complete confidence felt in the United States, without waiting for any claims made here looking to the same end, as would naturally be offered in case the United States should conclude to make the canal a government project pure and simple. This voluntary renunciation would be the most courteous expression of British sentiment toward this country. The argument is a happy one, no more than just to the United States, but none the less full of cordial kindness and concession. The Spectator no doubt represents English feeling in its frank recognition of the essential need of the canal to this country, a need which has expanded to giant proportions under recent events, a need to meet which we should be willing to face the most bitter and determined opposition. It is pleasant also to have the suggestion of this feeling put in such a form as implies that England should not only con-

sent in advance of the asking, but support American control with her full moral and perhaps her physical backing. It is not likely that The Spectator speaks "ex cathedra" in such a matter, but it is much that so important a journal of opinion takes this point of view. It would not dare to venture such a proposition without feeling itself in close touch with British sentiment in doing it.

The Misery of Spain.

Mr. E. J. Dillon in a late number of The Contemporary Review on the "Coming of Carlism" has some extraordinary details about the condition of the lowest and lower middle classes of Spain. Many of these, he tells us, in Madrid, Seville, Barcelona, Cadiz and Granada live on one meal a day, and that consisting of dry peas, coarse bread, garlic and onions. He asserts, too, that many of the lower aristocracy are not much better off, especially the official class thrown out of office by the overthrow of the Conservatives. Yet this is not the worst. He says:

This is but the chronic state of things which the people always had with them of late years and which should be indulgently borne in mind when forming a judgment upon contemporary Spaniards, whose relative immunity from crimes against property constitutes an eloquent testimony to their inborn honesty and heroic endurance. The misery which is coming will be incomparably more intense and widespread. I saw foreshadowings of it outside of Valladolid lately; also in certain other parts of Spain, where able-bodied men, supporting each a wife and children, could neither earn a loaf of bread nor obtain the price of it by begging. True, they had come from places where most of their neighbors were as badly off as themselves, but, then, the number of these places is rapidly increasing. A friend of mine, a foreign doctor resident in Spain, witnessed many other instances of this acute distress in places where whole families were down with hunger typhus. In most of the provinces of Spain the elementary schoolmasters have received no pay for over a twelvemonth, so that some of them are actually starving, and most of them are professional beggars as well as teachers.

Mr. Dillon sees in this the ripe condition of revolution and a desperate recourse to any change which promises relief. Yet what relief could be expected in recoiling from Scylla to be dashed on Charybdis? If Spain is thus wretched under the mild and comparatively progressive rule of the Queen Regent Christina, what can she expect of a would be monarch who stands for the most reactionary school of tyrannical Bourbonism? Under whatever rule poor Spain has a period of misery, suffering and stagnation to undergo before she can emerge to the hope of better things. Her probation is not yet over.

The question of the supply of ivory and of the preservation of the African elephant from extermination is getting to be pretty serious. Most of the tusks now come from the Kongo Free State and from the territory controlled by the French in Africa. The French National Society For the Taming of the African Elephant proposes to co-oper-

ate with the authorities of the Free State in experiments to domesticate this animal and to propagate the species in a kind of semicaptivity. The English in India have been very successful in saving the elephant of India, once also threatened with extinction. The noble creature is made a most valuable beast of burden, and his increase under domestic conditions is satisfactory. For a good while it has been thought that the African species had a peculiarly savage and untractable temper, a characteristic quite natural considering the savage energy with which he has been hunted by white and black men, civilized and savage. But it is also remembered that the African animal was utilized by both the Carthaginians and the Romans in war and that before them the Egyptians even used it for draft purposes. To restore the elephant to his value as a beast of carriage would be a priceless boon to Africa, where the question of the pack train is vital to the convenience of trade and travel. The experiment, which it is said will be put into practice at once in large and well guarded parks, will be regarded with great interest. Even if railroads should be built in Africa to any extent, it will be a great many years before they will supersede the use of elephantine carriage, if that can be made available.

Amid all the turmoil of man in Europe, the flames and fumes of his wickedness, as Carlyle would put it, nature refuses to play "second fiddle." The great fire mountain Vesuvius has burst forth afresh and is forming seven new craters around the central cone. The eruption threatens to be one of unusual grandeur and danger and already has resulted in much damage. Vesuvius has been for the most part a playful Titan since the Christian era. The Pompeian catastrophe in the year 69 and that awful catastrophe of the seventeenth century which destroyed 20,000 people, have been its only very notable exhibitions of consuming wrath in modern times.

One of the most popular reforms in the postal service of the country will be the recently issued order of First Assistant Postmaster General Heath in regard to money orders. Hitherto these could only be made payable to persons living away from the place of issue. This limitation is now removed. The convenience to the numerous class who keep no bank accounts but who wish to transmit money by post within their own town limits will be great. It is surprising that the accommodation should not have been extended before.

The person who is never guilty of follies is less wise than he who sometimes commits them and then has the courage to laugh at them genially with his neighbor. It is the impeccable man, too, who can make the most conscienceless rogue.