

conference" which was suggested by the German government. The Tribune's correspondent says: "The main purpose will be the formation of an international seismological association. With reference thereto the question has been raised whether it would not be advisable to have the international association of academies, which was formed recently, work out a common plan for international co-operation in seismological observations. The opinion is expressed that if this were done this international earthquake conference might be dispensed with, especially as there are already too many scientific conferences of all sorts. This opposition comes principally from England, but it is to be presumed that a large number of expert scientists will advocate the necessity of an international conference."

EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENTS TO AMERICAN newspapers report that the physical condition of Prime Minister Balfour is the subject of uneasiness to his physicians and friends. It is reported that while strong influences are being brought to bear to persuade Balfour to retain the premiership his physical condition seems to make it certain that he will retire. It has been known for a long time that Joseph Chamberlain has his eyes on the premiership and it is generally believed that in the event of Balfour's retirement, the present colonial secretary will succeed him.

WHEN IT WAS PROPOSED THAT President Roosevelt should act as the arbitrator in the dispute between Venezuela and the European powers, it was plain that American statesmen, without regard to political prejudice, were not in favor of the president undertaking the task. The reason for this is explained by a writer in the Chicago Tribune who points out that "disagreeable experience" has fallen to the share of nearly every reigning sovereign or chief executive of a republic who has accepted the role of umpire in international quarrels during the last fifty years. It seems strange, and yet it appears to be true, that in no case have awards made by these arbitrators given satisfaction and, as pointed out by the Tribune writer, the "decisions rendered by specially constituted arbitration, give rise to the least criticism and ill-will on the part of the powers concerned."

AN INTERESTING RESUME OF THIS FORM of arbitration is presented by the writer in the Tribune. Many years ago King William of Holland acted as arbitrator in a dispute between the United States and Great Britain respecting the northeast boundary line. King William did not accept either the American or the English contention, but rendered a decision in favor of a line of his own devising which was not only unacceptable to both countries, but absolutely impossible geographically as well as politically. The difference was subsequently adjusted by the Webster-Ashburton treaty. King Oscar of Sweden has served as an arbitrator in many disputes between nations. He acted in the differences arising between Germany, the United States and Great Britain in connection with Samoa, his decision being in favor of Germany; and although King Oscar stands very high in the world's estimation, his decision was met with bitter criticism in England and in the United States. It is true, however, that King Oscar's decision in this particular case met with commendation by many impartial men in the United States and in England.

THE BOUNDARY DISPUTE BETWEEN Great Britain and Brazil is to be passed upon by King Victor Emmanuel of Italy. Recently King Edward served as arbitrator in a boundary dispute between Chile and Peru. In 1872 old Emperor William, to whom the Tribune writer refers as "a fine soldier and chivalrous gentlemen, but who understood nothing whatever about international law," was called upon to determine the San Juan boundary question between the United States and Great Britain. His decision met with a storm of criticism in England. The dispute between France and Holland relating to the subject of the boundary of their colonial possessions in South America was passed upon by the late emperor of Russia. The late king of the Belgians acted as arbitrator in a contention between the United States and Chile in connection with the seizure of specie on board the United States brig Macedonian by the Chilean fleet. The late king of Spain, and after his death his widow, the queen regent, acted as arbitrators, in the boundary conflicts between Colom-

bia and Venezuela and between Peru and Ecuador.

THE DISPUTE BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN and Portugal relating to the various territories and islands in Delagoa bay, was passed upon by Marshal MacMahon. His decision was in favor of Portugal and the Tribune writer says that it was "an award so manifestly unfair in favor of Portugal, and so obviously prompted by Gallic prejudices against Great Britain, that it remains to this day as one of the most striking examples of bias and undue influence in the history of international arbitration."

THE HESITANCY ON THE PART OF THE British ministers to definitely commit themselves to the principle of arbitration contained in the program of the peace conference at The Hague is attributed by the Tribune writer to the recollection of the Delagoa bay award, which award it is said has always rankled in the bosom of the English people in consequence of the unfairness of the verdict. This writer says that this award made by Marshal MacMahon "serves as an illustration of my argument against the selection of chiefs of state as arbitrators, that although the interests involved in the Delagoa controversy were immeasurably inferior in importance to the Alabama award, yet the latter, while it constituted a severe blow to John Bull's pocket and to John Bull's pride, was accepted in silence and without grumbling, just because it had been given, not by any one arbitrator, but by an international tribunal assembled for the purpose at Geneva."

PERHAPS THE MOST INTERESTING EPISODE in the record of international arbitration presented by the Tribune writer relates to the appeal made by the late Prince Bismarck to Leo XIII. to act as arbitrator in a dispute between Germany and Spain with regard to the Caroline islands. Concerning this episode, this writer says: "It was a clever political move on the part of the great chancellor. For he could not have chosen an arbitrator more pleasing to the Spaniards, nor whose decision was likely to be received with more respect at Madrid, while the compliment thus paid to the supreme head of the Roman Catholic church contributed in no small measure to establish the friendliest relations between the German government and the holy see, which had been at war with one another ever since the inauguration of the kulturkampf, during the reign of Pius IX. It is doubtful whether there is any event during his long and remarkable pontificate to which Leo XIII. looks back with so much satisfaction as to this arbitration of the difficulties between Germany and Spain, and his award is well nigh unique in that it was received with equal good will by both parties to the controversy and its fairness never questioned."

AN INTERESTING FACT IS POINTED OUT by this same authority when he says that since the constitution of The Hague tribunal, the powers not only of Europe, but also of South America have shown a marked disposition to ignore the regularly constituted arbitration tribunal and have sought to refer disputes to crowned heads, or to presidents of republics. The Tribune writer says that the United States has done well to discountenance this tendency "for as shown above, rulers as umpires cannot help bringing the entire principle of international arbitration into disrepute by the suspicion to which they are exposed of partiality, whereas the tribunal of The Hague is entirely exempt from anything of the kind by reason of its constitution, and everything that can tend to increase its prestige and importance is calculated to promote the cause of the peace of the world."

ACCORDING TO THE CHERRY CREEK correspondent of the New York Tribune the descendants of John Alden have become thoroughly aroused. John Alden, it will be remembered, was the hero of "The Courtship of Miles Standish." Louis McKinstry, who happens to be the secretary of the speaker of the New York assembly, delivered a speech at a banquet given at Fredonia in honor of forefathers' day. In that speech Mr. McKinstry said that John Alden was "nothing but a 'longshore carpenter.'" In the vicinity of Cherry Creek there are many descendants of revolutionary settlers and the Tribune correspondent says: "These scions of history are naturally proud of their aristocratic ancestry and take ill any slighting reference to the honor or reputation of their forefathers." Two families in that vicinity claim that in their veins flows the blood of John Alden, "the stripling of Plymouth

and the friend of Captain Miles Standish." These have called upon others of the Alden descendants throughout the Empire State to rush to arms for the protection of the precious memory of their ancestor.

IN THIS DAY THAT A MAN HAD BEEN nothing but a 'longshore carpenter is not thought to be particularly discredit and, indeed, Mr. McKinstry's friends say that he meant no reflection. He presented as a mere interesting historical discovery that John Alden was in reality not such a remarkable character as he had been made out to be. According to McKinstry, the Puritan Alden was a 'longshoreman whom the Pilgrims happened to pick up on the wharf just before the Mayflower sailed. The regular ship's carpenter had fallen sick and could not sail and the Pilgrims felt that such a member of the crew was necessary and gladly accepted Alden's proffer and assistance. McKinstry said that Alden's modern reputation was purely the result of Longfellow's poem and hinted that nobody made any particular claim for having him for an ancestor before the poem achieved such a wide success.

THE RESULT OF MR. MCKINSTRY'S STATEMENT is admitted by the Tribune correspondent to be "indescribable." According to this authority, "Silence followed their utterance and a cold chill fell on the warm atmosphere of good fellowship, especially in the vicinity of the two families from Fredonia. The dinner immediately broke up, and it is said that several persons with forefathers who had prepared careful addresses were not called upon to deliver them. Since then the main topic of conversation has been the words which fell from the iconoclastic lips of Mr. McKinstry. It is whispered that he is not alone in his position, but that several prominent families who have never laid claims to an Alden line of ancestors have given him to understand that they put confidence in his historical accuracy. The Alden descendants, however, are thoroughly aroused, and declare that any aspersions cast upon the character of John are absurd and that they can produce, and intend to put forward, indubitable proof of the purity and nobility of his family connections."

THE DISCOVERY IN SYRIA OF ONE OF THE oldest Hebrew manuscript Bibles is reported to the London Mail by its Cairo correspondent. This Bible consists of the five books of the Pentateuch, written in Samaritan characters on gazelle parchment in the year 116 of the Moslem era. It shows important differences from the existing text.

THE RUSSIAN MINISTER OF INTERIOR HAS found it necessary to undo some of the work of his predecessor. The former premier banished without trial 61,000 persons and many of these were professional men and scientists. The present minister has discovered that Russia needs the services of these men and he is engaged in a systematic effort to persuade them to return.

THE MOST POWERFUL GUN EVER BUILT in the United States was successfully tested at Sandy Hook January 16. This gun cost \$110,000. At the test three shots were fired and the New York correspondent of the Chicago Record-Herald says that these shots "served to fulfill the wonderful accuracy and mathematical calculation of the army experts who had charge of the construction of the gun." This correspondent explains: "The first charge was 550 pounds of smokeless powder, and the velocity of the 2,400-pound projectile when it left the muzzle was 2,003 feet a second. The pressure of the powder in exploding was 25,000 pounds to the square inch. The full charge of 640 pounds of powder was used for the second shot, and the velocity was 2,300 feet a second, or six feet more than calculated. The pressure was 38,000 pounds to the square inch. The elevation of the gun's muzzle for the first and second shots was 1½ degrees and the ranges were 3,000 and 3,500 yards. For the final shot the muzzle was elevated to 4½ degrees, increasing the range to 7,000 yards. The charge was 640 pounds of smokeless powder, and the pressure was 38,500 pounds to the square inch. All the shots ricocheted two or three times on the water, sending up great fountains of sprays."

THE MANAGERS OF THE GORGEOUS SPECTACLE that recently took place at Delhi, India, are just now auditing the accounts relating to the cost of that magnificent affair. Cablegrams from London say that when the bills are all paid the expenses will have reached the sum of \$10,000,000.