IT'S

IN THE

WINDOW!

See it for yourself when passing To-day. The confirmation of your own eyes will convince you quicker than any words. Whatever you want it is there, or stop inside I can show it YOU; I do not yet, you to buy; I invite your inspection freely, and leave the rest to your judgment.

CALL ON ME TO-DAY!

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MY FAMOUS

ENGLISH LEVER, 35/-

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DESCRIPTION.—Solid massive Hall-marked Silver Cases, specially strengthened, perfectly adjusted full-plate Lever movement, Jewelled throughout, Dust-proof Dial, Hardened Crystal, Chain attached, Pair Hunters, GUARANTEED BRITISH MADE THROUGHOUT.

WARRANTED SEVEN YEARS.

I WILL SAVE YOU MONEY!

I GUARANTEE THE FINEST QUALITY!

And will return the full amount, if requested, to anyone who is not fully satisfied.

DO YOU WANT A GEM RING?

I supply the Handsomest in England. My prices will frequently be found less than one-half that charged by ordinary retailers. Give me a trial and see.

I CAN MAKE YOUR HOME BRIGHT!

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CUTLERY and ELECTRO SILVER WARE.

I PAY YOUR RAILWAY FARE

UP TO 50 MILES!

On Purchases value 25s. and upwards.

GIVE ME A VISIT!

IT WILL PAY YOU WELL!

NOTE MY ADDRESS, AND REMEMBER I AM ALWAYS AT YOUR SERVICE.

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(OF MANCHESTER),

168, FRIARGATE, PRESTON.

H. SAMUEL'S

World-famed LUCKY WEDDING RINGS,

Finest possible Value!

A Lifetime's Wear!

Pure Solid Gold Government Hall-marked

6, 10, and 12 carats.

FREE MARRIAGE GIFT

presented with each Ring, consisting of a real Gold Keyless Ring (hall-marked), half a dozen Teaspoons, or a useful Nickel Clock.

H. SAMUEL, 168, FRIARGATE, PRESTON.

SO INEXPENSIVE,

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"MAYPOLE" BUTTER

is still being Sold at

ONLY 1/1 A LB.

Notwithstanding the scarcity of supply of Choicest Quality Butters, you can always depend on the quality of

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MAYPOLE DAIRY COMPANY, LIMITED,

36, MARKET-PLACE, PRESTON,

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Blackburn: 32, Victoria-st. Barrow: 7, Market-street. Chorley: Market-place. Burnley: 23, St. James'-st. Nelson: 52, Scotland-rd. Colne: 23, Market-street. Padiham: 25, Burnley-road. Wigan: 127, Scholes. Blackpool: 15a, Market-place. Lancaster: 49, Penny-street. Barrow: 131, Dalton-road. Whitehaven: 41, King-street. Ulverston: 13, Market-street.

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THE DAILY POST.

PRESTON: SATURDAY, JAN. 2, 1904.

RUSSIA RAMPANT.

We publish to-day a statement received from the Central News regarding the Far Eastern crisis. It purports to represent the Russian semi-official view of the situation, and to have been received from an authoritative source. Concerning that we offer no opinion beyond expressing surprise that any such statement should be permitted to be issued as semi-official before the Russian reply to the last Japanese Note has been received by the Japanese Government. According to the latest intelligence we write, that reply has not only not been received, but has not yet been despatched. The possibility must be remembered, too, that the Central News may have been hoaxed. We do not doubt the good faith either of the Agency or of its correspondent, but there is the possibility we have mentioned. We prefer to wait till the nature of the Russian reply to Japan is known before accepting as unquestionably veracious a statement involving the issue of peace or war made by a news correspondent, no matter how well inspired he may think himself. It must be admitted, however, that, even if the statement in question be not worthy of the importance attached to it in to-day's morning papers, it betokens the possession by whoever is responsible for it of a remarkable grasp of the situation. We happen to be in possession of a communication from the correspondent of a leading English journal, who was the first, and, we believe, the only English correspondent to interview successfully the Japanese Premier concerning the Russo-Japanese dispute. This communication, written from Nagasaki last November, stated comprehensively—"War all off." We would point out that the Japanese Minister in London has consistently maintained, throughout these negotiations, an optimistic view regarding the prospect of the maintenance of peace. In well-informed circles in the various European capitals, too, there has been a steady insistence on the view that there would be no war. Earlier in the year this was not so. We ourselves received advices from Japan, from a quarter in touch with high Japanese Ministers, that there was to be war in the winter. Winter has come, and there is no war, and, putting aside the many baseless rumours that get into circulation, there appears to be less prospect of war now than there was two or three months ago. We are inclined to expect that both Japan and Russia from time to time have supplied to correspondents statements intended to produce a certain diplomatic effect internationally.

With this preface, it is easier to gauge the probable amount of importance attaching to the statement of the Central News correspondent which we publish to-day. It is a statement obviously inspired by someone enjoying considerable familiarity with the Russian diplomats who are conducting the negotiations with Japan and with the international situation in the Far East. The main idea underlying the whole statement is that Japan, throughout these negotiations, has been bluffing, pretending that, unless she received satisfactory assurances, she would fight Russia single-handed, whereas, in reality, she never meant to fight at all, but merely to get the best terms she could. Apparently, she has now got those terms—that is, all which she is likely to get. They relate to Corea only. Whether she has decided to make the best of these terms, such as they are, is of course not yet known, but negotiations are proceeding with a view to improving them. They cannot be such as she would have wished, or such as other Powers—England and the United States—have been plainly been hoping for. We are given to understand by the Central News statement that the protracted negotiations still pending have been due to the fact that Japan has been making further demands really on behalf of these other Powers—demands that Russia will not concede and that Japan, in all probability, will not urge to the bitter end of making war to secure them. It may be taken that the Russian diplomatists now see through the whole scheme by which it was arranged to induce them to evacuate Manchuria. They see that Japan, refusing to be a catspaw for other Powers which wished to reap where they had not sown, was determined all along not to fight Russia single-handed. The danger of war with Japan now being removed, as they think, they feel at liberty to say what they think of the Powers that have been prompting Japan. With Japan removed from the category of possible combatants, Russia can afford to defy England and the United States. If these Powers would not fight to back up Japan, they will certainly not fight deprived of Japan's most valuable, and, indeed, indispensable, co-operation. The statements regarding England and the United States are so offensive, and doubly so because they are home truths, that we cannot conceive any responsible Russian official would give utterance to them with a view to their publication unless it were perfectly certain that they might safely be made without any danger of precipitating a conflict with this two Powers.

There is another point on which this outspoken utterance might be explained, but it is so serious in character that for the present we prefer to withhold it. We rather wait to see whether the Newspaper is contradicted or contradicted. In the meantime, the fact has to be faced that Russian diplomacy appears to be issuing from this episode with flying colours. On the other hand, the British Foreign Office seems to have sustained a defeat, and the British Empire a damaging loss of prestige in the Far East. This, of course, is in keeping with the record of British diplomacy for the past eight or nine years. Russia thoroughly understands the position in the Far East—a circumstance that can hardly be claimed for the British Government. We have before called attention to the situation that would be created if Japan ever made peace and came to an understanding with Russia. We do not say that it is a natural thing for Japan to do, or that it would last very long or be productive of any permanent advantage to Japan; but it is a result at which Russian diplomacy must naturally have been aiming. Russian policy is to beat her enemies in detail, and to make friends with the rest while she is engaged with one of them. It is almost conceivable that Russia should snort defiance at Japan, Great Britain, and the United States unless she had "something up her sleeve" and were perfectly certain that she stood upon secure ground.

The Day of all the Dead.

Mr. Frederic Harrison, the leader of the English Positivists, delivered his annual address to members of the Positivist Society on New Year's Eve. In the last hours of the dying year the Positivists, like the other religious bodies, meditate on the losses of the Old Year. Yesterday Mr. Harrison delivered another address, which, as befitted the birth of the New Year, was devoted not so much to the losses and gains of the past as to anticipations of the future. The Religion of Humanity which the Positivists profess is one in which all may take an interest, for it is a very catholic one, making no distinctions of cult or creed. The Positivists make New Year's Eve the Day of all the Dead—all the dead, that is, whose life efforts converged towards the building up of humanity and the promotion of human happiness; and thus Mr. Frederic Harrison included in his review of the Old Year the men who had died in the year, the various in their characters and lives as the Pope and Lord Salisbury, Professor Mommsen and Mr. Herbert Spencer. The Positivists are very materialistic; hence, though Mr. Harrison devoted the greater part of his address to a consideration of the work of Mr. Herbert Spencer, as being, while alive, the most eminent of those that are dead, after Comte, he expressed his disdainful contempt for some of the Synthetic Philosophy in his regard to the unknowable environment behind the world of sense and knowledge as the sphere and object of religion. The Religion of Humanity is based on an idea which all may appreciate, though they may think it insufficient.

> What Generating Perfecting Has Done For Generation.

The Positivists aim at the perfecting of the individual through the perfecting of society. With them humanity is a relation in a social rather than a personal concern—a thing to be wrought out in, through, and by humanity. They look at man in the aggregate not as "a little lower than the angels," but as a little higher than the brutes around him. Consequently the Day of all the Dead commemorates an even vaster number than the All Saints' Day of the orthodox. It means a larger view, for it takes cognisance of all humanity and all human struggles for betterment. This embraces a vast number unknown to fame and now unnamed; but the conception is a poetic and inspiring one, for it recognises the oneness and continuity of humanity, the fact that even the poorest, feeblest, and most insignificant did not live in vain, did not utterly perish. For instance, before it was discovered what vegetable growths were good to eat, how many poisonous roots must have died of poisonous roots and herbs! When we think how little original man knew and how much man has learnt since, it may well inspire humbleness with the thought that they too, however wasted their lives may seem to have been individually considered, may be doing something useful for generations yet undreamt of. All the dead were pioneers of our civilisation; and we are pioneers of a civilisation we shall not see. This surely is an inspiration to cultivate a noble character and high ideals.

> In his second address, The Positivists and that of yesterday evening, the Government. Mr. Harrison, among things of the moment, gave to his audience the Positivist opinion of the Government—for Positivism is as much a political as a religious or philosophic. Some captious critic could not condemn his remarks for not being practical. Mr. Harrison had no honeyed words for the Government, whose record of reaction he condemned as much as he castigated Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal policy, which he likened humorously to Aaron's rod, because it had swallowed up those of the other fiscal projectors and magicians. It is not insignificant that this high priest of Positivism—a system that many who call themselves religious would contend had no religions or moral value—condemned Mr. Chamberlain's scheme mainly on ethical grounds. Mr. Harrison spoke contemptuously of the House of Commons, which, he said, had allowed itself to be tricked, beloaded, and made the tool of palpable intrigues. The Ministry he called double-tongued, and the Prime Minister he accused of having pleased his party into chaos and false pretences. Mr. Harrison is a firm believer in the doctrine of free trade, and, in attacked Mr. Chamberlain's Protectionist proposals not from the economic but from the moral or social point of view. Apart from any economic consideration, he looked upon the fiscal campaign as a mere "flagrant attempt of men overwhelmed by the failure of their schemes and the revelation of their ignorance and folly to avoid public sentence." Further, Mr. Harrison regarded Mr. Chamberlain's scheme as likely, if successful, to lead to the most deprivation of the political world of this country, and to cause the material ruin and misery of the country. And Mr. Harrison was almost as severe upon his former colleagues in the Liberal leaders for their "half-hearted and fumbling way" of conducting the defence of Free Trade. There was a great common sense in Mr. Harrison's suggestion that, if it be considered necessary to have a fiscal revolution, the Liberals should take the lead in it, and see that there is a real revolution and not a sham one—a revolution of the whole system of taxation in this country. We are inclined to think that this is good advice. Indeed, the Liberal leaders have tentatively and in a piecemeal way made some progress in this direction. But what is wanted by the Opposition is a bold and comprehensive programme. Unfortunately, the Liberals have not been bold and dashing leaders as the Conservatives have in Mr. Chamberlain.

POLITICS AND PERSONS.

END OF THE POLITICAL TRUCE.

THE COMING BY-ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

THE LABOUR PARTY'S TACTICS.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S INVITATION TO VISIT AUSTRALIA.

THE NEW MOTOR CARS ACT.

FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

(Received this morning.)

With the issue by the Speaker to-night of the six days' notice of the intention to issue a writ, it is expected that the election for Norwich will take place in about a fortnight. A certain discretion, of course, rests with a returning officer after the receipt of a writ, but the prompt notice points to a short contest. It is unlikely that the Unionist Free Food League will take part in the fight. Sir Alfred Pease, the sitting member, Sir Samuel Hoare, is no longer a member of that body; and in that case it will be interesting to see whether the Duke of Devonshire repeats the advice he gave to a Unionist elector at Dulwich.

Mr. Johnson, who has been selected by the Liberals to champion their cause at Gateshead, is a man of the type of Mr. John Wilson, the Durham miners' representative, who has worked so smoothly with the Liberal party for many years. The report comes to hand to-night that an Independent Labour candidate will be brought out against him, but it seems incredible that Mr. Snowden and his friends will lend themselves to the criticism which such a course would involve, viz., that they are opposing the Liberal interest with the idea of defeating it because the candidate does not prescribe to their particular opinions.

Whatever may be said against the Independent Labour party, no one can deny it the splendid assurance of youth. I see that Mr. Snowden, in his appeal for funds for the Norwich by-election, says: "There is every reason to expect that the Labour candidate will carry the seat at the coming election." That is the sort of thing which must gnaw at the reputation of all ordinary election agents, who hold that one should await a canvass before prophesying, and even then be guarded. There is another statement calculated to jagger the conventional organisers: "The financial responsibility for the election rests entirely on the I.L.P. To fight it efficiently and with economy we need a sum of £400." A few hundred M.P.'s will be at Mr. Snowden's heels to know how it can be done.

Several questions of importance are to be looked for during the next fortnight. On Monday week the Prime Minister will meet his colleagues in Manchester, and Mr. Chamberlain will be the guest of the Birmingham jewellers at their annual dinner. Mr. Brodrick will also be meeting his constituents at Guildford the same evening. Mr. Balfour gives his second address on Tuesday week. Sir Henry Fowler will then be speaking at Wolverhampton. The next night Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman will be at Maidstone, and it is certain that much interest is Sir Edward Clarke's promise to give an address at the Constitutional Club next Wednesday on "Unionist Legislation—a Retrospect and a Suggestion."

There is some expectation that Mr. Redmond will declare himself at Waterford next Tuesday on Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal policy. I shall be very much surprised, however, if the Nationalist leader commits his party to a view. The political forecasts have veered considerably during the last few months, but I hear that Mr. Redmond thinks that the Irish have long ago given him the balance of power. The Irish have long wished for Protection, but not on the lines of Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal scheme. They have wanted the right to protect Irish national industries. There is much difference of opinion as to what would be the effect on Ireland of the new policy of Retaliation and Preference. But, any way, it would seem there is more to be got by party detachment pending definite schemes.

More than 3,000 motor cars have been registered in the Metropolis, and to-day the police had instructions to stop the driver of any car which was not plated. In most cases the explanation of the default was that a driver was being made to Spring Gardens, and the constables were content to-day with giving warnings as to the pains and penalties involved in neglect. Some surprising information was gathered as to the ignorance of charged people at Bow Street, the metropolitan of the County Council Offices. Some who were stopped were actually going to the police station, thinking that permit. The Government has refused, therefore, for better land, and many of them are increasingly sorry at ever having left South Africa.

ALLEGED MURDER BY A DRUNKEN FATHER.

A sad New Year tragedy occurred on Friday morning at a home in City-road, London. One of the children of a family of nine, named Alfred Dumpig, aged 29, who lived with his wife and their eight months old baby boy. On Thursday night he had been drinking with his wife, and went to his home a bottle of spirits and renewed his none. The wife begged him to be quiet and not shout, but in a few minutes, and, looked her in another room. About an hour afterwards, the baby's cries, which had become alarmed, the wife succeeded in breaking out of the room. The husband met her and attempted to strike her, and she escaped and succeeded in the street. The police came up, and entered the house, and found the man in the bedroom. The door, where the prisoner was, the discovery was made that the child, which had been left by the mother asleep in a perambulator instead of a cot, had been murdered. The accused was remanded.

KING'S MOTOR CARS NOT TO BE NUMBERED.

According to "Motoring Illustrated" the motor car of the King are exempt from the numbering law for a day or two, but the reason is that "The King has no wrong" under the law, neither can one of his motor-cars. When the numbering law was passed, the question arose in his Majesty's Household as to the propriety of numbering the King's cars. It was soon decided that no number should be attached to them. The King needs no driving license either, though it is assumed that he driver has one.

Fire broke out about three o'clock, this morning, at a house in Oid-street, Shoreditch, in which an lodgings, and Edward Jacobs, an old man, 75 years of age, was unfortunately burned to death.

THE FISCAL CONTROVERSY.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND AUSTRALIA'S INVITATION.

In reply to the invitation of the Commonwealth to pay a visit to Australia, Mr. Chamberlain says until a mandate is given him any lengthened absence from home is impossible, but he hopes at no distant date to be able to accept the invitation.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN AS THE "ECONOMIC KIPLING."

Dr. Max Nordan contributes an article to the "Neue Freie Presse," entitled "1903 in the History of the World," in the course of which he says that notwithstanding the dislike of the working classes to the taxation of food, the fundamental ideas of Mr. Chamberlain's policy met only appeal to the millions of England, but create intense enthusiasm among them. They see in Mr. Chamberlain the political economic Rudyard Kipling, as Mr. Kipling they perceive the political Chamberlain. Kipling has been sent as in the statesman of Imperialism the embodiment of their own dreams of an Anglo-Saxon World-Empire.

The "Standard" says the fiscal campaign is already having its effect on the Colonial Department. An important order has just been issued, which took effect on Friday, that in future all entries relating to foreign and colonial goods imported or exported must show, in addition to the port of original shipment, now given, the actual place whence consigned.

LEEDS TOWN CLERKSHIP.

CRITICISM OF THE METHOD OF APPOINTMENT.

A meeting of the Leeds City Council was held yesterday, when the recommendation that Mr. Fox, the Town Clerk of Blackburn, be appointed to the position of Clerk to the Council was brought up for confirmation—Alderman Gordon, who detailed the means by which Mr. Fox was selected, and added that it was not fair to Mr. Fox, who had done so well, Mr. Fox had been given to understand that he would have to take his chance with the Council, and be judged on his merits.—A discussion arose on the matter. The Lord Mayor (Alderman Ingham) stated being contended that all the elected candidates should have been brought before the committee.—Alderman Wilby said that in his opinion the committee had been dealt with unfairly with not being allowed to see the other candidates.—The Lord Mayor said: "I am perfectly confident that Mr. Fox we shall have not only a good Town Clerk, but a man who will win his way in the city, and that we shall be proud to have got him."—The appointment was confirmed, only one man, Councillor Laycock, voting against it.

SMASHED HIS WIFE'S AND MOTHER-IN-LAW'S WINDOWS.

On Friday, at Bickdale, Vincent Johnson was charged with assaulting his wife and demanding £10 on an order with respect to his wife, and also with doing damage to the house occupied by her in Back Chatham-road, Bickdale, to the extent of £2, by breaking the windows. He was further charged with doing damage to his mother-in-law's house to the extent of £1, making £3 in all. He pleaded the act of a drunken fool. He was drunk at the time, and at the time. Prisoner said he had nothing to say in defence. The magistrate, Sir Charles Swinfen Eady, Mr. B. Armitage sentenced the prisoner to six months' imprisonment two months for each offence.

BRITISH STEAMER DESTROYED BY FIRE.

BOATLOAD OF TEN NOT YET HEARD OF.

A Central News message says that the British steamer Cygnet has been destroyed by fire. Her crew, consisting of twenty-two, left for all points from steam to steam 50 miles south of Vigo. The captain and 19 of the crew were rescued by the British steamer Kate Jones, and landed at Vigo. Prevous with doing damage to the house occupied by her in Back Chatham-road, Bickdale, to the extent of £2, by breaking the windows. He was further charged with doing damage to his mother-in-law's house to the extent of £1, making £3 in all. He pleaded the act of a drunken fool. He was drunk at the time, and at the time. Prisoner said he had nothing to say in defence. The magistrate, Sir Charles Swinfen Eady, Mr. B. Armitage sentenced the prisoner to six months' imprisonment two months for each offence.

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SUNDAY PLEASURES OF THE RICH

AN ARCHDEACON'S PROTEST.

Archdeacon Sinclair, of Wakefield, in his New Year's letter to the parishioners and congregation of Wakefield Cathedral, expresses regret and sorrow at the growing neglect of Sunday observance, and says:—

"Who is there that really approves of Sundays spent in picnics, in excursions, or in playing bridge? Such Sundays are common enough. It is a wicked thing to carry out the character of the sabbath. No one blames the hard-worked clerk or assistant, who after a week in the office, or behind the counter, or in the country for fresh air when Sunday comes. No one blames the artisan who leaves crowds and dirt for fresh fields or hillsides on the Day of Rest; but it is not for these that the sabbath was made. Take, for example, or finds a guide. The leaders of the growing classes, the leaders of society, men who hold high place in the administration of law and justice, ought to be asked whether they can justify the complete neglect of the Lord's Day as the day of the Lord."

COMPLAINTS OF BOER EXILES.

The Boers are still in exile, and giving trouble in various parts of the world. They are evidently a morose and dissatisfied lot of fellows, but in one or two places some of the Dutchmen have been very favoured with their presence they have not altogether been treated too well. A number settled in South America, but they are sadly disappointed with the lands which they have received from the Government. The Government has refused, therefore, for better land, and many of them are increasingly sorry at ever having left South Africa.

ALLEGED MURDER BY A DRUNKEN FATHER.

A sad New Year tragedy occurred on Friday morning at a home in City-road, London. One of the children of a family of nine, named Alfred Dumpig, aged 29, who lived with his wife and their eight months old baby boy. On Thursday night he had been drinking with his wife, and went to his home a bottle of spirits and renewed his none. The wife begged him to be quiet and not shout, but in a few minutes, and, looked her in another room. About an hour afterwards, the baby's cries, which had become alarmed, the wife succeeded in breaking out of the room. The husband met her and attempted to strike her, and she escaped and succeeded in the street. The police came up, and entered the house, and found the man in the bedroom. The door, where the prisoner was, the discovery was made that the child, which had been left by the mother asleep in a perambulator instead of a cot, had been murdered. The accused was remanded.

MEN AND WOMEN.

DECADENCE OF THE PULPIT.

Canon Talbot, of Derby, one of the most popular preachers in the Midlands, in the "Coming Man" in the current "Sunday Strand." He was recently asked some questions concerning the reasons why men are at present agitating serious-minded Churchmen. "I do not think," he said, "that the pulpit has lost its place with the people of the time, and unless the pulpit is prepared to do better it must be content to be thrust aside. As for the charge against the Church, they are inevitable, for they correspond to the differences in the human mind. They are not the same as to degree, but the same as to kind. Some attempt to prove your sole orthodox by apostolic blows and knocks is simply wasted energy, and is most harmful to the reputation of the Churches."

MR. ORR-EWING'S DEATH WARRANT.

The sudden and unexpected death of Mr. Orr-Ewing, as they have been described to a correspondent of the "East Anglian Daily Times," are told you so, he says, that once, while stopping at his home in Scotland, he asked her permission to attend the morning prayers, which she (being a clergyman's daughter) regularly read to her servants. Of course, she granted the request, though with surprise and misgiving. Mr. Spencer sat on the Bible-reading patiently enough, but when the little congregation turned to kneel he rose and placed himself on the rug, and, tucking up his coat-tails, stood warming himself at the fire, curiously unlike the way our shippers till the conclusion of the service.

THE UNITED STATES PRESIDENCY.

Should Mr. Roosevelt definitely decide to come before the Democratic National Convention with a view to his being put forward as the party candidate in the Presidential election, which takes place in the United States next November, there is very little doubt, a contemporary says, of his selection. Mr. Roosevelt will be 60 years of age when the election takes place, having been born at Oxford, Massachusetts, on September 15th, 1858. He graduated at Harvard University in 1880, and at the Harvard Law School in 1880, and was admitted to the Bar in 1881. He practised law as fourteen of many years, and was appointed United States Assistant Secretary of Navy under Cleveland in 1895. From June 19th, 1898, until March 4th, 1897, he was Secretary of State in President Cleveland's Cabinet, and in that capacity wrote the famous despatch on the Venezuelan boundary question which so irritated Great Britain. Mr. Olney, who resumed the practice of the law on quitting office, was married in 1861 to Miss Agnes Thomas.

THE SOLDIER AND THE COLONEL.

Mr. Tom Brown, R.L. has an excellent story in "M.A.P." "An old colonel of the Mulvaney type appeared one morning in the orderly room with a petition for a week's furlough, on the ground that his wife had been taken ill at some distant spot, and required his attendance. "Well, my man," remarked the colonel, "it's a curious thing, but I had a letter from your wife this morning, and she said you would be sure to want to come bothering round her, and if you asked for leave I wanted to give it to you, as she was getting on all right, and you would only be in the way." "She said that, did she, sorr?" "Yes." "An' you have to give me my furlough, sorr?" "In the circumstances—no." Pat was marching out, when he turned round and said, "May I speak a word, sorr?" "Yes." "Well, sorr, all ov'ee got to say is there's two mighty big loiars in this room, an' ov'ee was av them, sorr. For ov'ee niver had a wife!"

NEAR AND FAR.

MOTLEY NEW YORK.

Of the 1,000,000 foreign population Germany contributes 325,000, Ireland comes next with 275,000, Russia and Italy following, each with about 150,000. Of the 1,000,000 foreign population 1,000,000 live side on the globe which is not represented, most of them coming to stay. More than one-third of the population of New York is of foreign birth, and nearly all the nationalities represented have newspapers printed in their respective languages.

JAPAN'S INTERESTS IN COREA.

Details relating to Japan's commercial interests in Corea may be found in Mr. C. H. Hawes's new book on "The Uttermost East." In 1901 there were 16,142 Japanese in the country—as compared with 2,000 Russians—and this year Japan has the sympathy and support of Great Britain and the United States. That, however, will not go beyond moral support. Japan is under the influence of her own ambition over China. Japan has got too much pride at present. She considers herself one of the Great Powers, and is not to be trifled with by the press of other countries, which may get beyond control. Popular excitement in Japan is at present being taken as the one and only means of a dangerous agitation for Japan. Nevertheless, so long as the Japanese Government shows the same moderation and self-control as at the same time, the same control over the course of affairs in Japan as it has up to the present, there ought to be no danger of war.

THE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

Yesterday a report was telegraphed from Portsmouth that Japanese agents had decided to send four vessels believed to be battleships Formidable, Vindictive, and the Irresistible, and a cruiser from the Channel squadron, to the Far East, and that their places would be taken by warships from home.

The Press Association was informed by the Admiralty last evening that there was no foundation for the statement. It is understood that such a step has been contemplated by the Admiralty at the present time, and that there is nothing in the Far Eastern situation at present to warrant the being done.

The Admiralty has not contemplated any special measures with regard to the distribution of the fleet, and no such significance is being given to ordinary matters of routine, at the moment, when Japanese are prepared for any emergency.

The Press Association understands that the Portsmouth correspondent learns on good authority that as the result of inquiries from the Admiralty arrangements are being made in the home ports for the cruisers in readiness to proceed to the Mediterranean to replace any that might be despatched from that squadron to the Far East in the event of the outbreak of hostilities.

CRUISER LEAVES FOR THE FAR EAST.

The cruiser King Alfred, yesterday, left Portsmouth for China. She is taking out a new crew for the Sloop Sparrow, which is stationed at Hong Kong Noel, and for the river gunboat Kiusha. The King Alfred, however, carries provisions for six months, and can be taken out to China and back without coal. The vessel's orders on leaving Portsmouth were that if hostilities broke out between Russia and Japan on the way out she is to make for the Far East with all speed. The King Alfred will make a valuable addition to the British fleet, as she is a swift and powerfully armed vessel.

"WAR ALL BUT INEVITABLE."

The "Daily Telegraph" gives prominence to the following statement:—Even in diplomatic circles it is believed that the Russian Government is in a pacific solution of the difficulties in the Far East these was yesterday a recognition that a rupture between Russia and Japan was all but inevitable. Neither Japan nor Russia will abate anything of their claims, and there is no disposition on either side to accept the mediation of friendly Powers.

It is believed that Japan will take decisive steps within the next few days unless a conciliatory message is despatched from St. Petersburg—a contingency which those who are best able to form a judgment do not anticipate. Up to an early hour this morning no telegrams had been received from Japan, and the reason less in Japan. Russia is also silent in regard to matters of importance, that it appears to be considering and carefully delayed.

The "Daily News" mentions an unconfirmed report that the Russian Government has sold four of its steamers to a French company, which had in turn transferred the ownership to Russia.

A PERFECTLY PEACEFUL COURSE.

ST. PETERSBURG, Friday.

The journal "Rus" reports from a trustworthy source that the Russo-Japanese negotiations are proceeding a perfectly peaceful course. Russia, owing to a Japanese ultimatum having been sent to Russia, and statements to the kind, the journal declares are absolute inventions.

The only fact is that Russia, as well as Japan, is considering the proposals, and that it is incomprehensible, the "Rus" continues, as the liability of political complications is ever present, she is making a strong agitation in favour of war with Japan with the aid of foreign gold.

Not only her interests in the Far East, but also in dignity, as a Great Power cannot Russia to take measures to enable her quietly to await events.

REPORTED UNFAVOURABLE REPLY.

Reuter's Agency is informed that a telegram received from Japan yesterday, and dated Thursday, that the reply of Russia to Japan had been duly sent up and unfavourable is regarded as the Japanese Minister in London received a further news from his Government yesterday, stating that situation. His Excellency had been a thing of the reported order to 10,000 Japanese troops to Corea, via Nagasaki.

NO TIME-LIMIT.

(Through Reuter's Agency.)

ST. PETERSBURG, Friday.

It is officially stated to-night that Japan, in its last Note, made no conditions of time for Russia to reply.

EMERGENCY COUNCIL IN ST. PETERSBURG.

The Berlin "Lokal-Anzeiger" publishes a despatch from St. Petersburg which says that the situation in the Far East is regarded with the deepest anxiety. Russian official circles. Yesterday night a telegram of a thousand words from Admiral Alexieff, the Viceroy of the Far East, to the Czar arrived at Peterhof. The contents were so important that the Czar immediately summoned a Council of Ministers to his house. General Kuropatkin was ordered to the theatre to attend. The Council sat under the Czar's presidency until the early hours of the morning. It is understood that the Russian Government intends to stand by its former decisions, and a long as this arms will be despatched to Tokio.

SHOCKING OUTRAGE NEAR SKIPTON

Particulars of a remarkable shooting outrage are reported by a Skipton correspondent. What a farmer's son was proceeding home on Thursday night on horseback he was fired at by some person in some field near Skipton, and shot in the arm. An object on horseback had in his hand was blown away. The lad received a number of pellets in the neck and face, and fainted from the effects of the shot. The place is at the opposite side of the road had been rolled in shot. The police have the matter in hand.

OLD HORSES' TREAT.

One of the most interesting of New Year functions in London is the annual dinner given to the aged and retired veterans of the road—those horses who are closing out their days in the peaceful lives in the capable quarters of the Home of Rest for Horses, at Acton. Chopped carrots, apples, sugar, brown oats, and bran and biscuits were served to the guests on noon to 50 of these superannuated Dobbins. The menu dinners were very energetically summoned to the table by Mr. Alexander Pedigree, an old favourite, ringing a bell to announce that dinner was served. A corps of grooms to the bell Mr. Mac takes in his hand and solemnly shakes. One notable charger—and this feast has seen 17 years' service with Colonel Fitzclyer, one of the Scots Guards. In addition to horses, the home rejoices in the possession of goats and a donkey. The oldest inhabitant is a new 36 years old, and the last time the home was also boast of an occupant 45 years old.

END OF THE STARVED BABY CASE

The charge of manslaughter brought by the Liverpool police against Elizabeth Ann Harris, the mother of the infant that was found starved to death in a locked-up home, while she was in gaol, was on Friday withdrawn at the police court. At the inquest into the death of the infant that was found in the street was being arrested on a charge of drunkenness to ascertain whether the child was alive, and it was but from all suspicion of criminal neglect by the jury.

STONE COFFINS BENEATH LONDON STREETS.

During some excavations in Abbey-street, Bermondsey, workmen came across eight stone coffins, about 10ft. below the surface, two enclosed in the coffins, with neither bottom nor top. The coffins are of the famous old Bermondsey Abbey, some of the foundations of which have also been unearthed.

ANGLO-ITALIAN ARBITRATION TREATY DRAWN UP.

Reuter's Buenos Ayres telegraphs:—Signor Pansa, the Italian Ambassador to Great Britain, returning to Italy on leave of absence. A treaty of arbitration between Great Britain and Italy has been drawn up.

THE RACE WITH THE ATLANTIC.

The Cunarder Lucania, from New York, arrived at Queenstown on Friday after a passage of five days and a half, and reported that she encountered heavy seas of mails were landed. On Friday forenoon she 50 miles west of the Irish coast, great consternation was caused amongst the passengers by a telegram from Chicago, by a Marconigram announcing that consort of the Chicago disaster.

"INVISIBLE" BANKING.

HOW TEN THOUSAND MILLION POUNDS

The unimaginable sum of £10,119,822,000 (or nearly ten thousand million pounds) represents the number of the many London banks in the year ended without the exchange of a single bank-note, they passed from hand to hand. This colossal business is done through the medium of the London Bankers' Clearing House, which issued its statement for 1903 on Friday, after the year closed. The method of clearing is as follows: Each bank has a clerk at the house, and at the end of the day each bank gives a clerk on a slip a piece of it for the purpose. Then each bank finds it is a debtor or creditor on the day's transactions. The clerks then go to the clerk of the house, and for such amount only is signed and countersigned.

RUSSIAN OFFICERS DISGUISED AS WOODCUTTERS.

NORWAY'S FEAR OF ABSORPTION.

The Christiania correspondent of the "Daily Post" states that Russian aggression in North Europe has created a deep impression on the Norwegian mind. The Russian Government is said to be about to secure the total absorption of Norway under its sole dominion, only a question of time and opportunity. A number of Russian military officers, in civilian dress, have been seen recently, and it is stated that they have come in the guise of woodcutters of Russian having a practical knowledge of the country and its resources, and are dedicated to be nearing completion. The Norwegians look to Great Britain for assistance.

VAGARIES OF THE PATENT MEDICINE STAMP ACTS

"COUGH MIXTURE" TAXED BUT NOT LIVER TONIC.

Recently the Inland Revenue authorities decided to enforce the Patent Medicine Stamp Acts generally, but there seems to be a difference of opinion as to what patent medicines are taxable. Some patent medicines made by chemists and others. These have been made by the Inland Revenue authorities, which were made into force to-day, have been postponed until April 1st in order to give time to adjust the works. Were the Revenue officials to carry out the decision of the Statutes literally, it would be a charge to sell a penny worth of pills or lozenges without placing a three-halfpenny stamp on the package. Some of the fanciers of medicine, Nonconformist, House is investing in the chemists' Tonic, "Cough Mixture" will require a stamp, not so "Liver Tonic," since the mention of "Liver" is part of the trade name, and in itself does not make the preparation liable to duty. The proprietors of London correspondents, a that the officers got themselves into a fix, and so have postponed the enforcement of the Acts, for they hope to avoid themselves—All Fools' Day.