Hard Knock for England.

Many brilliant thinkers, reading the world's news from time to time, have stamped an impatient foot, in a moment of international recklessness, and have demanded, "Why is Germany ?" Now a French traveller clears this up. Henri de Noussane, for such is the name of the French gentleman, informs us, first of all, that he has been in Hamburg this summer, and that therefore everything that he has to say comes first hand and is beyond dispute.

"While in Hamburg," he says, "I met with a certain gentleman, whose name I cannot divulge, because he is a man who has not only very large interests in the maritime affairs of Germany, but is also well known in the commercial and financial circles of France, and is, besides, a personal friend of the Kaiser. He is thus an altogether important personage, who may be taken as a representative of the economic consciousness of Germany. This Hamburg magnate, who looks upon politics and diplomacy in general as a lucrative business, when well managed, was unusually frank and outspoken in his statements."

"What," I asked humbly, "do you people intend to do with France in the future ?"

"Precisely what we have done during the last thirty-six years," answered the magnate. "It is perfectly natural," he continued, "that we should make use of the situation which we have ourselves created. We do not wish, however, to carry out our national programme by the means of war, if we can help it."

"But what about the Pan-Germans ?" I asked. "Are they not ready to go to every extreme to realize their ambitions as soon as the opportune moment arrives ? Please, sir, will they let us live ?"

"Oh ! as to those brawlers," he answered with a shrug of his broad shoulders; "every country has its demagogues. You mustn't let them disturb you. The programme of the business men, which is the real programme of the country, is to maintain peace, to produce as much as possible, and to be strong enough to carry on their trade in every part of the world."

"How do you reconcile this with the attitude of the Kaiser and his numerous speeches, which to Frenchmen like me often seem very threatening ?"

"Hem! the Kaiser," he answered, with a significant smile; "we business men consider him as our best commercial traveller. He has a very keen eye for business, and does not want war any more than the rest of us. How could he! All our money is tied up in business enterprises; we have no reserve funds. If a war should break out between Germany and England the result would be that more than half of the Hamburg business houses, for instance, would be obliged to go into bankruptcy within twenty-four hours. No, we don't want any war."

"But," I replied, "the army itself might not be so considerate. It might want to hurt us."

"Well, now you come to a point very much misunderstood abroad, and I shall be very glad to throw some light on it. Let me tell, then, as emphatically as possible, that here in Germany, notwithstanding the numerous newspaper reports to the contrary, the army is the servant of the country, not its master."

"You do not think, then, that it will cry if it doesn't soon have a war ?"

"Of course not! But I don't claim to be a prophet. No one knows what may happen. But, in any case, I can assure you it would not be France that we should be after. All that your country would have to do, in case of a war, would be to keep quiet. But France has acted very queerly of late. Here in Germany we cannot understand why France makes itself the errandboy of England, with the Fashoda incident still fresh in memory."

"The upshot of my whole interview with this plain-spoken German magnate," concludes this wise and witty Frenchman, "may be found in a single sentence—a sentence which, he assured me, is often quoted in the private conversations of German diplomatists: 'The peace of the world can be secured only at the cost of wiping out England.'"

England, please notice.—[Boston Transcript.

An Old Russian Candlestick.

Once, long ago—I know not where nor when
It cast its light upon some strange-set board,
Around which, fur-mantled, lounged a horde
Of hot-eyed youth and swart, thick-bearded men.
Its flame lit up their wine-wild faces, then
It caught the studded hilt of dirk and sword,
And stopped till, coarse-carousing with her lord,
Some jewelled woman flashed it back again.

Far from those mingled scenes of mirth and ire,
This bit of glass forlornly braves its doom—
To waste with me the silent; days' desire,
To watch long nights of quietness and gloom,
To share the lonely glimmer of my fire,
And cheer the hired bareness of my room.
—Margaret Ashmore, in New England Magazine.

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The Island of St. Helena.

(By Raymond Blythwayt.)

St. Helena, an emerald set in granite, rose upon our vision from out a tropic sea one Sunday morning last August, and a party of South African wanderers, of whom I was one, banded together for its exploration.

Landing at the quaint old quay, whereon Napoleon and long years afterward Dinizulu, warlike Cetewayo's son and General Cronje first set their imprisoned feet, we passed from blazing sunshine into the cool green calm of a little church, wherein upon the walls are recorded in brief tablets and memorials some of the island's few and far between happenings. For, just as in Westminster Abbey we read the history of England writ large upon the tombs of its Kings and Queens and warrior statesmen, so in a thousand little grass-grown tabernacles scattered throughout the sunlit world we read in smaller words the story of the Great British Empire.

And then in carriages, through the one poor mean and shabby street of St. Helena's one little town—James Town—through bird-haunted, flower-scented valleys and up long hills, whereon clustered tropic flowers of every color and variety: burning crimson, petals of gold that glittered in a blazing sun, palm trees drooping gracefully over the sun-flecked, shadow-stricken pathway, whose great branches clashed and clattered in the summer breeze; and ever and again we caught a flash of water, and

Like a downward smoke the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

And the captive Napoleon is, of course, the genius of this enchanted island; everything speaks of Napoleon, and almost all the interest of that island discovered by the Portuguese soldier of fortune in the fourteenth century centres round his magic memory.

But what impresses the French or English visitor more than anything else, and impresses him most unfavorably, is the sad neglect which is evidenced on every side. Longwood, the prison of him who was perhaps the greatest conqueror the world has ever known, the third most distinguished man that has ever lived, the one man of all others, not even excepting our own great Nelson—Longwood is a prison tumbling slowly and sadly into shabby and premature decay.

The bare and empty rooms which once echoed to the footsteps of the mighty emperor lie silent now, whilst the long bars of sunlight stretch themselves day after day wearily upon shabby floor and fast-decaying wall.

Sir John Dartnell, one of our most distinguished soldiers, turned to me and said: "Who would have thought that England would so have treated the memory of her greatest foe ?" and then he made the suggestion that Longwood, and the lovely tomb wherein Napoleon's body rested for twenty years, should be handed over to the loving care of France. "And that," said he, "would be Petente cordiale indeed."

But, of course, this Island of Fate has many more memories connected with it than those which circle round the romantic figure of the little Corsican artilleryman.

For instance, in the far-off days of Charles II., when the world was very spacious and mysterious, and the gentleman adventurers who really laid the foundations of the British Empire, had not ceased to wander to and fro upon the earth, there were some bloodthirsty pirates who dared to assert themselves in the sturdy presence of Sir Richard Munden, the governor and those leaders of the "Dennison insurrection" were forthwith tried for sedition and mutiny, and straighway hanged.

St. Helena, still and quiet in these its decaying hours, must have rung with savage cries and rocked beneath the storm of passion over and over again in its eventful history. On one occasion, in the Christmas of 1783, a couple of sergeants led the troops into mutiny, merely because an orderly and well-conducted canteen had been substituted for the punch houses, wherein they had been accustomed to hold their drunken orgies, and for this uprising no less than ninety-nine mutineers were condemned to death though in the end only nine were executed.

And then quite suddenly one day—for, of course, at that period the telegraph was undreamed of, even in England—a man-of-war sailed proudly into the lovely sunlit harbor, and the whisper went round the island that Napoleon Bonaparte had come a prisoner for ever to St. Helena.

On his first night in James Town, curiously enough, and without any design whatever, he slept in a room which had been occupied some years previously by Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterwards Duke of Wellington, who was on his homeward voyage from India.

In 1890 came Dinizulu, Cetewayo's son, who only recently has been fomenting trouble for us in Natal. He lived a prisoner here in comfort, wore European dress and drank afternoon tea, to the disgust and horror of his uncles, who accompanied him into exile.

Of one of the uncles, however, the following story is told. He had determined to try to learn English. One day, finding a great difficulty in his spelling lesson, he asked his teacher what he would do to an English boy to make him remember. "I should stand him on a chair until he could learn," replied the teacher. Shortly after, on turning his head, the tutor was highly amused to find the huge black man standing on a chair, with a book in his hand. After remaining there for some time he got quickly down, remarking that he did not believe his works, for standing on a chair had not enabled him to know his lesson any better than sitting.

In 1900 came Cronje and many hundreds of Boer prisoners, who were marched through the town to Deadwood's Plain, not far from where Napoleon lived, and for a year or two they delighted everybody by their general courtesy and willingness to help in any improvements for the island. It was the Boer prisoners, for instance, who built the splendid road and sea walls round the west rocks, and a great sadness naturally overtook some of us when we were shown the spot where some who were trying to escape were shot down.

I loved St. Helena that quiet sunlit tropic Sunday. It was so much the island of my dreams, with its great cliffs—fancy the ladder of 699 steps which is erected on the face of the hill, from James Town to Ladder Hill—and its magnificent flowers; arum lilies, begonias, petunias, annunciation lilies, thunbergia, heavy-scented camellias and crimson magnolias, gardenias and innumerable ferns, all growing wild upon the roadside; and here and there great cactus plants, with their flowers, like spears of brilliant flame, outlined against the cloudless sky; and all the wonderful fish that swim in the shadow of those grim, grey cliffs: albacore, cavalli, yellow tails, fivefingers, bulleyes, soldiers, meckerel and grey fish, and great turtles stumbling on to the lonely beach, wherefrom no one can venture to bathe lest they chance upon the sharks, whose huge sinister dorsal fins so often cut the water of that tropical ocean.

Every bachelor was once a baby—being the single instance of where history does not repeat itself.

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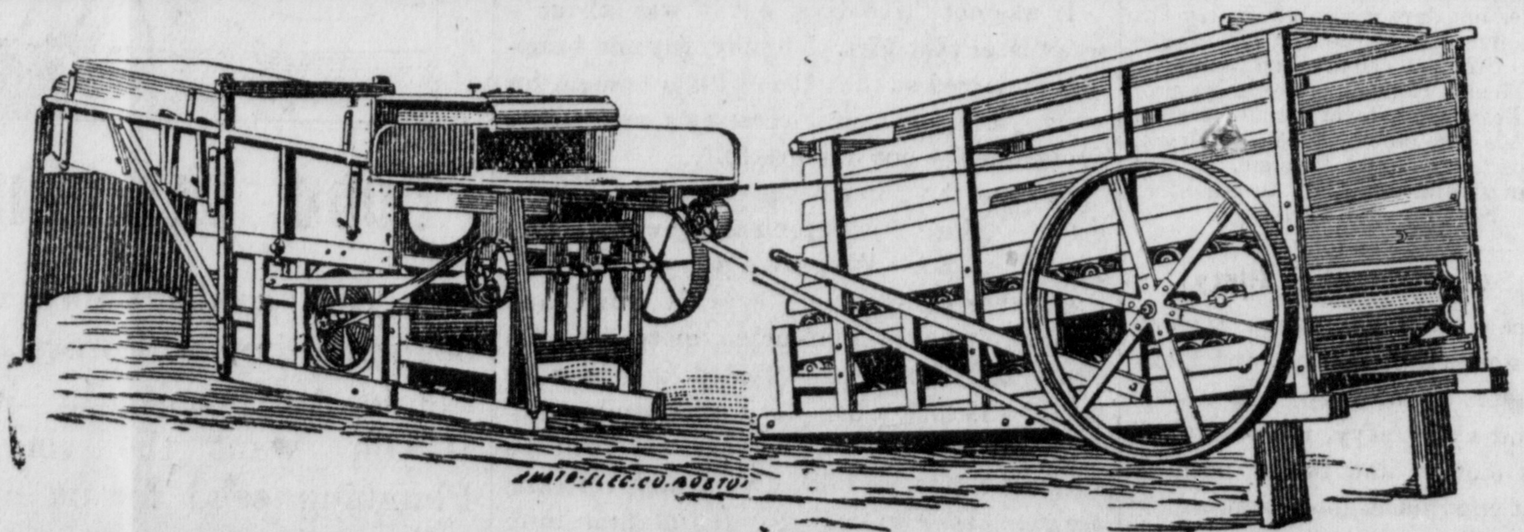

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