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AUSTRO-HUNGARY.

THE WHICH BINDS THEM IS A VERY WEAK ONE.

The Most Remarkable Confederation Now in Existence—Russian Diplomacy Triumphant—The Present Crisis in Spain.

Poor old Francis Joseph, emperor of Austria, king of Bohemia, etc., and apostle king of Hungary—by nature and training the kindest sovereign of the century—is a striking illustration of the adage that uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. Francis Joseph wears two distinct crowns—that of Austria and that of Hungary, to say nothing of the auxiliary baubles of Bohemia and the entire empire of Austria. In its foreign relations the Austro-Hungarian confederation is represented by joint officials, but there all semblance of unity ends. Hungary has its own parliament and ministry and retains absolute control of its trade and currency. Every act of its legislature must, of course, be approved by the king, but the approval must be proclaimed at Pesth, the Hungarian capital. In Vienna Francis Joseph is emperor of Austria, in Pesth he is king of Hungary, to the ambassadors of



COUNT BADENI,
Prime Minister of Austria.

foreign nations he is emperor of Austria "and" king of Hungary. His official acts at Pesth have no bearing whatever on the affairs of Austria, and pronouncements issued at Vienna are not respected in Hungary.

In 1867, when the Hungarian constitution was restored, it was agreed by Austria and Hungary to maintain the customs union and the commercial and economic unity which had existed between the two countries under the old regime. The proportion in which each state has to contribute to the common expenses is settled by mutual agreement every ten years; and at the present time a committee representing the two governments is attempting to arrive at an understanding for a renewal of the compact for the ten years beginning in the fall of 1897. The privilege of the Austro-Hungarian bank expires at the same time as the customs and commercial alliance, and should the committee fail to arrive at a settlement both states would recover absolute economic and fiscal liberty. Each could then pass its own tariff laws and coin its own money. In commercial transactions they would be as independent of each other as of any foreign country. In short, they would be held together by nothing but a common sovereign—a noble old man whose family is none too popular in Hungary, and whose demise might easily lead to the dissolution of the confederation. It is believed, however, that an amicable settlement of some sort will be arranged, as neither Austria nor Hungary is in a position just now to tempt the fate.

In Vienna Francis Joseph has lately had annoyances which would have tired the patience of Job. The new Austrian parliament, which consists of representatives from Austria proper, Bohemia, Poland and other provinces, indulged in disgraceful rows and had to be summarily dismissed by the crown, at the request of Count Badeni, prime minister of the empire. Some time ago the rabble of Vienna elected one Lueger, a violent anti-Semite, mayor of the city. The government declined to recognize Lueger. A second election was ordered, which resulted in his re-election and recognition by the crown. Since then the progressive liberal German element, although in a minority, has battled valiantly for the preservation of civil rights and, a few weeks ago, succeeded in out-flibustering the Czechs, Poles and anti-Semites, and bringing to the session of the reichsrath to an abortive close. The Bohemians managed, however, to secure the passage of a bill making Czech the official language of their kingdom; thereby winning a victory for



COUNT MOURAVIEFF,
Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

which they had fought for many years. The entire performance, laughable as it was at times, is of peculiar interest to Americans, as it proves conclusively that the union of a government of states must be strong and centralized to win the respect of its own people, to say nothing of the admiration of foreign nations. Without absolute union there can be no true liberty.

A country divided against itself has very little influence in international affairs. Austria-Hungary, by reason of its geographical position and its vast army, to say nothing of historical tradition, should be the ruling power in the Balkans. In countries gone by the Austrians of Hungary and the Germans of Austria repelled the advances of the victorious Moslems and preserved Christian civilization. Today the descendants of

these heroes are hardly consulted when Turkish affairs require adjustment. The Vienna government, cognizant of its inherent weakness, has degenerated into a mere adjunct to the foreign offices of Russia and Germany, whose decisions are accepted without question by the Austro-Hungarian officials. And yet it cannot be disputed that Russia, ever since the Crimean war, has been Austria's worst enemy. When France and Great Britain united with Turkey in 1853 to prevent Russia from taking possession of Constantinople, the czar's government waited in vain for Austria to support its cause. The allied powers conquered Russia, but they did not crush the national spirit which was then and is now dreaming of a universal empire in the east, with Russia at its head. The punishment of Austria was the first move in Russia's diplomatic game after the Crimean disaster. Napoleon III was permitted to take a hand in the struggle for Italian liberty, which led to the loss of Austria's possessions in the north of Italy. In 1866 Prussia was encouraged to invade Bohemia and seize two provinces, besides wresting from the Hapsburg dynasty the leadership of Germany. In 1877, when Austria was in sore straits on account of internal troubles, the czar declared war against Turkey and would have seized Constantinople and European Turkey had it not been for British jealousy which, personified in Lord Beaconsfield, compelled Russia to withdraw its troops from Turkey and consent to the establishment of the Bulgarian and Servian government and the virtual cession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria.

Since then Russia has ceased open antagonism to Austria-Hungary, and her diplomacy has been directed toward making the dual empire a tool in the hands of more powerful neighbors. Germany, which has no interest whatever in eastern affairs, has shaped its policy in conformity with Russian wishes, actuated by the hatred of its emperor for all things British, and Austria has co-operated meekly with her powerful ally. Count Mouravieff, Russia's minister of foreign affairs, has managed to restore the most amicable relations imaginable between his own government and that of Vienna; and it is due to this circumstance more than any other that Russia is to-day the paramount power in Constantinople where the British ambassador, a few years ago, the port's official mouthpiece, is now barely persona grata. Had Austria-Hungary been blessed with a centralized system of government during the past 50 years, it would to-day dictate the policy of the east instead of setting at the feet of Russia's table waiting for the crumbs the czar may be pleased to bestow upon it.

The inertia of Austria-Hungary is paralleled only by that of Spain, which is at present passing through a most serious crisis. Instead of dismissing Premier Canovas and his ministry, who had tendered their resignation, and entrusting the liberal party with the management of the government, the queen-regent—a member of the Austrian imperial family—has concluded to keep the conservatives in power. This act is equivalent to a continuation of the suicidal war in Cuba and a repetition of internal struggles at home. It also means official sanction of



PRAXEDES MATEO SAGASTA,
Leader of the Liberal Party in Spain.

the policy pursued by Gen. Weyler and his friend, the duke of Tetuan, who, in his capacity of minister of foreign affairs, has made Spain the laughing stock of the diplomatic world. Had the queen-regent called upon Senor Praxedes Hates Sagasta, the leader of the liberal party, to form a new ministry the trouble in Cuba might have been adjusted in a manner satisfactory to Spain, the insurgents and the United States. Sagasta was minister of state under the republic of 1870, and continued in the cabinet under King Amadeus. He was minister of foreign affairs under President Serrano in 1874, and a year later gave his adhesion to the cause of King Alfonso, father of the present boy king. On the death of Alfonso, in 1885, Sagasta again became leader of the government. He was overthrown in 1890, and retired until the Cuban crisis induced him to resume an active interest in politics. He is above all things a patriot, and cares very little for the pomp and circumstances of royalty. The latter is probably the reason why the queen-regent, who is a firm believer in the divine right of kings, refuses to place the affairs of her tottering realm in the care of the only man who might be able to give it a permanent lease of life.

Ginger Beer.

An old family recipe for ginger beer that is easily made is this: Put 1 1/2 pounds of granulated sugar in a large crock or bowl. Add 2 ounces of pure ground ginger and a lemon sliced thin. Pour over these 8 quarts of boiling water and occasionally stir until the liquid becomes lukewarm. Then add one-quarter of a yeast cake that has been dissolved. Mix well, and when perfectly cold strain into bottles and fasten the corks securely. Keep the bottles in a moderate temperature 12 hours and then put them in a cool place. This beer will be ready to use in four or five days.

Head Rests for Piazza Chairs.

Head rests or cushions for piazza chairs are covered with cream linens and grass-cloths. They are embroidered in wash silks, and when soiled may be washed and made to look fresh and new. The cushion is made in the shape of a half circle, but the cover is straight and cut seven inches longer than the cushion, the ends being finished with a half inch hemstitched border. The cover is drawn up at each end, leaving a three inch fall, and is tied with linen cords and tassels, by which the cushion is hung to the chair.

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B. McLeod,
Harcourt.
May 31 1897.

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