

VARIOUS

THE GREAT ROUND
WORLD AND WHAT IS
GOING ON IN IT, VOL. 1,
NO. 50, OCTOBER 21,
1897

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The new Prime Minister of Spain is Señor Sagasta. After several days of uncertainty the Queen decided to appoint him.

No sooner was her decision known than a report was circulated that Weyler had sent in his resignation; it was also rumored that Sagasta had stated that one of his first official acts would be to remove Weyler from Cuba.

The truth of the matter is that Weyler does not intend to leave the island if he can help it.

Just before the ministry resigned, when it was known that they could not remain in power many days longer, he hurried off a long report of the work he had done in Cuba; this he hoped would help him with the new Minister, and enable him to keep his place.

In this report he said that Western Cuba was pacified, and that he had effected a great improvement in the condition of Cuba since his arrival there. He stated that he had given Cuba a fresh lease of life, that trains were running regularly throughout the island, the telegraph was in working order, and the troops, in spite of the fact that their pay was six months in arrears, were in excellent health and spirits. Every one of these statements is declared, by those who are in a position to know the real state of affairs in Cuba, to be absolutely false.

Having this letter safely in the hands of the Government, the General waited for developments; then as soon as the ministry under General Azcarraga had gone out of office and that of Señor Sagasta had come in, he cabled to the new Prime Minister, saying that he had no intention of resigning his office, but instead, begged to offer his services to the new ministry.

A great excitement is being worked up over him in Cuba, which his enemies declare is being done by his orders. Soldiers are parading the streets, crying, "Long live Weyler!" Merchants are hurrying to the palace, begging him not to resign, and a rumor having been circulated that it is the United States that has been asking that he be sent away from Cuba, the soldiers are adding cries of "Death to the United States!"

The Cuban and American residents of Havana are terror-stricken. Much as they desired to be free of the tyrant, they now dread his downfall lest it shall cause more trouble for them.

It is said that Señor Sagasta will try to bring the war to a close by offering liberal terms of Home Rule to Cuba.

In fact, the new cabinet has already held a council in which it was agreed to establish reforms in the island with as little delay as possible.

The Colonial Minister has been instructed to prepare a draft of the scheme for Home Rule, and to have it ready to present to the cabinet officers at their next meeting.

The Cubans, however, declare that they do not want Home Rule. They have been fighting for freedom, and nothing less will satisfy them. They are willing to buy their freedom from Spain, but they declare that they will never lay down their arms until Cuba is free.

A despatch from the Philippine Islands brings the news that Spain is faring badly in that direction also.

In a recent battle four hundred Spanish soldiers were killed. It seems that the rebels in the Philippines fight in the American Indian fashion; that is to say, they get under cover, behind bushes or trees, and, taking careful aim at their enemy, make every shot tell. In this manner they are able to inflict great injury without suffering much themselves.

It is reported that an entire battalion of Spanish soldiers, eight hundred strong, has deserted in a body to the rebels.

The soldiers in the Philippines are suffering just as severely for food and pay as their brother soldiers in Cuba, and finding that the rebels feed their soldiers well, and treat them better than the Spaniards, great numbers are constantly deserting and joining the rebel ranks.

Affairs in Greece are still unsettled.

When the Prime Minister told the Boulé¹ or parliament the terms of the treaty, there was much dissatisfaction expressed by the members.

Mr. Ralli, the Prime Minister, stated that he was fully aware how hard the terms of the treaty were, but he thought that Greece must accept and make the best of them.

He told the Boulé that it was not possible for Greece to continue the war; she had neither men nor money to do it with; but he wished it understood that he was merely stating his opinion; he would not attempt to advise the nation on such a serious point.

If the Boulé decided to accept the terms offered by Turkey, he stated that the ministry was prepared to carry them out, and do all in its power to assist the country in the crisis; he, however, asked the Boulé, on behalf of the ministry, for a vote of confidence, that is, an expression of belief that the ministers were doing the best that could be done for the good of the country.

When Mr. Ralli had finished speaking, a member of the House rose to his feet, and began to blame the ministry for all the ills that Greece was called upon to endure. This turned the members against Mr. Ralli and the rest of the ministers, and the vote of confidence was refused. Mr. Ralli was thereupon obliged to send his resignation to the King.

King George has already chosen the new Premier, and a Greek prince of high rank has been selected to go to Constantinople and arrange the treaty, the Boulé having decided to accept the terms offered.

Both Spain and Greece now have new ministers who are undertaking the difficult task of piloting their countries through their difficulties.

It was just as well that we did not put too much faith in the story that the war on the Indian frontier would be ended with the defeat of the Haddah Mullah.

News has reached us that the British forces have once again been checked by the tribesmen.

This time it was the Mohmads who were the victors. These men, if you remember, professed themselves ready to submit to English rule, and when the troops arrived in their neighborhood, offered their allegiance to the British officers.

They were, however, told that to prove their good faith they must, one and all, give up their rifles. Upon hearing this they became sulky, and refused to do anything of the sort.

The British waited the two days they had promised, and then began to destroy the villages of the rebellious tribesmen. On one of these expeditions they were in turn attacked by the Afridis, and defeated.

In the meanwhile the Ameer of Afghanistan is uneasy over the advance of the British into the hills that form his frontier. He is afraid that the British will not be satisfied with punishing the tribesmen, but will endeavor to take possession of lands belonging to him. He has therefore sought the aid of Russia, and has obtained the Czar's promise to help him in case the British attempt to encroach on Afghanistan.

He is at the same time keeping faith with the English. He has issued a proclamation, forbidding his subjects to leave the country under penalty of a heavy fine, so that it will not be possible for them to go and join the tribesmen. He is doing all in his power to keep faith with England, but it is said that he is much pleased that he has secured the aid of Russia to protect him in case of need.

In the Soudan, the English are steadily advancing on Khartoum.

¹ Pronounced *voulee*.

The Mahdists are making a strong stand there, and it is expected that the decisive battle will be fought in the near neighborhood of that city.

A newspaper correspondent who is with the Soudan expedition writes a most interesting account of the rapid way the soldiers are building a railroad across the desert. The road is being finished at the rate of nearly two miles a day, and when completed will enable the army to bring men and supplies from Cairo in a few days instead of the many weary weeks which are now required.

The building of the railway through the desert has been entrusted to the engineer corps. These engineers are soldiers whose duty it is to build fortifications, railroads, bridges, or any works which the commander of the force may think necessary.

In building a railroad the first thing to be done is to prepare the road-bed, so that it will not give way under the weight of the trains that are to pass over it. This is done by digging out or banking up the earth so that the bed shall be level. When the earth-bank has been made as high and as solid as necessary, huge wooden beams, called sleepers, are placed across it at regular intervals, and on these sleepers the rails are laid.

The correspondent describes the laying of the rails as follows:

"A great sight was the actual work of laying the line. We went out in a car drawn by a spare engine, to see this at the place where the work was in progress. The second construction train had reached the scene of active operations just before we arrived, and the desert fairly hummed with busy turmoil. It has been given but to few to see a railway line made and used while you wait. Yet we had that experience on this afternoon. Everything was done at once. The long train moves slowly toward the end of the rails, getting as near to the bare bank as is possible. So soon as she stops, an eager army of workers attack her, with, of course, much wild noise of strange rhythmic chant. To the uninitiated this onslaught of the workers on the train bears all the appearance of a raid, yet, should one watch awhile, it gradually dawns upon one that marvellous orderliness and most studied method underlie every seemingly wild movement. The engine stops—say, ten rail lengths from the end of the track—and the game begins. The rail-cars are in front, just behind the tender, with the rails neatly ranged on racks. At once to either side of each rail-car rushes a party of, if Egyptians, eight men, if blacks, ten, upon whose padded shoulders the ton of sun-heated metal is placed by the car party. Then they run—they do literally run—away with the unwieldy thing to its destined place, where, once it is placed on the sleepers, the gaugers and strikers get at it, and it is put in position and pinned (to each alternate sleeper, the operation being completed after the heavy train has passed over the newly laid rails) in an incredibly short time, at the end of which a bugle sounds, the steam whistle blows, the engine moves slowly forward over the rails that less than five minutes ago were stacked on the cars behind her, and the whole operation is repeated."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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