

**POLITICS AND WEST POINT.**

Congressman Slayden of Texas has done excellent service in calling the attention of Congress and the country to the manner in which the discipline of West Point and the authority of its officials are being steadily undermined by politics. Proof appears in the documents transmitted to Congress by the Secretary of War, Mr. Wright, in response to a House resolution of February 10, asking for information in regard to the cadets who have recently been brought to book for deficiencies in conduct or studies. Some of the correspondence Mr. Wright declined to give, or forwarded only in part, on the ground that the matter was confidential.

The most important discovery is that the two worst offenders are Secretary Wright and the President himself, avowed enemy of the politicians. When the question of punishing certain cadets for hazing came up last summer, it was speedily made plain that Secretary Wright was wholly unable to realize the serious nature of the hazing at West Point, or the gravity of overruling the Superintendent of the Academy and his officers. The compromise at that time—the dismissal of two cadets and the suspension of the others for eight months—was adopted in spite of the united protests of Col. Scott, the Superintendent, and the Academic Board. As if to show his contempt for their attitude, Mr. Wright even went so far as to inform Congress that he had no objection to the bill introduced with the purpose of reappointing the dismissed cadets—no objection to overriding the laws against hazing, no objection to seeing the hazers return in triumph to flout their officers and inform their fellows that it is easy to get round a colonel when you have a Secretary on your side!

Bad as that case was, the more recent one is even worse. Now it is a clear case of failure in studies and in conduct of two first-class men, Cadets Fletcher of Providence, R. I., and Pendleton of South Ballston, Va., and three of the third class, Gonser of Elmira, Holliday of Kirkwood, Ill., and Thompson of Chattanooga. The Academic Board, after carefully going over their records and giving each one an opportunity to state whether the demerits against him were due to injustice or malice, ordered dismissal from the Academy. Some men are dropped in

this way every year; sometimes the derelictions are slight, from the point of view of the civilian, but the number of demerits—108 end the cadet's career—is usually plain evidence that the cadet is too slack to have in him the material of a good officer. Hitherto, such findings of the Academic Board, or of the special board appointed in certain instances, have always been final. To the amazement of the entire Academy, as soon as the political friends of the cadets could reach Washington, a reconsideration was ordered, and the President himself on January 4 wrote an autograph letter to the Secretary of War, as follows:

There are five young men who have been recommended for dismissal by the Academic Board at West Point for what seems to me insufficient reasons. . . . Cannot the Academic Board be reconvened to consider again its action so far as relates to these men? It seems to me that the needs of the service can be met by some arrangement less than discharge. I think it would be an entirely needless hardship to turn these boys out. If necessary, let them each go back one year.

The Academic Board pointed out that these cadets were not boys, but men over twenty-two years of age, two of them well into their twenty-fourth year, and that:

It has been the practice of the Academic Board heretofore to regard a deficiency in conduct as final, and as one of the most satisfactory proofs that can be secured of the unfitness of an individual for the military career.

The board then voiced this earnest protest against the subordination of the Academy to politics and the undermining of its own influence:

The Academic Board, with a long and intimate experience of the disciplinary methods of this institution, and the effects upon the cadets of unusual leniency, respectfully asks an earnest consideration of the very serious effect upon the morale of a body of young men who are being educated to high standards of conduct and of honor in seeing the disciplinary standards of the institution set aside in spite of the warnings of experience and the admonitions of their superior officers. If the young gentlemen of the corps feel that upon every occasion when they have brought upon themselves the penalties of failure, and when, after the administration of the institution has conscientiously sat in judgment upon their status, a reversal can be obtained by an appeal to higher authorities, the administrative authority of the institution is brought into contempt and the powerful influences which an impartial operation of the governing mechanism of military education should bring about is nullified.

Unfortunately, however, the board, "in

deference to the judgment of the wishes of the President of the United States," recommended "with reluctance that Cadets Fletcher and Pendleton be suspended without pay and allowance until January 1, 1910," and suggested a similar mitigation of the sentences of the others. The President insisted upon this being done.

Why should there be an Academic Board if somebody in Washington is to overrule it? Why should any cadet obey its laws if he has behind him an able Congressman? Will the cadets not read the memorandum prepared for the Secretary of War in which the Chief of Staff says?—

Herewith will be found requests on behalf of these cadets, as follows:

For Cadet Pendleton, from Senator Daniels and Representative Glass.

For Cadet Fletcher, from Senator Wetmore and Representative Granger.

For Cadet Gonser, from Representative Fassett; also verbal request from Representative Landis.

For Cadet Holliday, from Representative McKinney (both verbal and written).

Representatives Fassett, McKinney, and Landis called in person to see Gen. Oliver during your absence.

Cadet Thompson of Tennessee, who belongs to the third class, was found deficient in mathematics and drawing. There is a request on his behalf from Senator Frazier and Representative Moon.

Will not the cadets draw the proper inference that these visits were successful? Will they ever see, on the other hand, the statement in Theodore Roosevelt's annual message of 1901?—

Every promotion and every detail under the War Department must be made solely with regard to the good of the service and to the capacity and merit of the man himself. No pressure, political, social, or personal, of any kind, will be permitted to exercise the least effect.

**THE GROWING DREAD OF WAR.**

The most cheerful news of the fortnight is the report that the Powers signatory to the Treaty of Berlin have practically agreed to impose upon Serbia a policy of moderation with respect to Austria-Hungary. "To make representations at Belgrade," is the formal phrase; but, actually, intervention at Belgrade means also intervention at Vienna. If Serbia is persuaded to keep the peace by refraining from impossible demands, it follows that Austria will not be allowed to endanger peace by further exasperating the feelings of the Servian people. It is to be noted that among the Powers that signed the

Treaty of Berlin is Germany, which hitherto has refused to exercise on its ally pressure of any kind. That Germany should now actively intervene means that the end of the Balkan trouble is in sight. The agreement between Turkey and Austria concerning Bosnia-Herzegovina was signed at Constantinople last week. The difficulties between Turkey and Bulgaria are as good as settled. It remained for this latest declaration of Europe in favor of peace to scatter definitely the war clouds that have hung over the Continent since October. Now, as at the outbreak of the difficulty, the chief merit of working for harmony is due to the French government.

The behavior of Europe during these months of bewilderment and anxiety should give deep satisfaction to all friends of international peace. The idea has been so long dinned into us that Europe is a powder magazine, ready to go off at the slightest flash; the nations have been so continuously pictured as panting to fly at one another's throats; the Near East has been regarded for so many years as the world's peculiar danger spot; and we have been told so often that the slightest political readjustment in that devoted area must sweep all Europe into a general catastrophe, that we cannot but wonder that the course of Balkan history during the last five months should have been what it is. According to our prophets of glory and slaughter, the nations were so eager for war that an insignificant island in the Ægean, a fracas in a Macedonian village, a dispute between two frontier officials, might be enough to start a general conflagration. Instead, the Near East has passed through great changes and war has not broken out. The Turkish sovereignty in Europe has been seriously curtailed, Austria and Bulgaria have seized upon their long-coveted territory, a section of the Slav population in the Balkans has been thrown into violent commotion—and the result has been that on two important occasions a concert of the Powers has taken its stand squarely on the side of peace, and that the international politics are probably more amicable now than for years.

Only one deduction is possible from the facts: Europe is not the lurking place of sanguinary ambition that the Jingo and professional alarmist in

every country would make it out to be. The madness of military and naval competition, of course, is there. The intensity of nervous, often unreasoning, suspicion is also there. But undeniably in this mad striving after more field batteries and Dreadnoughts, the nations of Europe stagger on with a good deal of sickness at heart. It is easy to find a cynical reason why the Powers should intervene for peace in the Balkans. France traditionally wants peace; Russia is still crippled from its Manchurian adventure; Italy is torn between its Balkan ambitions and its duty to its allies, and would rather wait; Great Britain is this, and Germany is that, and so on. True in part; but equally true, and patently true, in the entire course of the Balkan disturbance has been the sincere dread of war that has been a sombre undertone to the daily shiftings and variations of the professional diplomats. The old diplomatic language of bluster and covert threat has been heard, but it has sounded as if spoken by men who were repeating the ancient warlike phrases while their minds were working in new habits of peace.

For all right-minded men in England and Germany who view with horror and disgust the stupid game of mutual exasperation in which the two leading Powers in Europe are now blindly engaged, the settlement of the Balkan difficulty cannot come too soon. It will be as a clamp upon the mouths of the preachers of hatred. Englishmen who have been taught to go to sleep trembling at the thought of German invasion, Germans who wait daily for news that the British have fallen upon the Kaiser's fleet, should find enlightenment in the events of these last five months in southeastern Europe. If Germany is bent on a trial of strength with England, why has she neglected the Balkan opportunity? If England wants to destroy the German fleet, why has she counselled Turkey to peace and labored with France towards the same end? The Jingo, of course, can never be permanently silenced; but men of common sense of both nations should conclude from the successful weathering of this general European storm that on neither side of the North Sea is the passion for blood so strong as evil report has painted it.

And for us, too, there is a lesson in the latest turn in the Balkans. It was

brought out forcefully by Mr. Root at the dinner of the Peace Society. When we see how Europe passes safely through severe and infinitely trying complications, we should awake to the full absurdity of the cry that a war with Japan is inevitable and imminent. Europe, a mass of huddled, jostling nationalities, a conglomeration of age-old rivalries, jealousies, and hatreds, a complex of units that touch each other at a thousand sensitive points, this Europe which is, in truth, one great armed camp, can yet find the path of peace through myriad difficulties. We, on the other hand, who have grown and thriven within limitless spaces, whose temper should have escaped all the irritations that international competition brings with it, no sooner meet a serious international problem than our Hobsons begin to talk as if there were nothing for it but war. Europe, being close-packed elbow to elbow, finds a way out. But the United States and Japan, with nine thousand miles of the Pacific between, are not far enough apart to avoid quarrelling. Never has the clamor of the international blackguards—the word is Mr. Root's—rung so empty.

#### THE NEW HOPE IN INDIA.

The Society for the Advancement of India has addressed an open letter to Mr. Roosevelt in which it takes exception to the President's eulogy on the British administration in India delivered last January in the Metropolitan Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church at Washington. The Society for the Advancement of India is a militant anti-British organization, whose motto is "Thorough." Naturally it protests when Mr. Roosevelt says that "in India we encounter the most colossal example history affords of the successful administration by men of European blood of a thickly populated region on another continent"; or that "the mass of the people have been and are far better off than ever before, and far better off than they would be now if English control were overthrown or withdrawn"; or "that England does not draw a penny from India for English purposes"; or "that the part England has played in India has been to the immeasurable advantage of India." The Society's letter then goes on to state—and forcibly—the case against British