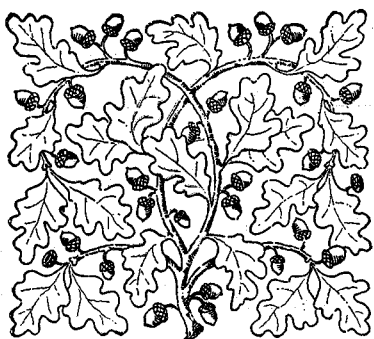


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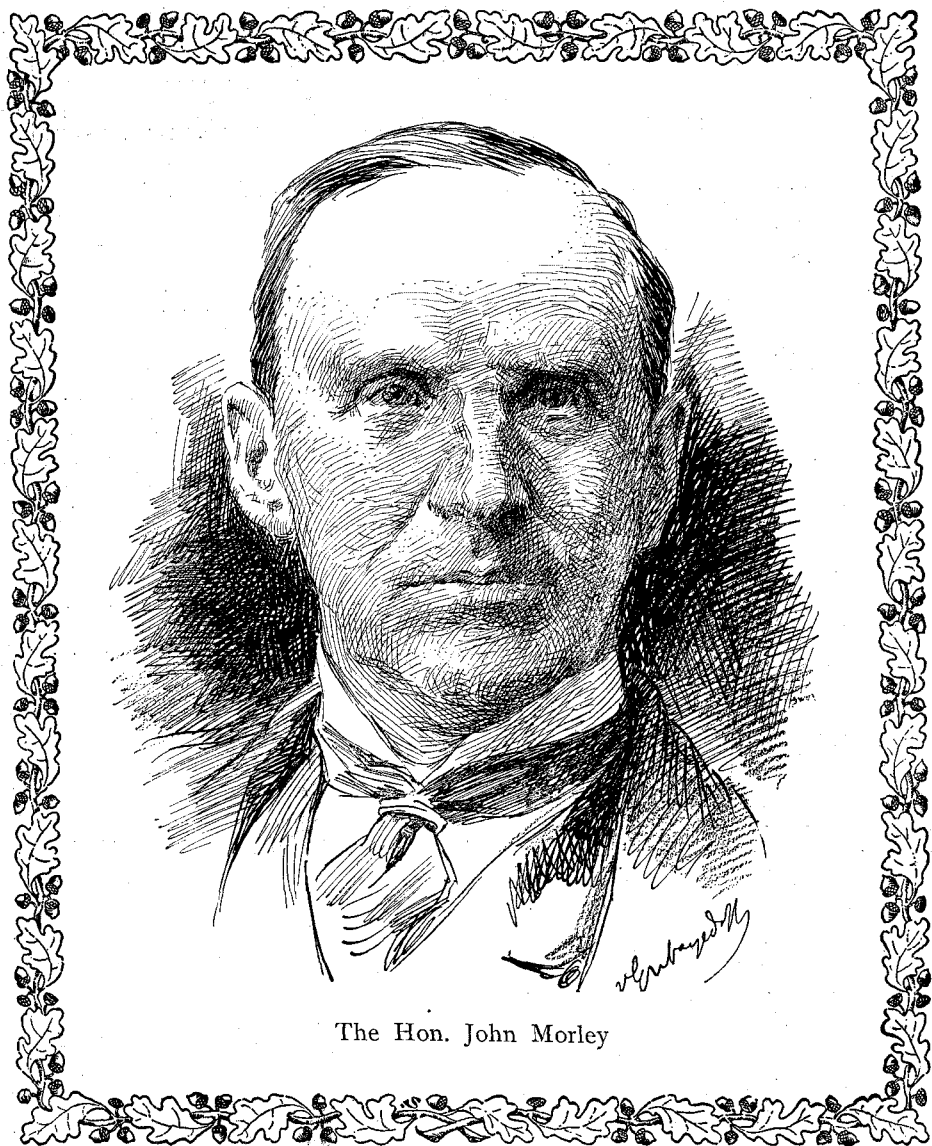
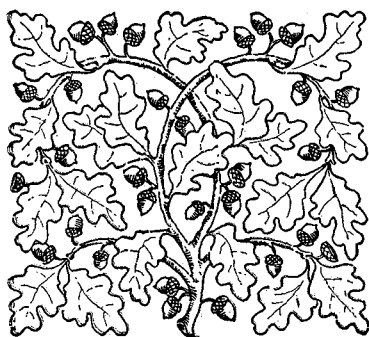
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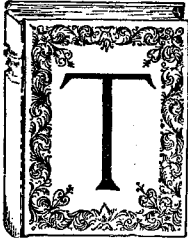


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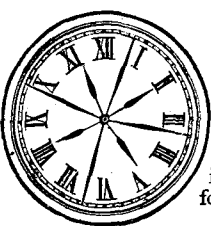
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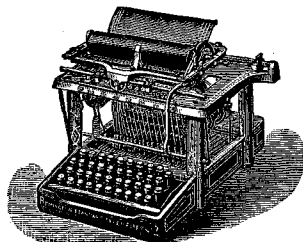
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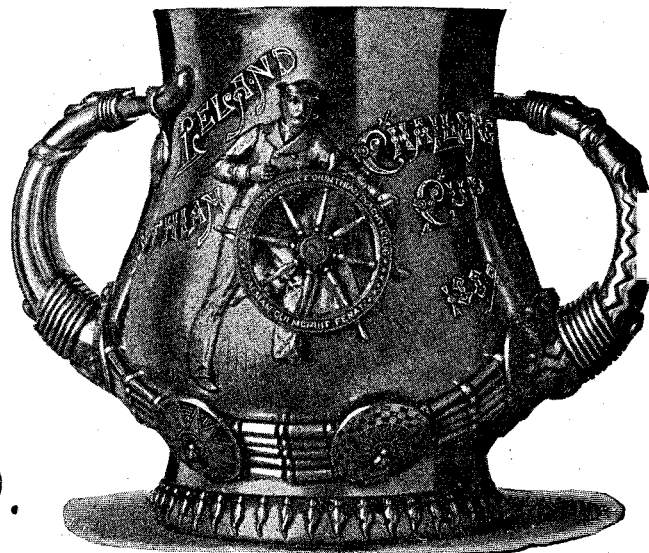


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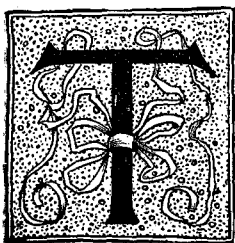
Volume 48

For Week ending 22 July, 1893

Number 4



The Week



THE new German Reichstag assembled on July 4, listened to a characteristic communication from the Emperor, somewhat dictatorial in tone, was notified by the Chancellor that it must lose no time in discussing the revised Army Bill, and, after a brief debate, passed the bill on

Saturday by a vote of 201 to 185. The majority is small, but the victory is decisive, and shows the sagacity of the Chancellor and the influence which the Emperor still has upon the masses of the German people. It is probably true that a majority of the latter are opposed to the bill, but the system of second ballots proved extremely useful to the Government by disclosing the strength of the Socialistic vote on the first ballots, and so securing adherents to the Army Bill by working upon the fears of Socialistic success. Moreover, in a legislative body divided into not less than eighteen separate factions the lines cannot be drawn as sharply as in the English Parliament or in the United States Congress, and there are always possibilities of combination between groups, brought about by personal influence or by local feeling, which make such a body in certain ways more manageable than a body divided along two or three leading lines of political opinion. The passage of the Army Bill does not seem to have created any enthusiasm outside Government circles, and in this connection it is natural to recall the criticism of Bismarck, recently made to Mr. Smalley, to the effect that the German Army needs strengthening, not in the direction of troops, but of artillery.



One of the complications of the present political situation in Germany, to which attention has more than once been called in these columns, arises from the lack of harmony of feeling between the southern and the northern provinces; and the recent election, in spite of the success of the Government, makes this division very apparent. A correspondent of the London "Times" reports that the distinctness of this line of cleavage between northern and southern Germany creates uneasiness in the minds of many of the friends of the Empire, for the returns of the election show that the Government made its gains almost exclusively in Prussian Germany; that is, in Hanover, Prussia, Saxony, Brandenburg, and Schleswig-Holstein, the northern provinces, where twenty-one seats were transferred from the various parties in opposition to the Government. On the other hand, the South German States, with Bavaria at their head, returned an overwhelming majority against the Army Bill. No less than forty out of the forty-eight members of the Reichstag from Bavaria, and fourteen out of the seventeen members from Wurtemberg, were pledged to vote against the bill. The southern

German provinces have never taken kindly to the Prussian spirit, which is the military spirit incarnate, and they are extremely jealous of every attempt on the part of Prussia to "Prussianize" the Empire. There is an intense race feeling in Germany, which may be successfully appealed to in the event of danger from without, but it is by no means certain that the Prussian dominance can be successfully maintained if the present military aggressiveness becomes a permanent feature of that policy.



There is probably a close connection between the recent success of the German Government at the polls and the prompt breaking off of negotiations for a new commercial agreement between Germany and Russia. It is said that these negotiations were stopped in obedience to peremptory orders from St. Petersburg, to the surprise and disappointment of the German Government. Nor were surprise and disappointment allayed when it was found that the Czar had signed a treaty with France, and that the duties on imports from all countries having no commercial agreement with Russia had been raised from twenty to thirty per cent. The coincidence of these three occurrences with the recent elections can hardly have been accidental. It looks very much as if they were the response of Russia to the determination of Germany to increase her military strength. A treaty of commerce between France and Russia, and the practical refusal of Russia to make such a treaty with Germany, looks very much like a tariff war. Very extensive tariff reductions are conceded to France, while very extensive advances in tariff are laid upon German imports. Tariff wars are as ineffective as they are exasperating and irrational. The tariff war belongs to the old commercial system, and is part and parcel of the series of fundamental economic misconceptions on which that system was based. Webster described tariff wars as "pernicious as to ourselves and imbecile as to foreign nations," and history shows that the only result of wars carried on by means of tariffs is to exasperate without securing practical results. Fallacious, however, as the method may be, the fact that it is employed by Russia is significant of the failure of the Emperor to reknit the ties between the two countries, and is also significant as showing the futility of endeavoring to maintain peace by constantly increasing armies.



The French and the Siamese have come into actual conflict on the Mekong River, and several forts have been taken by French marines. There is great excitement in Bangkok, and much agitation in French and English diplomatic circles. The immediate locality in dispute is insignificant; the real motive is to be found in the fact that the Mekong River is the great waterway to the rich southwestern provinces of China, towards which the commercial desires of both England and France go out very strongly, the French being determined to control the southern China trade by