

The Outlook

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LYMAN ABBOTT, Editor-in-Chief. HAMILTON W. MABIE, Associate Editor
THEODORE ROOSEVELT
Contributing Editor



THE PARIS FLOODS

Not since 1615 has there been such a flood at Paris as that of last week. Several miles above the city the river Marne flows into the Seine. As the united column of water passes through Paris, it is narrowed by quays, obstructed by islands, and blocked by the piers of thirty bridges. At present, from quite unusual thaws and rains, for many miles above Paris there is a flooded district miles wide. It precipitates an enormous volume of water through the narrow city channel at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour. The water is flush with the parapets of the bridges, and in some cases actually overflows them. The bridges have been closed, some embankments have fallen in, the beautiful new railway station on the Quai d'Orsay has broken down, the basement of the Palace of the Louvre and the Cathedral of Notre Dame have been flooded, the Palais Bourbon, where the Chamber of Deputies meets, has been submerged to a depth of several feet, and the Deputies are able to go to and fro only by row-boats. The American Ambassador has had to move from his superb residence in the Rue François I^{er} to a hotel on a higher location; indeed, a hundred thousand persons have been driven from their homes. A peculiarly unfortunate feature is the choking of the sewers. There are seven hundred miles of sewers and two rivers under Paris. One of the latter runs under the Opera-House, whose confining walls are now subject to the pressure of thousands of cubic yards of water. In many places streets have caved in, and the water and refuse have emerged. A mile back from the river on either side many fine structures are flooded, and the walls of adjoining buildings have been rendered

unsafe. Fortunately for law and order, the military commander in each section into which Paris is divided holds his soldiers in constant readiness to be despatched to points of danger, and this has had its moral effect upon the populace. Moreover, the municipality has placed school buildings and barracks at the disposition of the refugees. At a hundred points the French Red Cross has already established soup kitchens. In his dual capacity of Chief Executive of the United States and President of the American Red Cross Mr. Taft has sent to President Fallières of France the following telegram:

Is there any manner in which, through the National Red Cross or otherwise, appropriate expression could be made of the sympathetic distress with which the people and Government of the United States learn of the reported calamities which floods are causing in your beautiful and historic capital, as well as in the provinces of France? Meanwhile I offer you the sincerest sympathy and the most ardent wishes that the cause of these disasters may soon abate.

While the self-reliant and thrifty French may be depended on to combat the floods and the pestilence feared when they subside, the present is a fitting time to cement in every way the historic friendship between the two nations.



THE ENGLISH ELECTIONS

The English elections are still going on at this writing. Before last week the Unionists had made very substantial gains, but not enough to reduce the great majority of their opponents to the point of equalization. So far the Unionists have elected 263, the Liberals 260, the Laborites 40, and the Nationalists 77. As between the Unionists and the Liberals the former are likely to have a small majority; practically the two

parties will be even. The number of Members of Parliament representing the Labor element has been materially reduced, and the people of England appear to be almost evenly divided between the Unionists and the Liberals, Scotland holding loyally, however, to the Liberals and to free trade. The next Government must therefore be a coalition Government; a combination of the Liberals and the Laborites will probably make a safe working majority over the Unionists standing by themselves, but not over the Unionists and Nationalists if the latter should choose to cast in their fortunes with the Unionists. The fate of the Ministry will therefore be at all times in the hands of the Irish Home Rulers, and the Nationalist vote will be used, as it always has been used, with no regard to the interests of either party, but with sole regard to the interests of Ireland. A very difficult situation will be created for the Prime Minister. If the Nationalists had any reason to attach themselves to the Unionists, or any love for the House of Lords, they could arrest Liberal policies. But all the concessions they have received so far have come from the Liberal party, and they are not likely to forget that the House of Lords has thrown out every Home Rule bill presented to it. On the other hand, many of them hold that the decline of Irish industries has been largely due to the free trade system, and they do not love the land tax. If the Nationalists had a large sum of money at their command, they might play fast and loose with the Liberals. But they have no money to spend on elections. They are intent on getting all they can for Ireland, and the probabilities are that working relations can be established between them and the Liberal Government; in which case the Government will be able to carry through its financial policy and to modify in some form the constitution of the House of Lords.

A NOVEL POLITICAL PLATFORM

One of the most conspicuous figures politically, but one of the most interesting personalities in the recent election in England, was Mr. Maurice Hewlett. There is probably no man now writing in the world with whom it is more difficult to associate political methods and party

traditions than the author of "The Forest Lovers" and "Open Country," a man whose genius places him outside conventional lines, and whose freshness and charm lie in the fact that he cannot be counted in any organized category of human beings made along conventional lines. Mr. Hewlett issued a platform as characteristic as any of the stories in "Little Novels of Italy." It would have been interesting to be present at a meeting of laboring men whose interests Mr. Hewlett has at heart when this extraordinary pronouncement of an ingrained romanticist without a creed, who has lived most of the time in the age of chivalry or in the Renaissance, was read. What could Hodge make out of such a platform as this?

What, then, gentlemen, do we want, as workmen, husbands, and fathers of families, out of the Parliament which we are going to choose?

(1) That every Hodge-King should have at least one white-and-green surcoat, one gold baldrick, one suit of plain black mail, three white palfreys, and a milch cow.

(2) That no laborers' cottages shall henceforth be built without having each a buttery hatch, an outer bailey, and a phalanstery hung with black arras.

(3) That all and sundry, irrespective of social status, shall be christened by names likely to voice their inherent claims to natural respect. I believe that access to a romantic nomenclature is absolutely necessary to every honest and able member of the State. Names like Mellifont, Pietosa, Malise, Spiridion, Osric, and Fulk should no longer be the monopoly of orgulous lordlings, but be available to every workingman, Heaven help us, like you and me.

(4) That heraldry should be a compulsory subject in all provided schools.

... All this vamping and stressful blustering about Empire and All-Red maps is the most ineffable Panjandrumblather that was ever exuded from the limbo of a pseudo-Goliardic gallimaufry. The only All-Red color that counts is the bloom of healthy blood in the ruddy cheeks of some dark woodland elf.



THE TARIFF WAR WITH GERMANY

While Great Britain has been suffering from a naval "war scare," with Germany as her prospective antagonist, a good deal of disturbance has been created in the United States by "scare" headlines in the newspapers prophesying a tariff war between Germany and this country. Latest despatches from Wash-