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## ADMIRAL COLOMB ON THE SPANISH WAR.

Admiral Colomb, who is the literary Mahan of the British navy, has lately contributed a paper to the Royal United Service Institution, entitled "The Lessons of the Spanish-American War." The conclusions of the admiral are quoted and discussed at considerable length in a recent editorial in *Engineering*, which is reprinted in the current issue of the *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT*. We commend the article to our readers as forming a comprehensive expression of expert opinion on the part of the people who more than any other have reason to be interested in the technical results of the war.

The most important criticism is that which calls in question the wisdom of the defensive policy which largely characterized our naval campaign in the Atlantic. Admiral Colomb considers that our proper strategy was to send at once an adequate force to the coast of Spain. "The seizure of Minorca as a base would probably," he says, "have been an easy operation: and in any case it would have been morally certain that if this action had been taken, nothing offensive on the other side of the Atlantic could have been thought of by Spain." In view of the pitiful unpreparedness and incompetence of the Spanish navy, Admiral Colomb is undoubtedly correct; but no one knew at the outbreak of the war that the Spanish ships could not make half their trial speed or that Spanish gunners could not hit anything. It is easy to be wise after the event. The Spanish fleet on paper was too formidable in strength and numbers for our fleet to be able to seal it up in the home ports; and, by placing the theater of the war on this side of the Atlantic, we placed upon the enemy all the onus of the coal supply question—a consideration, by the way, that primarily led to Cervera's premature undoing.

Admiral Colomb is the father of the naval policy whose creed is that the best and most economical coast defense is a fleet of ships blockading the enemy's ports. Hence we are not surprised that he condemns the "sort of panic" which seized the people of the Atlantic coast and led to all the inconvenience of closed harbors and mined channels and waterways. While the panic was certainly uncalled for, the wisdom of closing our harbors was undoubted; for, even if we had blockaded the Spanish coast, it was reasonable to suppose at the time that our ships were too few to absolutely prevent the escape of some of the faster cruisers, any one of which might have wrought havoc in unprotected harbors. We know now that, even if some Spanish ships had escaped, they would have been comparatively harmless; but we did not know it then, and our conservative plan of campaign was justified by existing circumstances.

Admiral Colomb believes that ships are better than batteries. Ships will be too much engaged in hunting ships to take the time and run the risks involved in entering harbors to bombard cities. Thus he says: "No naval officer with his hands free would, in war, proceed into New York Harbor in order to damage New York, even if he believed there were no batteries and no mines to prevent him." To this *Engineering* makes the pertinent reply that we find an instance of the effect of the possibility of bombardment in the Manila campaign, when Admiral Dewey silenced the batteries at Manila by a threat of bombarding, not the batteries, but the town, if his ships were molested.

Except in the case where a country has an enormous navy in proportion to the length of its coastline and the exposure of its seaboard cities, a certain amount of coast defenses is not only advisable but imperative—imperative if the navy is to be set free to do its legitimate work of hunting down and destroying the enemy's ships.

## THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY OF ENGLAND.

The Great Central Railway of England is an important engineering work which has just been completed, the first train starting on March 9. An important collection of railway lines in the center of England have now been combined and provided with a London terminus. Since 1868 no new railway from the north has entered into London, and in thirty years the

growth and development of England, and even London itself, would really seem to necessitate the venture. The old Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire system from a provincial east and west line now takes its place among the great north and south trunk systems, giving what, under existing conditions, would appear to be the last important through route which can be added to the railway facilities of the metropolis. The Great Central system quietly extended itself southward to meet the gradual northward progress of the Metropolitan Company. When Annesley was reached the directors boldly announced their intention of securing access to London independent of the Great Northern system, over which their southern traffic had hitherto been sent. With the exception of some heavy work at Nottingham, the extension to a junction with the Metropolitan system presented few engineering difficulties. The new railway comes into London by way of Willesden Green and St. John's Wood, and the terminal station, to be known as the Marylebone Station, is just west of Regent's Park, and is located on the Marylebone Road. Thirty-seven acres were required for the terminal. The passenger station site has an area of nine acres, and is 1,000 feet long and 435 feet wide. Of this, a section 180 feet in width will, for the present, be occupied by three platforms and five lines of tracks. No attempt has been made to produce a particularly expensive station, but it is in excellent taste, as it is purely an engineering work, and is not covered with sham architecture. The large terminal hotel is, however, very handsome. It is probable that the London extension of the Great Central Railway will cost altogether some \$50,000,000. The huge freight warehouse is 385 x 255 feet. The cars are run into it on the ground level, and they can then be lowered bodily by elevators into the basement, and the upper floors are provided with cranes. Hydraulic and electrical appliances are used throughout the yard for the rapid moving of freight.

## NEW YORK TRUANT SCHOOL.

In New York city, or, more properly speaking, that portion of it termed the Borough of Manhattan, the rules of the Board of Education regarding truancy are strictly enforced, and education is truly compulsory. Those who persist in playing truant are sent to the Truant School, in East Twenty-first Street, where, for two or more weeks, the boy is detained as a prisoner; but he is a prisoner only in name, for, while it is true the door is locked, there are no bars nor anything else which suggests a reformatory. There are twenty-two men and two women employed in the borough as truant or attendance officers. They investigate the cases of truancy reported by the principals of the schools, and visit the parents of the children and try to get the parents to co-operate in seeing that the pupils attend school regularly. If this is unavailing, it is the duty of the attendance officer to take the little offender to the Truant School, where the acting superintendent decides whether or not he shall have another chance, for the boys are committed to the school only as a last resort. When a boy begins to absent himself from school, he is caught by the officer, asked the reason, and reprimanded. Then the attendance officer calls on his parents and reads them a copy of the compulsory education law. If this fails to make the boy a regular attendant, he and one of his parents are summoned to a private hearing before the superintendent. Every case is carefully considered, and if there seems to be an antipathy between the teacher and the boy, he is transferred to another school. Sometimes these persuasive tactics are not sufficient. Then the boy is put on probation for two weeks, and he must bring in a card to the superintendent, showing that he has been a regular attendant at school and his conduct has been good. If the small truant persists, however, in pursuing his rebellious career, there is nothing that can save him from incarceration in the Truant School.

The boy is kept in the Truant School at the expense of the city for two weeks or more, and this time can be extended to even six weeks if necessary. When a boy leaves the Truant School he is put for two months on parole. During that time he must report at regular intervals to the superintendent. If his conduct has been excellent, he is allowed to drill on Friday evenings with the truants. The work which has been done in the truancy school is very remarkable. The boy is taught by kindness and appeals to his moral nature, and there are no cases that sooner or later do not yield to all the influences to which they are subjected.

The building itself does not call for special attention. It was built originally for the Children's Aid Society, and is only fairly well adapted to the purpose. The boys sleep in dormitories, and to some of them it is their first experience in sleeping on a bed, for the pupils of the Truant School are cosmopolitan to the last degree. They include Americans, Italians, Poles, Russians, Jews, and Irish. They rise at 6 in the morning, dress and march downstairs, where they wash. Breakfast is eaten at 7 o'clock, then they make their own beds and do part of the kitchen work. At 8:30 they again wash and brush up for school. Then come

various studies until 12 o'clock. From 1 o'clock until 3 o'clock the school is in session again, and they are then allowed to walk up and down for an hour in the little courtyard, for, unfortunately, the school is shut in by high buildings. They have supper at 5:30, and at 6:45 they have a regular military drill. Promptly at 8 o'clock the boys go to bed on their little iron beds. So well are the boys treated that they very seldom think of escape, and if they do, a half hour in a dark but well ventilated closet will always bring them to terms. The work that has been done specially among the east side truants by the acting superintendent, Mrs. Alger, has been very remarkable, and shows what boys really need is a friend.

## A GROSS VIOLATION OF PRINCIPLE.

At a conference of the diplomatic representatives of the Latin-American countries which compose, with the United States, the International Union of American Republics, recently held at the State Department, it was decided that the admission of advertisements in the publications of the bureau should be continued, and that all moneys received by the bureau from advertising, etc., should be paid to the Secretary of State for deposit in the Treasury of the United States to the credit of the bureau fund. It was also decided that the Executive Committee should have power to specifically authorize, if it saw fit, the solicitation of advertisements and the sale of the bureau publications by agents working on a commission.

It is impossible to mistake the purpose and effect of this compact. Its purpose is to increase the funds of the bureau by lending all the "drawing power" of the government to the advertising columns of what is practically a trade journal, and its effect is to set up the government in the publishing and advertising business in direct and disastrous competition with the interests of a certain number of its own citizens. In other words, the publishing and advertising interests find themselves in the anomalous and vexatious position of contributing to the support of a government which is using its powerful influence to capture the very trade upon which those interests subsist.

Now, anything more unconstitutional than this action of the bureau, or aiming more directly at the rights of the individual citizen, it would be difficult to imagine. In the first place, it is a flagrant abuse of the functions of a popular and representative government that the interests of one section of the community should be sacrificed for the enriching of another section.

The bureau already receives an appropriation to cover the expense of printing and publishing its literature, as do the other bureaus of the United States government. By what special favor, then, is this particular bureau allowed to enter into commercial enterprise and use the government name to fill its own coffers at the expense of the legitimate trade publications?

The violation of principle is extremely dangerous as a precedent for further legislation of the kind. If the Bureau of American Republics is justified in filling its coffers by dabbling in trade, why not the other bureaus? And if we had all the bureaus similarly engaged and reaping the inevitable profits, we should have the ridiculous spectacle of a trading and manufacturing people supporting a great rival concern (their own government), whose operations were eating the very heart and life out of their own industries.

We were willing to believe that the parties who have been responsible for this miserable piece of business had acted without looking at the question in all its aspects; and we fully expected that when its injustice had been pointed out, as it has been, in our own and many other journals, the bureau would act on the suggestion and discontinue its insertion of paid advertisements. It seems we were mistaken. The gentlemen who control the bureau find the ill-gotten gains too profitable to be so readily let go, and the recent compact at the State Department shows that we are still to be subjected to one of the most unblushing and extraordinary abuses that ever brought discredit upon a popular government.

## GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES AS LEGITIMATE TRADE MARKS.

An interesting decision has recently been rendered, touching the protection obtainable at common law on the use, as a trade mark, of a geographical name pure and simple. The difficulty of procuring the registration of trade marks for this class of names is well known, and the difficulty has increased in recent years, the Patent Office protecting itself in the position it assumes in refusing to register trade marks coming under this denomination, under the claim that it has no option, owing to the statutory regulations. Many instances arise, however, in which the geographical significance of a term is remote or far-fetched, and in many cases some obscure town or place is cited as a reason for refusing the registration of a trade mark, which name is entirely unknown to the applicant, and almost entirely so to the public at large. Such a strict application of the statute often works hardship, and doubtless leads to many anomalous con-