

FOREIGN COMMENT.

RUSSIAN DIPLOMACY.

PERHAPS one of the most interesting features in the recent Peace Conference at Portsmouth has been the side-light which it has cast upon the national character of the Japanese and Russian diplomats who were engaged in a battle which should prove even more decisive than Mukden or the Sea of Japan. The Japanese plenipotentiaries were, in the language of a German paper, "solemn, silent, and serious." The Russians were voluble and excited. Mr. Witte, at the close of the negotiations, is represented in the press as openly expressing his self-satisfaction, and even as boasting of a diplomatic victory. To a representative of the *Slovo* (St. Petersburg) he said:

"You see what one gains by standing firm. I was in a frightful position. I had not the right to accept a compromise, and a rupture seemed likely to enlist the sympathies of all on the side of Japan. Mr. Roosevelt appealed to my patriotism, humanity, and good sense. Fortunately, I succeeded in holding out to the end. The Japanese could not read in my face what was passing in my heart. From the outset I assumed such an indifferent tone that it eventually carried conviction. When the Japanese presented their written conditions I laid the latter aside without looking at them and spoke of something else. On leaving the room I intentionally forgot the conditions lying on the table. When one of the Japanese plenipotentiaries drew my attention to this, asking if I did not wish to take away secret documents which some one might read, I put the papers carelessly into my pocket. It was thus to the last minute of the negotiations."

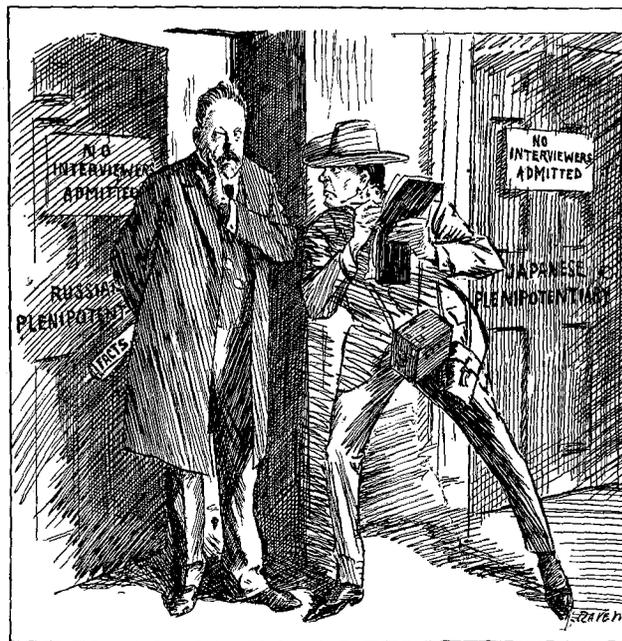
One London daily represents Mr. Witte's conduct in the negotiations as a long series of "bluffs," and the London *Standard* declares:

"Hardly any responsible writer treats with seriousness or sympathy M. Witte's delight at what he mistakes for a glorious victory. If the statement which he is reported to have made to a correspondent of one of the radical papers is not a fabrication, the weakness of the Czar's plenipotentiary can not be attributed to a disingenuous disposition. He is represented as claiming admiration for affecting, throughout all his dealings with his Japanese colleagues at the council-chamber, stolid indifference and even disdainful forgetfulness of their proposals. If this be the new type of diplomacy, men of honor will decidedly prefer the old."



UNCLE SAM AS A SNAKE-CHARMER.

—Fischietto (Turin).



RETICENCE A LA RusSE.

AMERICAN NEWSPAPER MAN—"See here, I can't get any information next door. Can you talk?"

MR. WITTE—"Alas! My lips are sealed. But—I may tell you in strictest confidence that the justice of the case is entirely on our side. Here are the facts."

—Punch (London).

DIPLOMATIC EXIGENCIES.

In a similar tone the London *Times* speaks as follows:

"The Russian people are not under any illusion as to the real character of the peace. They are not blinded by the remission of the war indemnity, which is paraded in Portsmouth as a great diplomatic victory. M. Witte, according to messages from American sources, is said to have proclaimed himself to be the conqueror. A correspondent . . . pertinently asks in what particulars the Russian plenipotentiary has exhibited the high degree of statesmanship on which the American reporters are congratulating him? He almost wrecked the negotiations. He would have wrecked them altogether, had it not been for the magnanimity and the real statesmanship of the Mikado."

He is accused by all the London papers with being too communicative and even with betraying to reporters the sacred secrets of the conference in an attempt at playing to the galleries. From this accusation Mr. Brunetière absolves him (in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*) and says:

"Certain journals have accused him of having talked too much, of pandering to the curiosity of the reporters, of showing himself incapable of keeping up the silence and mystery proper to a diplomat. But he published no secret of importance and never at any time uttered a word that would imperil the success of the negotiations."

The *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna) claims a real victory for Mr. Witte, and says:

"The victory which the Russian generals failed to carry off has been won by Russian diplomacy, which showed itself at the table of the conference more fortunate than armies in the field or fleets on the sea. Victorious Japan has surrendered."

The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (Berlin) acknowledges that the Japanese diplomats made this surrender, but adds "and it does honor to their wisdom." According to the *Vossische Zeitung* (Berlin) this palpable victory of Witte is likely to appease the anger of the Russian people toward the Government, and Witte's boast of a diplomatic triumph is justified by the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, which expresses surprise at Japan's back-down, which renders her successes in the war no more than a Pyrrhic victory. On the other hand the *Frankfurter Zeitung* declares: "The Japanese in their war with Russia have gained a series of brilliant victories, but their greatest victory of all has been

that carried off at Portsmouth, for there they show themselves capable of self-conquest." The same compliment in almost the same words is paid the Japanese diplomats by Mr. Ferdinand Brunetière in the review quoted above. The *St. Petersburger Zeitung*, the organ of the German embassy, thinks that Japan ought to be satisfied with the prospect of a treaty which will usher in a permanent peace, while *Vorwärts* (Berlin), the Socialist organ, says that "the effect of the peace negotiations will prove as glorious to Japan as they are subversive of the Czar's plans of Russian preeminence in East Asia." Japan's statesmen, thinks the *Fremdenblatt* (Vienna), have shown themselves as successful at Portsmouth as her fighting men did in Manchuria and the Straits of Korea. But *The Saturday Review* (London) remarks with cold-blooded but felicitous cynicism:

"It is not only bad international manners, but the silliest twaddle, to talk of Japan's 'great renunciation' and of M. Witte's 'triumph,' when it is evident to all men that no peace was ever made which more faithfully registered the exact degree of success at-

declares the *Journal des Débats*, ought to do honor for safeguarding their interests in so masterly a way. According to the *Tribuna* (Rome) the result of the conference marks "Japan's latest victory" over Russia, and the writer hazards the conjecture that in their sudden ending of the war the Japanese diplomats were acting under the inspiration of Machiavelli.—*Translations made for THE LITERARY DIGEST.*

REVOLUTIONARY RESULTS OF VICTORY UPON JAPAN.

THE riots in Japan give point to a remarkable article in the *Européen* (Paris) by the editor of the Tokyo *Mainichi Shimbun*. This editor, who is a deputy in the Japanese Parliament, declares that the war has inspired his people with the spirit of democracy. He says that for the first time in their history the Japanese have found themselves and recognized their responsibilities as a nation, and adds that the idea of equality among men has superseded that of aristocratic exclusiveness and plebeian submission. Every man, rich or poor, feels himself on the same footing in the eyes of the nation.

He goes on to draw a parallel between Japan and England. After England's great struggle with France, which ended with the battle of Waterloo, the spirit of reform, the sense of personal responsibility, was evoked in Great Britain. So in Japan the personal patriotism of the Mikado's subjects has been proved and exhibited at Mukden and Liau-Yang, and, after those victories, and the arrival of peace, will survive in a new feeling of political and civic independence. To the success of Japanese arms, he says, every person in the country, young or old, contributed by his self-sacrifice. To quote:

"This people, which has sacrificed its money, to the extent of selling personal clothing for the benefit of the national war fund, and which has given generously the life-blood of its children, occupies no privileged position in the State and enjoys no pension as the nobles do. Without denying the ability and devotion of the military leaders, it must

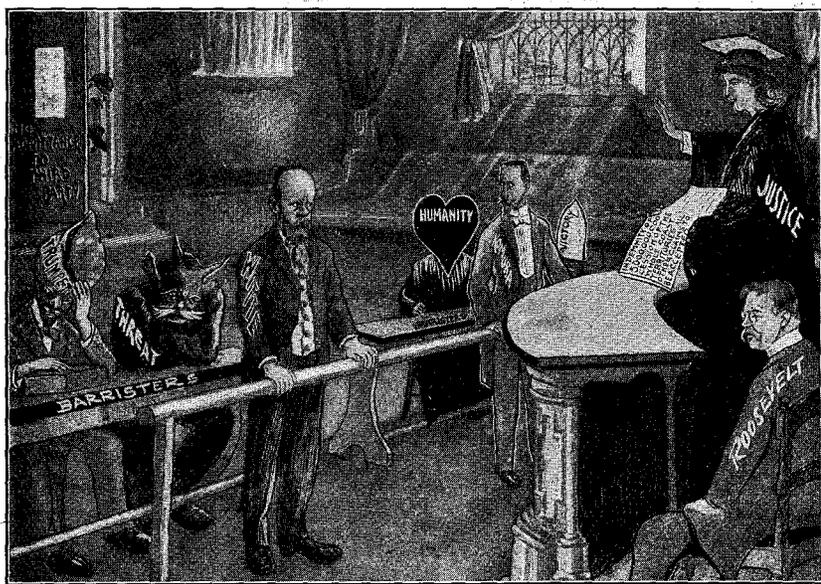
be allowed that but for the heroic spirit displayed by the rank and file success in any great degree would have been impossible."

The writer proceeds to show that war has filled the mind of the Japanese with a sense of democratic equality. Those who fought for peace and independence must enjoy the fruits of it. As in England the continental victories of Wellington paved the way for the reforms of 1832, so Japan expects that the extension of political privileges will result from the victories gained in Manchuria. He proposes, accordingly, something like universal suffrage in Japan. In his own words:

"It is ill advised, or rather unreasonable, to tell those who have devoted themselves to the service of their country, and are conspicuous for their loyalty, that because they do not pay high taxes they therefore have no right of interference in the affairs of the nation. By extending the franchise on a large scale such deputies will have a chance of being elected as really represent the claims of the people, and are more interested in relieving social distress than in projects of fresh taxation. In this way the distance between rich and poor will be lessened and popular discontent kept in check."

He talks of military life as being actually a school of democracy and hints at a danger which threatens the State unless "the governing class give their best consideration to the present tendency of thought in the nation." He argues as follows:

"In spite of this equalizing tendency, the distance between rich and poor in Japan must inevitably increase. The growth of



THE JUDGMENT OF JUSTICE.
A Japanese View.

—The Tokyo Puck.

tained by the victorious party up to the time of its conclusion or more exactly measured the resisting force still existing in the defeated side."

The Spectator enumerates all the territorial and other gains of Japan and concludes: "M. Witte may exult in his hardly decent fashion at what he considers his victory; but it is Japan, not Russia, who has achieved a triumph, consolidated rather than limited by the terms of a peace signed before St. Petersburg has recorded a single victory either by sea or land."

Naturally enough, the French press extol the skill of Witte, and praise the wisdom with which the Czar has put an end to a disastrous war. There is only one exception in this laudatory verdict of the papers, and that is the utterance of a French Academician in the important review of which he is editor. Ferdinand Brunetière, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, already quoted, a magazine of the greatest weight and authority in Europe, declares that "every single thing which was at stake in the war remains in the hands of Japan," and expresses astonishment that Russia should make the paying of the indemnity a question of "honor." The *Paris Figaro* thinks the Czar showed "great wisdom in his perception of the necessity for ending the game," a compliment that must apply with even greater force to the "wisdom" of the thousands who perceived the necessity long before the Czar did. The *Gaulois* (Paris) calls the sudden surrender of Japan a *coup de théâtre*, and says the incident constitutes a remarkable diplomatic victory for Russia and especially for Mr. Witte, to whom the Russians,