

desire that my prerogatives and powers, in so far as they relate to the creation of peerages and to the issue of writs of summons to the Lords spiritual and temporal, to attend, to sit, and to vote in the House of Lords, should not stand in the way of the consideration by Parliament of any measure that may be introduced at the present session on the subject of the constitution of the House of Lords.

This implies the King's acquiescence in the Liberal plans to abolish the Lords' veto.

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The Ferrer Debate in the Spanish Parliament.

The debate in the Cortes over the trial and execution of Francisco Ferrer, the beginning of which was reported last week, was primarily a fight between the Republicans on the one hand, and the Conservatives who were in office at the time of the execution of Ferrer, on the other. The Liberal ministry of Mr. Canalejas endeavored to preserve the position of onlookers, but were finally forced to intervene in order to defend the principles of the government procedure in the court martial. Their half-hearted defense, however, only provoked the resentment of the military authorities who were under fire, and a demand came for a military cabinet. The ministry therefore resigned on the 1st, but there was too small support for a different regime available, even the Conservatives preferring a Canalejas ministry to a military government. King Alphonso therefore requested Mr. Canalejas to form another ministry, which was accomplished by the 3rd. [See vol. xiv, p. 301.]

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International Opium Conference.

An International Conference for the Suppression of the Opium Evil has been called to meet at the Hague on July 1 of this year. The present status of China's long and heroic fight for the abolition of the opium trade and the suppression of the use of opium among her people, is thus related in a bulletin issued under date of March 16, by the International Reform Bureau at Washington:

The International Reform Bureau received yesterday from its Oriental Secretary, Rev. E. W. Thwing, Tientsin, a cablegram to this effect: "Great anti-opium convention in Peking consisting of appointed delegates, to urge rejection of opium agreement demanded by British Government, which would allow sale of British opium for seven years more, and to insist on carrying out prohibition within one year as voted by Chinese Parliament." To-day another cablegram tells that one hundred thousand Chinese names have come in on a second petition to the British King for release from British opium treaties, and for permission to prohibit.

In recent letters Mr. Thwing has said that China is near to success or failure in the anti-opium crusade. In 1906, following a sympathetic resolution of

the British Parliament requesting the government to bring the Indo-Chinese opium trade to "a speedy close," the Chinese Government ordered the closing of opium dens in six months, and the gradual suppression of all poppy raising and use of the drug in ten years, during which period also the British Government agreed to decrease the export of opium to China to the same degree, if during three years' trial China reduced not less than one-tenth a year. Instead of reducing three-tenths, China has reduced its own poppy cultivation and opium trade seven-tenths in three years, and has shown such enthusiasm in the reform, in spite of the unrestricted sale of British opium in China all the while, that the new Chinese Parliament has recently voted opium prohibition to take effect in one year, subject to Imperial approval.

The Chinese Government has recently asked the British Government to release it from the ten years' agreement of 1907, and also from the fifty-year-old opium treaties secured by three opium wars which Gladstone called "the wickedest wars in history"; but the British Government has persistently refused China's request, though it has been supported strongly by the British people in numerous petitions, and though India has received as much revenue in three years as was expected in ten, on account of the great increase in the price of India opium in China because of the suppression of the native product.

An appeal of Chinese students to the people of Great Britain, sent out from Tientsin, China, runs as follows:

We, Chinese students now living in this country, feel that the time has come to make an earnest appeal to the humane people of Great Britain to assist our countrymen in doing away with the opium vice. Since the proclamation of the Edict by our Emperor, our government, our people and ourselves have done everything possible to stop opium-growing within the vast borders of our Empire, regardless of expense to ourselves. But so long as foreign opium is allowed to come in, we feel that we can never be successful, because the weaker members of our people will always be tempted to try the drug. We are told that your great country and our government have made a treaty to stop the traffic in ten years, and that three years have gone. Seven years appear to us to be such a long time to wait, and we want you, humane people of Great Britain, to hasten the day when we may see opium no more in our midst. Will it be too much to ask you to help us a little more? Will it not be possible for you to urge your government to cease sending the poison to us when we have proved to your satisfaction that we grow no more opium in our Empire? We cannot believe that Great Britain, which has been known for years to be the champion of liberty and fair play, will refuse to listen to us. For we love our people as much as you love yours, and we want to see them healthy in mind as well as strong in body, neither of which will be possible if they take opium. Our people are miserably poor at present, and millions of them can scarcely afford to buy food to support themselves. For the sake of humanity, we appeal to you to cease sending us any more of this horrible drug to our people. And may Heaven protect you!