

## NEWS

The debt-collecting war of the European allies against Venezuela (p. 711) has come now to an end, all the protocols having been formally signed at the British embassy in Washington on the 13th. A separate agreement was made with each of the allies.

As reported by the Washington dispatches, the allies agreed to raise the blockade on the 14th, and return to Venezuela her captured ships; Venezuela making no claim, however, for the two ships that were sunk by the Germans. It was stipulated also that the question of preferential payment of the Venezuelan debts shall be submitted to The Hague tribunal, and that the non-combatant creditor nations shall have rights of representation at the hearings. Great Britain received \$27,500 in cash, upon the signing of the protocol; Italy and Germany are to receive the same amount in two payments, one at 30 and the other at 60 days; and Germany is to receive immediately, in five monthly payments, enough to bring the grand total up to \$340,000. All claims not already adjusted are to be referred to tribunals composed equally of representatives of the claimants and Venezuela, umpires to be appointed by President Roosevelt. As a guarantee for the payment of claims that are or shall be allowed, Venezuela pledges 30 per cent. of the customs receipts of La Guayra and Porto Cabello, from March 1, to be deposited with the representatives of the Bank of England at Caracas and there retained until The Hague tribunal decides upon the question of preferential treatment, after which the accumulated sums are to be paid over according to the various adjustments. In case of default on the part of Venezuela it is agreed that Belgium shall appoint an administrator of the Venezuelan customs houses at the two ports named above.

Pursuant to their agreement, the allies raised the blockade on the 14th. All their war vessels had sailed away on the 15th, and accumulations of goods began to flow through the Venezuelan customs houses. Of the duties on these goods the allies will get no share, as the 30 per cent. agreement does not go into effect until the 1st of March.

The United States has agreed with Venezuela upon a tribunal to adjust the American claims. It is to consist of two commissioners, one representing each country; the queen of the Netherlands is to be umpire; and the tribunal is to meet at Caracas on the 1st of June.

To provide for the obligations imposed by the protocols of peace, President Castro issued a presidential decree on the 17th by which he increased all import duties 30 per cent. and added specific duties on exports of coffee, cocoa and hides.

Rumors of war in the Balkans (p. 712) have multiplied while the war upon Venezuela has been drawing to its close. As reports from the Balkan region have it, there is great unrest in Macedonia, and open rebellion of the Macedonians against Turkey is almost certainly set for the opening of Spring. This would not signify the probability of a general European war, as it is said to do, but for the "Near Eastern" question—namely, the problem of driving the Turk out of Europe and administering upon his European estate. Otherwise Europe's interest would be slight in a Macedonian uprising. As it is, however, anything that threatens disturbance in Turkey forebodes a general continental conflict. Each nation is anxious to extend its own jurisdiction, yet is "committed" to maintaining a "balance of power," lest it may lose some of its own importance through such extensions by its neighbors. For that reason, all the Powers other than Turkey are forbidden by treaty to sail warships through the Bosphorus. But in September Russia asked permission of Turkey to sail four unarmed torpedo destroyers through that strait into the Black sea, whereupon Great Britain promptly addressed a note to the Sultan protesting against the proposed violation of treaty, and gave notice that if Russian vessels were allowed to pass Great Britain reserved the right to the same privilege. Turkey took the subject under advisement, but finally allowed the Russian vessels to pass. This incident supplements the Macedonian question. As one of the correspondents writes, all sorts of dry tinder are littered along the slopes of the Balkans and only a little spark may make a great flame.

Macedonia is a collection of more or less Christian districts in Turkey,

where maladministration is reported to be extreme. By the treaty of 1878, made at Berlin in settlement of the war between Russia and Turkey, Turkey was bound to introduce immediate reforms in Macedonia, establishing religious liberty. But this has not been done. A committee of Macedonians has consequently established headquarters at Sofia, in Bulgaria, for the purpose of agitating for these reforms and with the view of ultimately securing annexation of the Macedonian districts to Bulgaria. Roumania and Serbia are understood to disapprove the operations of the committee, fearing they may result in an extension of Bulgarian power and influence. The committee works secretly, of course, fearing on one hand the authority of Turkey, which is suzerain over Bulgaria, and on the other the interference of the Bulgarian government itself, which dare not openly countenance the annexation movement. Recently Bulgaria has taken steps, though her good faith is questioned, to suppress the committee.

Reports of uprisings have been gathering in volume for two years, and latterly they have been supplemented by reports of military activity on the part of the large powers affected. Diplomatic movements are also afoot. On the 10th of January it was reported from London that Russia and Austria, acting in concert, were about to submit to the other European Powers a scheme for the amelioration of the condition of the Christians in Macedonia; and that if the Powers approved their plan, it would be pressed upon Turkey by Austro-Russian diplomacy, coupled with representations that, if the Sultan did not acquiesce, Austria-Hungary would occupy the sphere of interest assigned to them by the Berlin treaty, while Russia would keep the Balkan principalities in restraint pending the perfection of the new regime. Later dispatches, also from London, stated that Italy had been consulted about these joint proceedings and had promised her support; and that the contemplated arrangements included the assembling of an international congress to be supported by a demonstration of European warships in the Gulf of Salonica. On the 17th a Paris dispatch announced that the Austrian ambassador to Constantinople was then about to present to the Sultan the Austrian note demand-