

a radical change, even if it only took the shape of a very harmless edict by a powerless reformer, has caused trouble. The adoption of what is good in Western civilization (the Emperor formally announced that he intended to discard its bad features), meant wonderful changes in the eighteen provinces of China and her dependent territories. In the train of Western civilization will be found Western commerce, and the unrivalled internal waterways of China will know no liquid rest until the pioneers of trade have conveyed to every corner of the Flowery Land the merchandise of a world too long excluded from intercourse with a people possessing unsurpassed aptitude for commercial pursuits, and all the elements of natural greatness.

**The Woman in the Way.** However, the edicts of the Chinese Emperor, declaring in favour of Western civilization startled Chinese officials into a sudden and decidedly unpleasant display of lively opposition to his will. They were ungrateful, and declined to have their welfare promoted by any of the methods proposed. The next news received by the waiting and somewhat impatient and possibly greedy outside nations gave them something serious to think about. The Emperor was reported as having resigned after placing all power in the hands of the Dowager Empress, who, if not equal to the task of disproving the statement of Mr. Chamberlain that "the resources of civilization are not exhausted," is at least openly and avowedly opposed to the introduction of said resources into the Flowery Land. What this virago, the virtual ruler of three hundred millions of people, objects to, has not yet been stated to waiting Europe; but she has proved herself a mistress of diplomatic lingo, and the equal of Bret Harte's Chinaman in the dark ways and vain tricks of the Asiatic. Whether this wonderful woman can stop the growth of Western civilization remains to be seen. Yet, it opens a curious train of thought, if an Eastern potentate's desire to do something for his country, should lead to his death at the command of an attendant at the court of a former ruler.

The life of a Chinese Emperor is not a happy one. It seems that this poor, well-meaning reformer, who has been sighing for Western civilization, cannot eat or drink what he likes; he has, for the sake of his noble ancestors to go in for ballooning; and, as High Priest, he has to worship at least forty-six different gods in the course of fifty-two weeks.

We should be sorry to see the annexation or partition of China by Great Britain and her allies encouraged. At the same time, it must surely stir the sympathy of mankind outside the gates of Peking to know that a royal reformer who sighed for Western civilization is probably, if alive, less happy than his countrymen in Canada, who, when not being persecuted by policemen, are beaten and insulted by idle young vagabonds.

**Western Civilization not Wanted.** Although the world at large has frequently been assured that the Emperor of China is alive, it must not be forgotten that at the close of 1898, "arrangements" were said to have been made for his death which was declared to be imminent. If the present expedition to Peking only clears up the mystery of this Eastern reformer's surroundings, something will have been achieved. The story of his sudden disappearance from the throne was accepted as an indication that the growth of Western civilization had been checked by a woman. That woman still lives, and is doubtless responsible for the recent attempt to kill all the "foreign devils." At all events, it is certain that the Dowager Empress is for the present a more prominent figure in the world than poor, peregrinating Paul Kruger.

Let us hope that the nations now attempting to restore order in China will be satisfied with placing the Emperor Kuang Hsü in a position to effect the changes he contemplated making. There is good reason for cordially supporting this amiable and royal reformer who has been trying to introduce Western civilization into China when he might have been reasonably happy in hanging silk balloons before the tablets of his ancestors, the unbroken line of whom extends back before the lifetime of our Lord.

Incidentally, Great Britain may be enabled to judge by the conduct of Russia and her seemingly friendly allies in this crisis, what are their intentions. However puzzling and perplexing this Chinese question may prove to be to Europe and America, there would seem to be good reason for believing that the present outbreak is nothing more than Chinese opposition to the introduction into their country of Western civilization. Under the circumstances, it is a pity that the advantages of railway and telegraphic systems, postal and press privileges, and all the accompaniments of modern progress, are likely to be forced upon these people at the point of the bayonet.

VANCOUVER ISLAND BOARD OF FIRE UNDERWRITERS held its first annual meeting at Victoria, B.C., on the 22nd ultimo, with Mr. Richard Hall, of the Liverpool and London and Globe in the chair. The following companies were represented: Aetna Insurance Co.; Alliance, Atlas, Scottish Union; British America, North British, Sun; Caledonian; Commercial Union, London Assurance; Connecticut, Lancashire; Guardian, North British; Imperial; Ins. Co. North America, National of Ireland; Lancashire, Queen, Scottish Union; Liverpool and London and Globe; London and Lancashire, Royal; Manchester; Northern; Norwich Union, Western; Phoenix of Hartford; Phoenix of London; Aetna, Commercial Union, Quebec.

The officers elected for the present year were: president, H. M. Grahame; vice-president, Robert S Day; local executive, Frank Burrell, C. B. Stahlschmidt and B. S. Heisterman; joint committee under Art. 15, Messrs. Day, Dickinson and Grahame; secretary-treasurer, J. C. Elliott, re-elected.