

assessment or co-operative schemes are. But it is when an attempt is made to work the theory out in practice that the wrong foundation is made plain to every thinking mind. Experience proves the assessment plan a delusive quagmire to those who do not die early, or who fail to drop their membership in time to escape the inevitable disaster of their early insolvency.

#### UNLIMITED COMPETITION.

A curious form of Trust has been disclosed in the English courts. A number of vessel owners joining together agreed to give a rebate of five per cent. to firms which shipped exclusively with them. In China they met competition, and the companies, which went under the name of conference companies, to secure cargoes cut rates. One of the independent competitors brought an action against the members of the conference, alleging that they had conspired together to prevent the plaintiffs from carrying on their trade. If the ground of complaint had been a conspiracy to raise rates, it would have stood a chance of succeeding, but as the complaint was that there was a conspiracy to lower rates, the complainant failed to succeed, Lord Coleridge deciding that agreement to reduce rates was legal, since no limits could be placed to competition in trade. This judgment has been confirmed by the Court of Appeal.

There was one dissentient, Lord Esher, in the Court of Appeals, who took the ground that the conference "lowered their freights far beyond a lowering for any purpose of trade: that is to say, so low that if they continued it they themselves could not carry on trade." On this observation of the dissenting judge, the *Economist* remarks:

"From this we deduce the proposition that no one, for the purpose of crushing an adversary in trade, may lower his prices to a level which is unremunerative to himself. The fallacy here seems obvious, for, as Lord Justice Bowen pointed out in his judgment, all commercial men with capital are acquainted with the ordinary expedient of sowing one year a crop of unfruitful prices, in order by driving away competition to reap a fuller harvest of profit in the future. The means adopted by the members of the conference against the plaintiffs was competition to the bitter end; of course, they wished to injure the plaintiffs in their trade, because their own success could only be attained by the driving away of all competitors. They had no malicious feeling against the plaintiffs, but wished to crush them, together with all other rivals in trade. Competition was the only weapon used by the defendants; there was no suggestion of intimidation or misrepresentation on their part.

"In the present day it is impossible to limit combinations of capital for the purpose of competition. To do so would, as Lord Justice Bowen said, be only like an attempt to set boundaries to the tides. Such combinations, trusts, or conferences, though they are intended to benefit exclusively their promoters, usually in the long run tend to the good of the consumer. An attempt to raise rates or prices may be successful for a while, but any combination is liable to be overthrown by one still larger and still more powerful. Free trade and free competition are in themselves sufficient levers, and any decision of our courts of law which tended to confine the limits of competition and combination—except when, as in the case of some proposed 'trusts,' such, for example, as the coal and iron trusts that have been spoken of, there is an attempt to create a monopoly in what may be termed the national domains—would justly be regarded as a public misfortune."

This is remorselessly carrying the law of competition out to its bitter end. There are many expedients for mitigating its severity, some of which, as those between nations, may be reasonably successful, but even here the success is limited to the home market, and turns to failure the moment competition has to be encountered in the open markets of the world, for there unrestricted competition is the law.

#### ANOTHER PAPER ON JAPAN.

Some months ago there appeared in the *Vancouver News-Advertiser* a paper by Mr. K. T. Takahashi, entitled "What Canadians may import from Japan." The first enquiry propounded by the writer was: Why should not Canada have her own factories of silk-weaving? The Dominion can now procure silks direct from Japan, either in the raw state, to increase a branch of her industry, or in manufactured shape, at cheaper prices than from other countries. Silks are exported from the Japanese Empire to the yearly value of \$10,000,000, chiefly in the shape of egg sheets, cocoons, and raw silk; also in the manufactured shape of dress goods and handkerchiefs. It is in fact the largest item of export.

Next in importance among her products for export Japan counts tea. "Do we not," says the poetic writer, "raise those mysterious kinds known as Green, Black, Rosenta, and what not? Ours is manufactured of pure, unmixed young sprigs of genuine tea plants which are picked while tender; boiled in hot water; rolled by hand over braziers; sweet and fragrant; hence the best." Canadian importers of tea may be presumed to know something of the tastes of our people as well as of the tricks of shippers in the far East. Still, at the risk of exposing some secrets of the trade we give what Mr. Takahashi has to say about the Japanese essence of "the cup that cheers." There is, he says, still open an excellent opportunity for any enterpriser to inaugurate a revolution in the tea trade, not only in Canada but throughout the other western countries. "Tea, as at present exported from our country, generally goes through the hands of foreign merchants residing there, who have their own way of seasoning it palatable for the western taste. They buy ready-made tea from our native manufacturers, mix up the different grades together, re-bake them over the fire, pour in an enormous quantity of blue powder, which has the virtue of making the mixture look like No. 1 grade all through. Such a process can never be understood by us Japanese, except as unnecessary and destructive, although it was claimed on their part that this is quite necessary for preserving the fragrance of tea through a long voyage. I hope their claim is honest. At any rate it is not desirable that the public be supplied with non-powdered, non-mixed tea, if possible? We Japanese firmly believe that the wholesome flavor and taste of tea can stand any amount of voyage without such suspicious humbuggings."

The rice ordinarily consumed in the Dominion imported from India and China, we learn from this patriotic writer, is "very poor stuff" compared with that pro-

duced in Japan, which is not only richer in starch but "much more wholesome in taste, more juicy when cooked, and destitute of the unsavory smell of patent and Chinese rice. In shape of grains ours is very much like the Carolina, and I believe it is not inferior in quality. There are two species of rice, known as Mochi-gome and Kome. The former is far more glutinous and white than the Carolina, and in fact it is so rich in starch that we use it only for pastry and confectionery purposes. I do not know how cheap rice is in India or China; but computing from the cheapest price as it is sold here, that is, about \$3.25 a bag, I do not see why ours cannot be imported with equal profit as others, if in unhusked state. As regards the cleaned and finished rice, Canadian tariff is too high, the duty being one cent and a quarter per pound; for when we calculate the other charges in, there is no margin left for any profit. As Canada has no rice fields, and is altogether dependent upon foreign supply for this article, such a high tariff seems to be almost unreasonable."

Tobacco is an item of Japanese growth which Great Britain has purchased from her to the extent of £46,000 stg. in a single year. They grow a vegetable wax from which nice candles may be made; it yields also a varnish which is "the only ingredient which keeps up the fame of our lacquer works." Bamboos grow to a height of 40 and 50 feet, and have a diameter of 4 to 7 inches. Their use for interior architecture is suggested, being at once ornamental and durable. They are recommended for "basket work and other household goods." Japanese paper is remarkable for its toughness as well as smoothness, some of it for transparency, and its worth for medical and surgical purposes is insisted on. Artists in the United States, it seems, have been much taken with the brushes made in Japan. Very fine point and good strength are the special qualities. "Your seal-hair brushes are ridiculously expensive while camel's hair ones are of very little use. Our brushes are splendid in quality, and exceedingly cheap, for two to six cents in retail will buy what you have to pay twenty-five to fifty cents for in Yokohama."

#### CLEAN YOUR PREMISES.

The hot weather should remind municipal authorities everywhere of the necessity of cleanliness in the interest of the public health. Stagnant water, cess-pools, stop-ped-up drains, rotting garbage, should be found out and done away with. Shopkeepers who sell articles of food should especially see to such matters. Foul or damp cellars, undrained outhouses, pestilent barn yards—these breeding places of disease should be cleansed. The case is stated thus by the *Sentinel-Review* of Woodstock, referring to a Princeton letter: "A few cases of low fever should warn us to look well to all sanitary matters, to the cleanliness of slaughter-houses, to the state of our wells, cisterns, cellars, barn-yards and out premises; to the prompt and deep burial of dead horses or other animals, and to the proper disposal of refuse, vegetable matter,

and waste water from named too often the nearest door upon by the heat its sickening odor and it may be de-

This matter was the Local Board of not long ago. Said circular: "The good of all; it has don't abuse its your health; greet as an angel in dis many dollars to y or the life of your to clean up yards, refuse, to drain of general to put all shape before the will breed disease on the same top chairman of the Health, who did n by argument, bu each individual h in at once and cl fresh lime or a s burning up all ru be about. Disinf ing a pound or so all lovers of clean simple suggestion Board in promoti community."

Burn kitchen burn rubbish of a way to be rid of enough vegetable into street or lan raise the death ra-

#### MATTERS.

Our Montreal co lows: "The weath has been visited of erable disquietude Since last writing very depressing an rain, flooding low-stop to all haying What hay was dow damaged. The e upon grains and r growth cannot b and Central Ontar to be most excell Manitoba both by returned thence in spect as regards th fortnight ago. Th the main quiet an report an improved for teas, but cou extremely light, an is about shutting higher here; warra the rolling mills hoops, and sheets show a more cheer North-West being the Eastern Towns ern Ontario give g spect. In the Otta is decidedly quiet. reported firm in being fully employ of an advance in domestic cottons tained."