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COMMERCIAL MORALITY.

Mr. Robert Young, editor of the Kobe Chronicle, Japan, has contributed an article to the Nineteenth Century on Commercial Morality in Japan. Mr. Young does not represent the commercial morality of the Japanese as being very high. According to him the Japanese merchant is bound to have the best of the bargain, and he is not very particular as to the means he resorts to to accomplish his purpose. As long as a transaction affords him a prospect of profit he is quite willing to perform to the letter all the conditions of the bargain; but let him once see that, when it is consummated, he is certain to lose he will resort to any device or take advantage of any quibble to avoid fulfilling the conditions of his agreement.

He does not appear to think that sharp practice or breaking his word, if there is any excuse for it, is in any respect disgraceful. Provided he succeeds in escaping loss, he is not very much offended at the language used by the tricked and disappointed party, no matter how strong it may be. Mr. Young accounts for this low commercial morality by showing that before Japan became a trading country, and the road to distinction was military achievement, traders were looked down upon by the Japanese aristocracy. No man of high or even respectable social station would think of engaging in trade. To do so would be to lose caste—to bring upon himself and his family the odium which traders had to bear. And by Mr. Young's account the trading class in Japan fully deserved the reproach cast upon them and the contempt by which they were regarded. But when the military period was supplanted by the industrial period by a sudden convulsion, "which in less than ten years converted the State from feudalism and aristocracy to industrialism and constitutional government," trading in Japan became respectable and the trader soon occupied a high position in the social scale.

"But" says Mr. Young, "though trade now became an honorable and recognized profession, in which even the ancient territorial aristocracy could engage without losing caste, but little change occurred in the methods which characterized it in the centuries of military supremacy, when 'trader' was but another name for 'trickster,' and the pursuit of commerce practically argued lack of integrity. To recognize a low ideal in one class, and to speak and act as if in the circumstances there could be no higher ideal is to originate and encourage a defective standard, which no sudden change of environment can immediately alter. And thus we find it the unanimous opinion of those in a position to judge that Japanese commercial morality is of a defective type when compared even with the standard prevailing in China where trade has never been stamped as degrading, or with the standard of those nations which, amid all the trickery immemorably associated with trade, have yet kept before them a certain standard of integrity in business as in other walks of life."

Mr. Young gives examples of the loose morality of Japanese traders of comparatively high standing. A Japanese discussing one of these cases with a foreigner, remarked: "But if he had taken delivery of the goods he would have lost money." "That is the attitude," resumes the reviewer, "which, with some few honorable exceptions, is almost invariably taken by the Japanese merchant. The profit on a transaction must be on his side. If he perceives that he is likely to lose money he will repudiate his bargains and his contracts, and will

permit all manner of evil things to be said of him rather than fulfil his obligations. Unfortunately, those who rank above the merchant in social status, and who might be expected to take a higher view of the country's commercial reputation, do not, as we have seen, set him a much better example. It is 'business' to secure the greatest advantage to one's self at all costs to reputation, and this seems the only touchstone which, in Japan, is applied to all commercial matters. We see in this the direct outcome of the contempt for trade and for all who concerned themselves in barter, which was one of the features of the feudal days of Japan."

WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

The editor of the Portland Oregonian would, if he published a paper in Canada, be set down as an uncompromising old Tory. He has very little respect for popular cries, and he shows no political fads no quarter. This is what he says about the effects of women suffrage in Colorado: Men and women voted in Colorado. Therefore the vote of that state—about 175,000—is twice as large as it would have been, had the men only voted, as in other states; and the majority for Bryan and humbug is also twice as large; for the women, of course, voted just as their men did. The main objection to woman suffrage is that it would increase the difficulties of maintaining government under general suffrage, for the women could hardly be wiser than the men, and consequently such evils and dangers as now exist would practically be doubled. The country already is struggling with ignorance enough, without multiplying it by two. This is not saying that women are more ignorant than men; but probably they are no wiser. The evils of indiscriminate suffrage already lay burdens upon the country that tax all its energies and all its courage, and greatly darken its future.

THE TARIFF COMMISSION.

The Tariff Commission has left Toronto and gone to Hamilton. We venture to predict that their experience in that flourishing manufacturing city will be similar in every respect to that which they acquired in Toronto. They will find men of every occupation and of both parties to a greater or less extent protectionists. Like the millers, the pork-packers, the tanners, the furniture-makers, and other manufacturers, they will want all the protection they now enjoy, and more in the shape of free raw material if they can get it. It is edifying to observe how completely party distinctions disappeared among the men who went before the Commission to talk business. The Liberal business man was quite as urgent as the Tory manufacturer in impressing upon the Commissioners that the very existence of the industries by which they made their living and in which their money was invested, depended upon the continuation of the policy of protection. Nearly the whole of them were quite satisfied with the tariff as it is, and the only change that some asked for was more protection, or protection in a different shape.

The sittings must have been a great trial to Sir Richard Cartwright's patience and temper. When he found men of both parties satisfied with the working of a tariff which he has been condemning and denouncing for the last eighteen years or so, he must have felt that there must be something wrong somewhere; that somebody must have made and must be making a stupendous mistake, but Sir Richard is not the kind of man readily to admit that the mistake has been and is his own. He has too high an opinion of his own judgment and of the teachers at whose feet he has been sitting to make any such admission. It would be more like him to condemn the men who have been giving evidence and relating their experience before the Commission as a pack of ignorant, shallow-pated, selfish villagers, than to allow himself or others to think that he could possibly be laboring under a delusion all these years.

THE ARMENIAN AGITATION.

The agitation respecting the Armenians appears to have greatly subsided. This may be because the Sultan has once more promised to behave himself and to extend to that persecuted people the reforms which have been promised them so often; or it may be because the people of Great Britain have become convinced that the Armenians have brought on themselves many of their afflictions and are not so deserving of sympathy as they were believed to be some time ago. Perhaps, the hope that the nations of Europe have at last determined to use their influence to secure an amelioration of the condition of the Armenians has allayed the agitation for a time. A speech made by the Prime Minister of France, some little time ago, may have led to the belief that the day of deliverance is at hand for the Armenians, and that it would not be wise to do or to say anything that would cause any further delay. A passage in Lord Salisbury's speech at the Mansion House may have had the effect of quieting the public mind of Great Britain with regard to the Armenian question:

"I was very pleased," His Lordship said, "to read an eloquent speech by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Honotaux, in which I in the main concur, defending with great justice the position of European action in respect to the Turkish Empire. I see no prospect of any difference on the part of France that should buffet the action of the concert of Europe."

Further on in the same speech the Premier said: "Well, I may say that I have good ground for believing that the Russian Government pursues the same object and entertains the same views as we do concerning these terrible events in the East." If Great Britain, Russia and France determine to use their influence to compel the Sultan to treat his Christian sub-

jects humanely and fairly they will soon find a way to make him see that opposition to their wishes is not in his own interest. When he is convinced of this the day of Armenian persecutions will be over.

THE RINDERPEST.

The rinderpest in South Africa is a dreadful visitation. It is a deadly plague and will, in a short time to all appearance, exterminate the herds in every part of South Africa. Nothing that has yet been done has had the slightest effect in staying the plague. "It is now leaping sixty miles a day," says Harold Frederic in his letter of the 21st. "It cannot, so far as is now known, be checked by any human device, and must inevitably kill every head of cattle in South Africa. The attempts made last summer to stop its ravages by a wholesale slaughter of native cattle provoked the rising of the blacks, and if they are repeated among the more powerful Basutos, Zulus and Griquas, who live nearer the coast they will produce a mutiny against which the combined forces of the Dutch republics and the English colonies will be powerless to stand."

THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

Politics are quiet in the Dominion just now. The publication of the terms of the settlement so-called of the Manitoba school question created a little stir, but it is too soon yet to decide what effect that settlement is likely to have on the politics of the Dominion. It is evident that the settlement is not satisfactory to the Roman Catholic minority of Manitoba—one of the parties to the dispute. Whether the Catholics of the other provinces sympathize with them or not, time alone can tell. So far the public utterances on the subject have been chiefly partisan. The opinion of persons who are really impartial seems to be that, if the parties immediately concerned—the denominational majority and the denominational minority—are satisfied it is not for outsiders to complain. But, so far as they have been heard from as yet, the minority in Manitoba are very far from being satisfied. There is a section of the population who appear to think that whether the Manitoba minority is satisfied or not does not much matter. It is a good thing to have to trouble some a question out of the way, and if the Laurier Government has succeeded in removing the school question out of the politics of the country, it is not expedient to inquire too closely as to the means that have been taken to accomplish their purpose. This is a case in which the end justifies the means. The people who take this view are, we regret to say, not exclusively Grits. Many Conservatives are sick of the school question and would be glad to see it "plunged into oblivion," no matter who does the plunging or by what means. It is quite certain—much as these peace-loving people hate to see the subject agitated in Parliament and in the country—they may depend upon it that they have not heard the last of that question. People who feel that they have been unfairly treated and imposed upon have an ugly trick of complaining, and they cannot be kicked and cuffed into silence.

CHEESE EXPORTS.

Canadian cheese-makers gazed abroad an honest and a wholesome article; our neighbors on the other side of the line have resorted to some smart devices to increase their profits without improving the quality of the cheese with, according to an American exchange, the following results: Ten years ago the United States exported 118,000,000 pounds of cheese annually and Canada 80,000,000. Now Canada exports 154,000,000 pounds and the United States only 73,000,000. So much for going into the manufacture of filled cheese, which is a cheating article, and the world knows it perfectly well, though the old stamp is placed upon it.

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They are waiting to see how the Government will act before they make up their minds with regard to it. There are, of course, many who will uphold it and praise it, no matter what course it may take, and there are, on the other hand, many who will condemn it in advance whatever it may do. But, besides these, there is a large number of men who are prepared to judge the Government on its merits. This class of electors are in this Dominion increasing in number, and they are the men who, in the future, will decide election contests. The out-and-out partisan in the Dominion does not in these days count for as much as he did a few years ago. And it is well that it is so.

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