

## Topics of the Day

## ABROAD.

## OUR RIGHTS TO FISH FOR SEALS.

BY HALIGONIAN.

It is a rule of International Law, that is the laws that one nation obeys in regard to the rights of other nations, that the sea on the shore of any country belongs to that country only to a distance of three miles. Beyond that all is public property. Countries that are near have no more real right than countries that are distant. All have an equal right to sail in the sea and to fish in it.

If you find your atlas and turn up the map of North America, you will find away up in the left hand top corner Behring Sea. This sea at one time belonged to Russia. When Russia sold Alaska to the United States the sea went with it. Now it is in the territory of the United States.

The sea is a very valuable one on account of the enormous quantities of seals that frequent it, and while all nations must regard the International Law that reserves for the United States the necessary monopoly of the three mile limit to fish for seals, we, among others, have been sending our boats to the sea to get our share of the fishing.

However, one day one of our boats, called the "Sayward," was fishing in the waters where anyone might fish, and, to the surprise of the captain, a United States cutter came along and seized his boat and its cargo of seals. Of course the cutter would not have done this if it had not thought it was doing its duty. And in a sense it was doing its duty. It was not to blame, for the United States had given it instructions, and a sailor, as well as a soldier, must obey orders.

It so happens that when the sea belonged to Russia, it was as it were surrounded by Russian territory, which would make it belong much more to Russia than if it had been only partially so surrounded. But when the sea became the property of the United States this surrounding of territory was divided, inasmuch as Alaska was American, while the other shore, Siberia, was not. When the sea belonged to Russia, the American people declined to admit the claim of Russia to the whole of the sea for itself. Now, when Americans own it, they insist that the sea all belongs to them. The ground they take is that it is an inland sea, a sort of lake, or gulf, and that no one but an American has therefore the right to come and take the seals. And so the cutter seized our boat, the "Sayward," when it was fishing away out as far as one hundred miles from the shore. When Russia made the claim, even although she had territory on both sides, the Americans denied the claim. Now, when America, with territory only on one side, makes the claim and we deny it, she seizes our fishing boats and makes no end of a fuss. The claim of Russia never was recognized, although it was more reasonable than that of the United States, and the American people were the stoutest against recognizing it.

Great Britain, who stands by us as a parent does for her child, has had a long official correspondence with the United States on the subject. Lord Salisbury, who is the Foreign Secretary, denies that the United States had any right to seize the "Sayward." Mr. Blaine, who is Foreign

Secretary in Washington, holds that they had. Lord Salisbury has offered to submit the whole question to arbitration—that is, that the United States and Great Britain should each appoint some men, in whom all have confidence, to talk the matter over, and decide what should be done—a very sensible plan. But Mr. Blaine has refused to do this.

Meantime, in this suspense of negotiations—that is, when both parties are taking a breath to think what they will do next—our Canadian Government, with the sanction of Great Britain, has decided to test the case in the Supreme Court of the United States. We claim restoration of our vessel, on the ground that the seizure was against law—against even American law. The "Sayward" is now up in Alaska. The American Government was on the point of proceeding to sell it. We have applied for an injunction to prevent such sale by them of property that so evidently does not belong to them.

If the Supreme Court of the United States decides that the American Government, by its own laws, had no right to seize our ship, that will settle the whole dispute. If it should decide the other way, that won't settle it at all. We shall still contend that we have a right to fish in Behring Sea, except within the three miles limit, and in this we shall be supported by Germany and other nations who have a similar right and interest with ourselves.

## THE MAPLE.

BY CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

Oh, tenderly deepen the woodland glooms,  
And merrily sway the beeches;  
Breathe delicately the willow blooms,  
And the pines rehearse new speeches;  
The elms toss high, till they brush the sky,  
Pale catkins the yellow birch launches,—  
But the tree I love, all the greenwood above,  
Is the maple of sunny branches.

Let who will sing of the hawthorn in spring,  
Or the late-leaved linden in summer;  
There's a word may be for the locust-tree,  
That delicate, strange new-comer;  
But the maple, it glows with the tint of the rose,  
When pale are the spring-time regions,  
And its towers of flame from afar proclaim  
The advance of winter's legions.

And a greener shade there never was made  
Than its summer canopy sifted;  
And many a day, as beneath it I lay,  
Has my memory backward drifted  
To a pleasant lane I may walk not again,  
Leading over a fresh green hill,  
Where a maple stood, just clear of the wood—  
And oh, to be near it still!