

Very Conflicting Opinions. A truly funny incident is recorded by the New York papers, in connection with the question of explosion liability arising from the recent fire at the wholesale druggists' establishment in that city. It seems that when the damage done to surrounding buildings by the successive explosions became known to the concerned underwriters, a prominent foreign company asked for a decision as to their liability, from a leading legal firm. One of its members is said to have promptly and emphatically stated that the fire insurance companies were not liable for mere explosion damage wrought in the neighbourhood of the fire. The officials of the concerned company were perusing this legal opinion, when they received notice from a partner in the same firm of lawyers claiming damages by the explosion. Then the manager of the prominent foreign company cruelly sent to the legal luminary who fyled the loss claim the opinion of his eminent partner.

Silverism Silenced. It is to be hoped that the result of the recent Presidential elections in the United States will exclude the money question from the sphere of that nation's politics for ever. Mr. Bryan chose to menace the business interests of a great and growing country by attacking the standard of value, and the people have for the second time shown they do not wish for a change in the monetary system. As a means of arousing public feeling, silverism has proved a success, but not in the way its advocates desired. Further agitation for a change in the currency is useless. The question has ceased to exist, silenced by the votes of a sensible majority of practical business men.

Let us hope that the defeated candidate for the presidency of the neighbouring republic will now surrender his silly ideas on silver, and devote his oratorical talents to denunciation of trusts, imperialism, militarism, or any matters about which the people feel strongly, and on which there is a more equal division of sentiment and opinion than that so recently reiterated as to the merits of Bryan's currency scheme.

Western Civilization. The methods adopted by European nations for introducing "Western civilization" into China have been made the subject of much adverse comment, and the critics of the course pursued by the great Powers have now received strong support from Sir Robert Hart, Director-General of the Chinese Maritime Customs. In an article in the "Fortnightly Review" for November, Sir Robert Hart, who is better qualified to speak on Chinese affairs than is any other living European, bluntly expresses his belief to be that the recent Boxer movement "is national and patriotic, has taken hold of the Chinese imagination and will spread like

wild fire throughout the length and breadth of the Empire."

"There is not the slightest doubt," he says, "that fifty years hence there will be millions of Boxers in serried ranks and war's panoply, at the call of the Chinese Government."

The English papers, dealing editorially with Sir Robert's article, admit its importance, but consider that his views are too gloomy, and that his ideas of the Boxer movement are "a phantasm of a too sensitive imagination."

In the light of the revolting treatment the childlike and bland believers in Confucius are receiving at the hands of the Germans, the desecration of their temples and palaces by a looting soldiery, and the prospect of being taxed because of their long suppressed, and, therefore, violent outbreak of remonstrances against the introduction of modern Christianity and civilization, it will not be surprising if a patient and harmless race should, some day, prove that the prediction of Sir Robert Hart is no "a phantasm of a too sensitive imagination." Fifty years hence! Will it be so long?

The Chlorate Hazard. In the course of some comments upon the terrible explosions which accompanied the fire at the large wholesale druggists' establishment in New York, we referred to the possibility of similar dangers existing in Canadian cities. That the question of permitting large quantities of chemicals to be stored without any proper or sufficient safeguard against accident is receiving attention is shown by the many letters to the press since the New York catastrophe. Among others, Secretary Wilmerding, of the Philadelphia Fire Underwriters' Association, has written the following circular to owners of dyeing establishments:

"We desire to call your attention to a hazard which has come to our notice through the occurrence of several fires recently in dyeing establishments, so that the repetition of accidents from the same cause may, as far as possible, be avoided in the future. These fires were caused by a mixture of chemicals in which chlorate of soda formed a part. The use of such powerful oxidizing agents as chlorate of soda or chlorate of potash in direct contact with powerful reducing agents (as was the case) is attended with great danger of spontaneous combustion. In the cases referred to, chlorate of soda had recently been substituted for potash, it being claimed that the soda possessed greater strength than the potash. On that account it is probably more hazardous. The fires occurred from these mixtures, which had been left standing. It is therefore recommended that where such mixtures are made, they should be used immediately, and not left standing even for an hour.

"Care in this matter is most important, because the ordinary modes of fire protection such as automatic sprinklers and hose pipes, are not, as a rule, effective in promptly controlling a fire of that nature, inasmuch as the application of water to burn-