

agitations are reckoned at their true value by large sections of the better sort of Americans.

A portion of the California press is particularly outspoken, and, in some inland parts of the country, the turmoil created by "a few angry New England fishermen" is deprecated and condemned. "What false lights are to the mariner," says the San Francisco *Newsletter*—"the utterances of the average daily in regard to our foreign relations are to the people of this country. The latest insensate howl is, 'enforce the Retaliation Act.'" It is then maintained that the difficulty at worst is but of little consequence, and that it is disgraceful that so small a matter should be allowed to disturb the commercial relations between two of the greatest nations on earth, and to risk turning the friendship of a neighboring people claiming a common origin into hate. It is pointed out to irate Americans that the United States do more trade with the British Empire than all the rest of the world put together, and that the unscrupulous "average editor" proposes "with a light heart" to jeopardize it. It is scornfully added that the same "average" gentleman boasts that it is he who manufactures the opinion which rules the country. But, indeed, we are not under any necessity ourselves to go far from home in search of public opinion—factories in which party animus supplies the material to the entire exclusion of reason, dignity and patriotism.

The tone of a good deal of the higher American press is satisfactory enough on these points, but it is an additional satisfaction to think that the Fisheries Question, at all events, will in all probability have been amicably settled, and its exasperation have died out, long before the tug-of-war comes, in which Mr. Blaine hopes to profit by it and by kindred agitations.

CHINA FROM A CHINESE STANDPOINT.

The icy exclusiveness and excessive national pride of the Chinaman, his contempt for the foreigners with whom he comes in contact, and his reluctance to adopt the best results of western thought, may well seem striking. But if we look upon China from a Chinese standpoint, and compare it with other nations, viewed as the Chinese view them, the cause of wonder is immediately cleared away. Chinese education consists in various degrees of ability to read and write the language of China. There being no alphabet, properly so-called, to acquire anything like a mastery of the innumerable word-signs of the language is a life task. Hence other branches of knowledge suffer neglect. The geography taught in the country is confined to that of China itself. Great empires have arisen, prospered and fallen in the West, and even the educated Chinaman has been none the wiser. The great nations which control the commerce and politics of the non-Chinese world are names of vague import, and their inhabitants seem only enterprising barbarians. Added to this ignorance of the affairs outside the country, the history of China and her present material strength suffice to explain the national pride and self-complacency. She contains within her borders perhaps one-third of the human race; and even now there are many districts only half-populated. The soil of the country is generally fertile, the climate agreeable, the mineral wealth unbounded, the rivers among the largest on the globe. On the rivers and the net-work of canals, which covers the surface of the land, an enormous inland commerce is carried on. Indeed it is estimated that the aggregate tonnage of Chinese craft exceeds that of all the rest of the globe.

But the most ample explanation of the self-satisfied conservatism, the arrogance and narrowness of the Chinaman is furnished by the historical and legendary past of China, extending back 5,000 years, to a time when Assyria and Greece were yet undreamt of. Away back in this remote antiquity the historians of the country place the invention of writing. Printing was also a later Chinese discovery. Gunpowder, the compass, all the great inventions except the steam-engine and the electric telegraph were first known in China.

Could the Chinaman but see himself as western civilization sees him, he would probably be made aware of something which would not foster his pride. The huge unwieldy empire of which he is a citizen could be overthrown in a few weeks by a European power of the second class. The natural fighting qualities of the Chinese have so deteriorated during many centuries of peace, that they seldom offer a determined resistance. During the war of 1857, an English and French expeditionary force of less than 6,000 men, humbled this nation of 400,000,000 people. His farming and mining operations are conducted by the most primitive methods. The government, jealous of foreign influence, keeps a careful check on railway construction. China might well nail on her door the legend, "Wanted, an alphabet."

Since the Opium war of 1842, and especially since the treaty of 1859, the trade of western nations with China has developed enormously. With commerce comes a certain amount of western civilization; and if Chinese prejudice against the latter were removed as readily as against the former, China will gain by the connection even more than the highly civilized nations of the West.

UNFAIRNESS OF SPECIAL FREIGHT RATES.

There seems to be a diversity of opinion as to the effect of the Interstate Commerce Act, the New York *Nation* asserting that the next session of Congress will witness a struggle between the commercial classes of the country and the railways, the former seeking to repeal or essentially change the Act, the latter to keep it in force. It then goes on to show that the act was instigated by the railway authorities and meets with their entire approval, as it prevents the secret cutting of rates and the violations of agreements between the roads, which, under the old condition of affairs, were constant occurrences.

We had always been led to believe that the Act was in the interest and met the entire approval of the commercial classes, while the railways were bitterly opposed to its provisions. The *Montreal Witness* in a late article on "Discrimination" takes this view of the case, and, while advocating a somewhat similar act in the interests of the commercial classes of the Dominion, closes with the following argument: "At the present time, when the railway barons of the United States are endeavoring to procure the revocation of the Interstate Commerce Law by raising a wild cry about the 'unrestrained competition' of the Canadian railways, it is peculiarly important that Canada should restrain her own tyrants, and, by so doing, guard not only the commercial liberty of her own people, but that of her neighbors." Leaving the *Nation* and the *Witness* to reconcile as best they may such widely divergent views of the Interstate Commerce Act, we will glance for a moment at the effect on this province of discrimination in railway rates.

In order to secure through freight the railways, at points where they are brought in competition with other lines, cut their rates to such an extent that freights are often carried at a loss. On local freights, however, that is from or to places on the line of the railway, where there is no competition, and where shippers have no option, the freight rates are placed at such high figures that it actually costs in proportion more to ship, say from Moncton to Truro, than from Point Levis to Halifax. Take a Western illustration of this unfair discrimination. The through freight on wheat by the Canadian Pacific from Brandon to Montreal, a distance of one thousand five hundred and fifty-six miles, is fifty-five cents, and from Winnipeg to Montreal, a distance of fourteen hundred miles, it is fifty cents. The through rate, therefore, on wheat from Brandon to Winnipeg, is five cents, and the local rate actually charged for that distance is about twenty. The discrimination in favor of through rates as against local on the Intercolonial is proportionately much less, but that a discrimination is made was abundantly proven by the evidence submitted to the Royal Commission on Railways during its sessions in Halifax, and the general impression, even amongst merchants who were profiting by it, was that it was decidedly unfair to local merchants. In the case of very heavy shipments it may seem only fair to grant special rates, but the power to do so which is now given is liable to abuse and should be entirely annulled. If A manages to secure a special rate he at once obtains an unfair advantage over B, who, supposing that the regular schedule will be adhered to, ships at a disadvantage. Communities and localities profit in a similar unfair manner, and, looking at the matter from every standpoint, only one conclusion can be arrived at, and that is, that special rates should be prohibited, and that regular schedules of rates, adopted after first being published and discussed by the localities and interests affected, should be substituted and strictly enforced. If this rule applies to railways in general, it should have double force in the case of government roads, when the opponents of the ruling party are too liable to believe that government supporters are given unfair advantages in low special rates. By all means then let Parliament legislate prohibiting, under penalty, railway companies from charging a higher rate to one person than to another, for transporting and handling goods.

MESMERISM.

We all know, or at least have heard, something of "mesmerism," which it seems to be now the fashion to call "hypnotism," under which improved nomenclature much attention is again being devoted to it. It has been recently set up as a defence in the case of Franzini, a man accused of barbarously murdering three women. It has long been maintained that the human brain is susceptible of the influence of another mind or will-power, and many who have witnessed manifestations find it impossible to doubt that there does exist in certain persons a power to influence, and that the receptivity of others is the complement of it. There are always sceptics, but confirmation of belief in the reality of the control has recently come in the shape of a terrible performance at the "Folies Bergères." This was a rehearsal of a séance of magnetism, which is to form an item of the nightly programme of the London Pavilion of Paris, an immensely popular place of entertainment:

Into a cage containing two lionesses and an enormous lion, which had been made to perform in the usual way by a lion-tamer named Giacometti, the mesmeriser introduced a Mdle. Lucia, his "subject." When she was conducted into the cage she was in the magnetic trance, and followed her magnetiser apparently in unresisting obedience to his will, the lions being kept in subjection by their master, Giacometti. The subject was then made to kneel in front of the beasts, her arms outstretched towards them, the expression of her countenance changing, it is reported, from that of astonishment to joy. Presently the lions rushed and bounded about her while she remained quite motionless. The fiercest of the lionesses was made to stand upon her hind paws, and her mouth was forced open by her tamer; Mdle. Lucia, on being commanded to do so, walked, with the utmost composure, up to the formidable brute. Two chairs were then placed within the cage at a certain distance apart, and upon the backs of these the rigid form of the subject was laid, her head resting upon one chair, her feet upon the other. Over this living barrier the lions were made again and again to leap. The gas was turned down, Bengal fires were burned, and the lions, roaring fiercely, were lashed and made to continue their bounds over the entranced girl, until one of them failing to clear the human barrier, Mdle. Lucia was thrown from the supports on which she had been lying, but still without showing the least alarm or consciousness of the strange and terrible part she had been playing in this harrowing exhibition. Such is the latest, and possibly the most impressively convincing, demonstration of animal magnetism which has been given. We can only say we wish its results had been arrived at by less objectionable means.