

Current Topics and Events.

THE FISHERY QUESTION.

We are glad to find that most of the better class journals of the United States refuse to join in the bitter tirade of Senator Ingalls against the British interpretation of the Fishery Treaty of 1818. The *Christian Union*, one of the most influential of these journals, has the following sensible remarks on this subject :

"It is clear that there is very little popular feeling with regard to the fishery business. The practically unanimous action of the Senate is met by a practical unanimity of indifference throughout the country. This does not mean that Americans are less sensitive to infringements of their treaty rights or less delicate in their sense of honour; it does mean that they do not intend to be artificially stimulated into an outburst of national rage. Firmness in dealing with a foreign power is a very different thing from bluster, and it is unfortunate that Senator Ingalls does not understand the difference between the two. It is to be hoped that the entire indifference of the country will convince him that the American people have outgrown such crude and superficial patriotism. They will not allow the national honour to suffer, but they will decline to deal with an international question in a spirit of bravado. There is a feeling in England, as here, that any question of the peaceful settlement of the matters now pending between the nations is absurd. Great Christian States, leaders of civilization, ought not to go about in the nineteenth century like bellicose boys. Meanwhile, if the politicians will keep as cool as the people are in regard to this question, a right, wise, and honourable settlement is certain to be secured."

The Canadian Government, we think, is willing to extend all customary international courtesies to Ameri-

can vessels engaged in legitimate trade on our coasts. But when they come to steal the bread out of the mouths of our fishing population, that is another matter. Having ruined their own fisheries by the reckless use of the seine and other methods, unlawful in our waters, they would soon destroy ours also if permitted. It is not only the right but the duty of our Government to protect the harvest of the sea of those who have no other harvest. The present writer thinks that scarce any one in the Dominion receives so many letters from the poor fishing villages of the Maritime Provinces, as himself, and in some of these the poverty shown is distressing. The following is an example. It is from one of our own ministers in Newfoundland, but great distress often results from failures in the Maritime Provinces of the Dominion as well :

"The people all about here, as well as in other parts of the country, were last winter and spring in a state of almost starvation—they would have starved but for Government support. And this summer, even at this hour, there are scores of families within three miles of me, on the brink of absolute want. God only knows what the end of it will be if the fishery does not shortly improve."

Another minister writes that he has himself, by the instruction of the Government, distributed over 200 barrels of flour, for which men labour on the roads to keep their families from starvation.

Is it upon these poor starving fisher-folk that a great powerful, and we trust chivalrous nation like the United States, wants to make war? We reject the thought as an insult to the humanity, not to say Christianity, of its people.

Instead of war, or an international embargo, we hope for that guarantee of peace, a reciprocity treaty of com-