

of the State in the interest of the public health is disposed of by the Court on the ground that this power can be invoked only when the health of the community generally, not that of a class of citizens, is affected. This decision, if accepted, of course renders any regulation of the sweat-shop evil impossible. It would rule out all factory acts designed to protect labourers of either sex from the rapacity of employers. The question suggested by such decisions, which must from time to time arise in all countries in which the hands of the people's legislators are thus tied by constitutional enactments is whether their predecessors one or ten generations ago had any just right or authority to assume that their successors in later times would be any less worthy to be trusted to make their own laws, adapting them to changing circumstances, than those by whom those circumstances could not be seen and who could not possibly be affected thereby.

*The Attack on
Li Hung Chang.*

The attempt made by a Soshi fanatic to assassinate Li Hung Chang, the Chinese peace ambassador, while in conference with the Japanese authorities at Shimonoseki, would seem at first thought to be one of the most untoward events which could have taken place, so far as any prospect of a successful issue of the peace negotiations was concerned. There is now some reason to hope that it may prove to have been the very opposite. The injury to the wounded ambassador has happily proved to be comparatively slight. The mortification and regret shown by the Japanese of all classes, from the Emperor down, that such an attack should have been made upon one who was in a peculiar sense under Japanese protection, and to whose respectful treatment the good faith of the Empire was specially pledged, have been evidently genuine, and consequently most creditable to all concerned, and have gone far to confirm the claim of this Oriental nation, which has so suddenly challenged the attention of the world, to a place among civilized powers. But the most noteworthy outcome of the incident, for which the Japanese authorities were no more responsible than would Great Britain or Germany be for a similar assault of a foreign ambassador by an anarchist, is the effect it has had in causing the Emperor of Japan to grant, without condition, the armistice which had been before refused, save on onerous conditions. The effect of a truce, under such circumstances, can hardly fail to be to greatly promote the prospects of peace, by giving the passions of both nations time to cool in the absence of the fresh fuel continually supplied by the record of victories and defeats. The susceptibility of the Japanese to generous impulses, as brought out by this incident, also affords more ground for hoping that they may not use their advantage to utterly humiliate and crush the fallen foe.

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England and France.

IT has been so long since Great Britain was at war with any Great Power, and so materially have the popular ideas in regard to war changed during the long period of peace, that multitudes have almost come to think of the horrors of pitched battles, by land or sea, as atrocities belonging to less civilized times, now happily long past. It is no wonder, therefore, that the words used the other day by Sir Edward Grey, in the British Parliament, should have sent a shock through the Kingdom. Many who had almost come to regard the idea of a sanguinary struggle with the people of another nation as among the impossibilities, have had their eyes suddenly opened to the fact that the spectre still hovers on the horizon and may at any moment take definite shape and form. Whatever may be thought of the change in the spirit of the people of Great Britain and their

Government in regard to war, it can scarcely be denied that never before has that spirit been so far removed from the Jingoistic propensities which have in past days done more than anything else to make foreign wars possible and almost popular in the Mother Country. Were we disposed to seek for the causes of the transformation of ideals which has made the people of Great Britain to-day more reluctant than those of any other great European nation to entertain the thought of war, we should, no doubt, find those causes largely traceable to two chief sources. One, and probably the most powerful of these, is the increasing power of the Christian religion, in its application to life and conduct. Whatever may be the fact with regard to the relative numbers of those who openly profess their personal faith in the Christian system as a supernatural religion, no one but a pronounced pessimist can hesitate to admit that its influence as an ethical system, a standard of motive and action, was never before nearly so powerfully felt. The sway of impulse and passion has become more than ever before subordinated to the sway of conscience. This growing tendency to let the voice of that something within ourselves which makes for righteousness be heard above the din of national selfishness and passion has wrought in various ways, among which the propaganda of the Peace societies has not been the least influential, to bring about the changed state of feeling of which we are speaking and which seems to us so manifest.

But another and scarcely less potent force which has been at work, making a renewal of the war-spirit of former days specially difficult has been the remarkable development of the democratic spirit. The nation is no longer ruled by its aristocracy, no matter how influential some members of the so-called "higher classes" may still be in shaping the course of national legislation and policy. The people have come to realize more and more their own power in shaping the destinies of the country. Simultaneously they have come to feel that their interest in questions of public policy of all kinds, and above all in questions of peace and war, is supreme and vital. They realize, as never before, that whoever may reap the advantage and the glory from victories gained on the battle-field, the hardships and privations endured and the blood shed so freely fall, for the most part, upon the common people.

Without enlarging upon these influences and tendencies, we are compelled, in view of the temper in which Sir Edward Grey's few but pregnant words spoken on behalf of the Government have been received by the nation, to admit that the peace spirit is yet far from triumphant. It is, at least, evident that peace-at-any-price is far from being, as it has often been said to be, the motto of the Britain of to-day. We say this advisedly because, though the ill-omened word "war" was not uttered, was scarcely even hinted at by the Under-Secretary, the tone, as it has been caught and re-echoed by the voice of the nation, is unmistakably a war-tone. The effect has, indeed, been remarkable. If the aim of the Government was to feel the pulse of the nation in view of the necessity which they deemed forced upon them of giving a distinct warning to France against further unfriendly aggression, the response has been unmistakable. Though the unfriendly words and movements which have unhappily emanated from the French Government for some time past have failed, in a large measure, to evoke angry retorts from the English press and people, it is evident that they have not failed to leave their mark upon the national temper.

While it is highly probable, in fact almost certain, that the incident will pass without any hostile demonstrations, further than a possible strong defiance in words, it cannot be