

and bankers of every dollar that passes through their hands, and the "chop" is to enable them to recognize any dollar they may have paid out.

Hong Kong bank notes pass freely, being preferred to silver, and are therefore at a premium. The bulk of the merchandise shipped by the foreign merchants is paid for by checks on Hong Kong, which can generally be sold to the native banks at a premium varying from one-fourth of 1 per cent. to 1 per cent., and sometimes as high as 1-2 per cent. The Chinese merchants, in effecting exchanges between themselves, use the taels. This is not a coin, but merely a weight of silver, and is considered the local currency. Seventy-two taels are equal to \$100. Among the poorer classes and in the country districts, the copper "cash" is used, of which one thousand are about equal to a dollar. The Mexican dollar and the Japanese silver yen are legal tender when not chopped.

From the foregoing it will be observed that the local currency is debased. It is not legal tender in Hong Kong—that is to say, the chopped dollars. Kwang Tung dollars and subsidiary coins are accepted by the government and by the banks and merchants, but shopkeepers will accept such money only in small sums. Nearly all foreigners residing in Canton—more particularly the merchants—keep the bulk of their money in the Hong Kong Bank, and draw against their deposit by check when required.

#### HAS THE ENGLISH CHARACTER CHANGED.

Abridged from the "Spectator."

A good many people are asking in all sincerity, and even with some anxiety, whether it is possible that the character of the English people is materially changing. They are, such enquirers say, becoming less grave, less restrained, more like a people of the Southern type. They display their feelings much more, they rush more in crowds, they are more swayed by rumor, by fear and by emotion. It is unlike the English, they say, to have taken up this war with such enthusiasm, to be so unreasonably angry if any one speaks against it; above all to be so explosive in their gladness at good news. . . . The difference strikes Americans here, as well as our own people, and has produced such an impression on the Continent that men talk of the English as of a people changed beyond recognition. They are drunk, say the Continentals, with the "heady" wine of Imperialism, and will enter upon some entirely new and probably dangerous career. "Never laugh at us again," say surprised Frenchmen; "you are as mobile as we are."

There is no change in the national character whatever, as may be seen in the hard, self-repression and cool resolve to go on with which the people received continuous news of defeat and disaster. The almost silent fortitude with which they listened, and which meant, as all recognized who knew them, that, like unbeaten pugilists, they would "come up to time" after a moment to draw breath, was entirely like their own older selves, as was their abstinence from complaints of their generals, or of demands for a change of Government. The capacity to endure with-

out losing strength which is the note of the Anglo-Saxon character is here still, and the only change is in the national power and method of expressing feeling. In that there is a change. Chiefly, as we believe, from the effect of a generation of education, a kind of shame-facedness, shyness, involuntary reticence, describe it how you like, has dropped away, and the people are more articulate. They are less ignorant, and less afraid of their own ignorance, less obliged to wait for leadership, less painfully apprehensive of ridicule. Just as they can all write, well or badly, but still intelligibly, so they can all, when excited, speak with a freedom and directness which fifty years ago was entirely wanting to them. They are learning to converse instead of merely narrating, to narrate without parentheses, and even to question without hopeless vagueness. They were, more especially in the villages, as tongue-tied as cattle, and now they are only as tongue-tied as reserved men. They know, too, a great deal more. Partly because of the early defects, but chiefly, we fancy, from the diffusion of the habit of reading newspapers, they have taken an interest in this war such as the inhabitants of the sea-ports took in the old sea-fights; they know all about it, they follow its details, and in every respect but one they understand its geography. They are still bothered to a quite comic extent by the scale of South Africa, having a difficulty which is almost pathetic in realizing that any region can be so immensely bigger than their own island, but they are slowly getting over even that mental obstacle—with results which will be felt when immigration into South Africa begins. The consequence of this rise in the mental ladder is that they see over a larger field, and seeing, take courage to say what they see. It is nothing new. Such of our readers as are old men saw much of it in the Corn-law agitation, and in the old proceedings at elections before bribery and terrorism ceased, and the ballot hid up men's votes.

Not only has the population increased, but everybody hearing the same thing in the same moment of time, every rush to hear more, or to applaud, or to give vent to joy takes the form of a stampede. Only when grieved or angry or alarmed does the crowd stand still, and growing pale round the lips, issue orders which Governments hear through organs of perception other than their ears.

BRITISH OFFICIAL STATISTICS.—Some matters are certainly managed better in America than they are here—the compilation of official statistics, for example; and the degrading comparison does not stop with the Government of the United States. Most nations, as a fact, are ahead of us in this respect, and the only thing we can do is to hope that some day the value of comprehensive and reliable statistics will be recognized in legislative circles, and by the heads of official departments. Another irritating oversight has just been pointed out. Thousands of people are interested in the general working of the Employers' Liability and the Workmen's Compensation Acts, but neither of these statutes contain any provision for the compilation of the statistics which would throw light on their real operation. Such returns as are to be had relate solely to causes actually brought into court, but as regards the vast bulk of the cases—those in which the compensation is settled either by agreement or by informal arbitration, no official information is available, as no memorandum has to be registered.—The Insurance Observer.