

that some imaginative correspondent had been drawing upon his imagination to fill his column. We have not unfrequently had occasion to comment upon the inequalities of sentences imposed for similar offences by different judges, as indicated by the fact that habitual criminals are said to have their favourites and their aversions among the occupants of the bench. It is a fact which has risen to the dignity of a proverb that the deterrent effect of a punishment depends more upon its certainty than upon its severity in relation to the offence. Still more, we may feel sure, does that wholesome regard for the administration of justice which constitutes the salutary awe and dread of ministers and courts of justice, depend upon the uniformity and the impersonality with which its inquisitions are conducted and its sentences pronounced. Nothing could be much more destructive of this salutary awe than that the idea should go abroad that a judge may, of his own personal will and caprice, and on the spur of the moment, without trial or verdict of jury, send a man for three years, more or less, to a felon's prison, for the offence of a word or a sneer. The judge in question is reported as saying in his report to the Minister that the additional sentence had a most salutary effect, though he now favoured its remission. He must mean, we suppose, an effect in cowering the prisoner. But what of its effect upon spectators and the public generally, and their respect for the administration of criminal justice?

Asiatic
Development.

The Citizen, the new journal published in Philadelphia by the American Society for the Extension of University Teaching, superseding *University Extension* and *The Bulletin*, has some thoughtful and suggestive comments on the great historical importance of the entrance of Japan into the ranks of the world-powers. "Nearly all modern writers on politics," it observes, "have taken the view that the political future of the world lay entirely in the hands of the white race. Some of the most eminent publicists have not hesitated to assert that the yellow races have shown little more capacity for political organization than the black, and that the only hope for them, as for the latter, is a gradual development under the tutelage and domination of the white races. Whatever there may have been in the history of the relations and contacts of the European and Asiatic races during the last century to warrant such a conclusion, all former reasonings are certainly put at fault by the events of the last few months. The development of Japan, dating from the moment when her people began to study and adopt, or perhaps we should rather say adapt, the institutions and methods of Europe and America in her own educational and political affairs, has been marvellous. The question how and why it has come to pass that a people which had been stationary for centuries in the traditional inertia of Orientalism should have so suddenly aroused themselves from their age-long lethargy and thrown themselves, with a restless energy not unworthy of the Yankees with whom they have been compared, into the march of enterprise and progress, is, and will probably remain one of those psychological mysteries which no metaphysical plummet can fathom. But the marvellous fact remains, undermining the fatalism of the East, confounding the scepticism of the West, and threatening to cut off the visible continuity of the chain of cause and effect on which the historian is accustomed to rely as his most trustworthy clue under all circumstances.

New World
Powers.

It would be idle to prophesy with regard to the final outcome of the present Asiatic war—if war that can be called, which is a uniform succession of triumphs on the one side,

or retreats on the other. The peace negotiations do not, it must be admitted, seem very hopeful as yet. It would be contrary to all historical analogy, as well as to what we know of human nature in its national manifestations, to suppose that China can possibly emerge from a situation in which she lies helpless under the heel of her adversary, without serious loss of territory as well as of money. Correspondents' rumours to the contrary notwithstanding, it is in the last degree unlikely that either Russia or Great Britain would think of intervening to save her from her fate, unless the demands of the conqueror should be so exorbitant and vindictive as to threaten the permanent upbreak of the Celestial Empire. But whatever may be the condition in which the great nation which has hitherto been, in virtue of population and extent of territory, the leading Asiatic power, may find herself when peace is declared, it is beyond conception that her people will not at once begin to profit by the terrible lesson, and will lose no time in studying and copying the Western civilization which has wrought such marvels for their formerly despised neighbour. It will not be surprising, therefore, as *The Citizen* suggests, "if from this time shall date one of the most stupendous events of modern times, the appearance of two great Asiatic powers among the political forces of the modern world." Other smaller members of the great Mongolian race would almost surely be caught and swept along in the current. Imagination fails us as we try to picture the effect upon the world's history of the advent into its national councils of a distinctively Asiatic diplomacy, as far-sighted and as powerfully backed as that of the greatest of the European nations.

American
Civilization.

An affray in the Indiana Legislature in which, if the newspapers may be believed, oaths, pistols, and slung-shot were called into requisition, and the Governor's Secretary was seriously, if not fatally wounded; a pitched battle with clubs, revolvers, and stones, in an Omaha churchyard, caused by the attempt of the Bishop to remove a priest in opposition to the will of the congregation of a Polish Roman Catholic church, and culminating in the serious wounding of two or three men, some of them not improbably by the hand of the priest himself, he having taken a conspicuous part in the conflict, and used his revolver somewhat freely; six Italians, charged with the murder of a deputy-sheriff, lynched in Colorado; such is a part of the record of a few days' lawlessness in the United States. "From half-a-dozen places in the West and South come threats and anticipations of lynchings. All these incidents and threats are distressing symptoms of a serious evil which can be met only by educational influences and public opinion." So remarks *The Outlook*, from whose columns the above incidents are taken. In the second of the three cases of lawlessness and violence quoted, as in very many similar instances, the blame cannot perhaps be fairly laid at the door of American institutions, as the outrages are the work of foreigners who have been in the past freely admitted into the Republic. But in the remaining two cases, as in others of almost daily occurrence, it is fair to assume that the native American was mainly responsible. In these cases it would seem that educational influences and public opinion should have had time to work. If not, their operation must be too slow to give hope of any but a very remote cure of this terrible evil. Would not a little stern application of the punitive and preventive methods used in the most enlightened and best organized communities have a much swifter educative influence both upon the lawless and upon public opinion?