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The Japan Daily Mail.

YOKOHAMA. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1906.

THE SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOL QUESTION.

THERE appears to be on the part of many residents in Japan a misapprehension of the attitude of the Japanese people,—certainly of those whom the writer has conversed with,—toward this question. Responsible Japanese do not contend that difficulties may not have arisen in connection with the attendance of Japanese children and youths at the public schools of San Francisco and other cities and towns in the Pacific states. They do claim, however, that these difficulties have been greatly exaggerated, though this is not their main contention. For example, it is said often times that Japanese young men desirous of learning English have entered the lower grades of the public schools to such an extent as to prove a serious embarrassment to the teachers, as well as to constitute a real danger to the morals of the native American children. Apparently trustworthy reports, as published in the Japanese papers, indicate, however, that the total number of Japanese attending the public schools at the time the obnoxious order was issued was a little over ninety and that of these only three were more than fifteen years of age; though it is admitted that before the earthquake the number of the Japanese in the schools all told was over three hundred.

According to the last census the total attendance at the public schools of the city of San Francisco was 39,720, that is, the Japanese children even before the earthquake were less than one per cent. of the pupils in the schools. Of course, the three hundred Japanese young people were not distributed evenly over the city and there may have been congestion at one or more points; still even allowing for such congestion, it is difficult for the Japanese people to see why a special regulation should be directed toward their children. To them it seems that any embarrassment growing out of the congestion referred to might have been relieved by certain general regulations which would have borne equally upon all. No thought-

ful Japanese could fail to approve of a rule which forbade adults or adolescents attending the lower grades of the public schools. Such a rule would be founded on practical universal experience. Neither would they object to the introduction of a language test for all applicants for admission to the public schools. A certain standard of efficiency in the use of the English language might very wisely be established, the attainment of which should be essential to admission to any but special schools.

Furthermore, no one could object to the segregation of any and all pupils who might show themselves morally unworthy.

If the Japanese community suffer more than others from the strict enforcement of regulations framed in the spirit indicated, no complaint would be heard from any responsible persons, certainly not against the regulations themselves, and an international question could not arise. The central point in the Japanese complaint is, not that certain of their countrymen have suffered through their children, but that they have suffered through the operation of a law in direct violation of a clause in the existing treaty which says, in effect, that they shall not be made the objects of special legislation, or of special administrative treatment; for that is what the most-highly-favoured-nation clause in the treaties means, if it mean anything. And this is just the question at issue. "Does the treaty afford any protection whatever from local prejudice?" It is natural that the Japanese of all classes should wish to have that question answered. To plead the congestion in certain schools or the inability to house all the children that apply, or the immorality of certain Japanese youths, seems to them an attempt to divert attention from the main issue. Grant if you will that these pleas are well founded, they are none the less irrelevant; for the Japanese contention does not in the least oppose suitable legislation to correct the evils mentioned. There is a right way and a wrong way in all such cases, and it seems to the writer's Japanese friends that the people of San Francisco have more or less deliberately chosen the wrong.—*Communicated.*

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The Japan Daily Mail.

YOKOHAMA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1906.

SAN FRANCISCO.

If the trouble between the United States and Japan be not easily adjusted the fault will be with local American newspapers. We who have watched Japan closely through this most unhappy phase of her foreign relations, are constrained to bear unqualified testimony to her remarkable self-control. Perhaps she does not deserve much credit for the fact. For it would be difficult to persuade any educated Japanese that an unfriendly sentiment could be entertained or an unfriendly act deliberately committed towards his country by the American people. The Japanese did not set out with any special bias in favour of the United States. True it has become the fashion with some historians to speak of the great boon conferred on Japan by the Americans in breaking down her isolation, and to laud Commodore Perry for the *saue* tact he is supposed to have displayed in forcing his country's society on a nation which would fain have kept all the outer world at arm's length. It is also the notion of certain publicists that Japan very speedily recognised this boon and appreciated the commodore's politeness. Such fancies are emotional. Assuredly the Japanese of the present day are glad that the "black ships" came to Tokyo Bay 50 years ago, and assuredly they reckon Commodore Perry a benefactor. But at the time of his advent they heartily disliked him, were thoroughly hostile to his proposals, and did not discover in his methods anything that might be taken as a model of courtesy. Besides, they are not so shallow as to imagine that Perry came or that his Government sent him for the sake of benefiting Japan. That kind of pretty fiction makes them smile, and it is not at all upon such make-believes that they base their friendship for the United States. It is because they have never received anything but good at America's hand; because she alone among the States of the West has treated them with uniform justice and sympathy; and because her schools, her colleges, her private houses and her factories have always welcomed their students with liberality and thus contributed largely to the successes they have achieved in the world. None of us who have lived long in this land can fail to recall the years—many years—when to be an American was to possess a sure passport to the affection and hospitality of the Japanese. England as Japan's ally now shares the popularity which long belonged to America alone, but this exten-

sion of Japan's amity in a new direction has not weakened its steadfastness in the old. Hence no one conversant with history will give Japan large credit for the forbearance she now displays towards a friend. Still the fact has to be recognised. No Japanese newspaper has shown any heat or impatience; no Japanese publicist has allowed his faith in the good will of America to be shaken. It has been different with the San Francisco newspapers. The excuses they have offered have been subterfuges. The cause they have advocated is insulting. The stories they tell are false and vindictive. What is it but a subterfuge to pretend that the attendance of adult Japanese at primary schools has inspired the exclusion movement, and what but a subterfuge to allege that by admitting Japanese students the schools become over-crowded? To regulate the limits of age is within the competence of all educational authorities, and congestion can not be caused by an addition of less than one per cent, to the number of school-going children. Side by side with these disingenuous pretences the San Francisco newspapers have frankly declared that the Japanese must be segregated from contact with American citizens. They pretend not to understand that such segregation would be in flagrant violation of a treaty which guarantees to the Japanese in America treatment absolutely equal to that enjoyed by any European nationals. And to create a final prejudice against Japan, they represent her as planning the absorption of America's outlying territories, the Philippines first and Hawaii second. The latest rumour—as to trained Japanese soldiers proceeding to Honolulu in the garb of labourers—is a deliberately conceived falsehood which clearly betrays the character of the San Francisco agitation. But it will be vain for these journals to contrive devices for alienating Japan's friendship. The disposition of the Japanese is to-day precisely what it has been throughout the whole complication, namely, an earnest desire not to retaliate or to resent but to remove as quickly and as effectually as possible this temporary cloud upon the horizon of the two countries' relations. So small a cloud will never overcast the sky if Japan can avert such a catastrophe, and it will be averted as long as the great bulk of the sane American people continue to display a kindly mood, and as long as the President, speaking for the nation he so worthily represents, utters the noble sentiments embodied in his last address to Congress. Japan is taking the right course when she trusts her friend to see that she obtains justice, and we are very sure that her confidence will not be misplaced.