

London, Dec. 27, 1900.

THE EAST AND WEST.

BRIEF as is the Reuter despatch referring to the *Times'* leading article on the Californian question, it seems to give the gist of what our great name-sake of London has to propound and that is to call attention to the problem of races that the West must ultimately face in its relations with the East. We are not informed of the trend of the *Times'* opinion as to the solution of the problem; but since Japan is named as the cause of forcing it into a sphere of practical study, we feel called upon to state how this nation would regard such a theme.

Much may be written on the causes that give rise to or keep active inter-racial friction, long cultivated prejudice, misinformation, jealousy and the spirit of revenge, being often the most responsible among them. But as between the broadly divided East and West, the cause essentially lies in the antipathy that originates in the claim of superiority on one side and the resentment against inferior treatment on the other. And to deny the existence of this antipathy between the two great groups of mankind would be sheer hypocrisy, though, as we will presently show, it is both misleading and unjust to include Japan unqualifiedly in the designation "Orientals" in this connection. Reduced to this elemental phase the problem and the difficulty which attends its solution are precisely the same as those that were presented or are still being presented by the old fashioned caste system. Indeed, for the purposes of our argument, the West may be said to form a caste of its own, just as the East forms another, and the two have prejudices and suspicions against each other to brood upon. Nevertheless, in point of modern civilization the East acknowledges its inferiority and because of this boasted modern civilization the East asks of the West to carry into practice the latter's theoretical justice and equity. But the West is only human and not disposed to altruistically surrender its position of superiority. The East cries "inconsistency" to the West and the West retorts "might is right." So goes on the social conflict with nothing but a

judged, however, the demand of the East is imperative. It is not unreasonable, and the only way in which East can obtain satisfaction will be to work itself up to the same level of moral, social and political civilization as the West has attained and secure the might that will give it the right.

We have said it is both misleading and unjust to include Japan unqualifiedly in the designation "Orientals." We do not say this from a mere sense of self-importance. There were days when we saw with a feeling of abhorrence Western men and women shake hands or walk arm in arm. Then kissing appeared absolutely immoral to us, while the act of walking into houses with shoes or boots on was evidence to us of the inferiority of the Western race. What a host of other practices and usages we might recall of Europeans and Americans that once shocked our sense of decency and politeness! But they no longer do so and for good or bad we ourselves are rapidly adopting these manners. So long as those practices and usages disgusted us they formed so many sources that fed and fanned our prejudice against the Westerners; but they no longer disgust us and this turn of affair is the most conclusive proof that the anti-foreign spirit is dead and gone in Japan. We have for a long time shared with the other nations of the Orient the sense of being humiliated by the West. But unlike the others young Japan started her career with a hope, resolution and faith that she would outlive the period of self-resignation, win a place of respect and consideration in the world, and that by her silent and unremitting exertion for self-betterment. We are now on a fair way toward the accomplishment of this aspiration, with reasonably encouraging prospects before us and we have nothing to complain of. And taught by our past we look with disdain on all hot-headed attempts and noisy clamourings which often characterise the doings of our fellow Asiatics. If there is a Caste of the East, we have freed ourselves of its shackles and we are not Orientals in that respect. In our relations with the West, there is, therefore, nothing on account of which we should be disposed to entertain any social antipathy toward the nations of Europe or America. If the accident of complexion is to be insisted upon

as a mark of our racial inferiority, we will not stop at pitying the innocence of those who adhere to such a proposition, but will yet strive to disprove the allegation in a manner as will do credit to our past. The racial problem, then, in so far as we Japanese are concerned is one that does not affect us so much as the mode of thinking or the way of looking at things on the part of the Westerners.

We have hinted above as to our attitude toward the rest of the Oriental nations. In view of the spirit of restlessness now observable throughout those countries it will be well to be definite on this point. We have gained new prestige since the late war and this has given new power and influence. There seems to be a vague feeling among a section of Westerners that we will use this power and influence in setting the East against the West. The idea is absurd on the face of it. To incite the East against the West with Japan as the rallying point, will be to make this country the vortex of the mad whirl of vast Asia, untrained, unsystematised, mob Asia, and Japan would be drawn up into the water-spout, then dashed and ruined before she could lead the hords in battle array. Japan would not be so foolish. If Japan is at all inclined to exert her power and influence outside her own limits, it will be always in restraint and guidance, and to promote better understandings between the East and the West. For all this disposition on our part, which is sincere and genuine, it is in the power of the West to distrust and blackmail and ultimately compel her to throw in her lot with the East and rise or fall with the East. Then the responsibility will be on the West. But with England as our ally, the United States as our most trusted friend, France coming to the side of world's peace, and Germany knowing us better, such a turn of events will never occur.