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MR. TAFT'S PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

ATTENTION may be drawn to a report in another column of the U.S. Secretary, Mr. Taft's speech at the banquet given in his honour by the Municipality and Chamber of Commerce of Tokyo at the Imperial Hotel last evening. That speech is a complete disposal of the mischievous reports of American-Japanese animosity. Mr. Taft speaking as the honoured guest of the Emperor—a distinction which he intimated he appreciated not only personally but as a representative of America which His Majesty desired thus markedly to honour in him—referred to the prominent part his country had played in Japan's development and then attacked his main subject. "Now, for a moment, and a moment

only," he said "a little cloud has come over the sunshine of a fast friendship of fifty years, and how has it come about?" In the first place, he said jocularly, it was caused by the San Francisco earthquake—"only the greatest earthquake of the century could have caused even the slightest tremor between such friends"—but, without entering into the details of the "events of injustice" in San Francisco, he desired to say emphatically that there was "nothing in those events that cannot be honourably and fully arranged by ordinary diplomatic methods between the two governments conducted as they both are by statesmen of honour, sanity and justice." Mr. Taft went further. He boldly talked of war. He was not in the least afraid of war in a good cause nor denied its necessity on occasion. He said "war" was a word taboo to the diplomat, but he was no diplomat and was not bound by diplomatic usage; and then he denounced the idea of war between the countries. It would be "a crime against modern civilisation," "it would be as wicked as it would be insane." What had either country to gain by it? He finally traced the reports and rumours of war to "certain members of the modern press" who by headlines and sensational dispatches give rise to ideas that have no foundation whatever. He added:—

"In each country, doubtless, there are irresponsible persons that war would aid or make prominent who try to give seriousness to such a discussion; but when one considers the real feelings of

the two peoples as a whole; when one considers the situation from the standpoint of sanity and real patriotism in each country it is difficult to characterize in polite and moderate language the conduct of those who are attempting to promote misunderstanding and ill-feeling between the two countries.

"It gives me pleasure to assure the people of Japan that the good will of the American people towards Japan is as warm and cordial as ever it was and the suggestion of a breach of the amicable relations between them finds no confirmation in the public opinion of the United States."

This is the plainest kind of talk, and we give it special prominence in type because we believe that it expresses the best sentiment of the best and most representative people of both countries, and should be proportionately emphasized. It is also a memorable utterance. It may well be that the genial personality of the big American Secretary dispels the "little cloud" of which he spoke. But he will pass on his way and similar clouds may gather. At such a time, unless they have a more reasonable source than at present, it will be well to remember these strong words.

CURRENT TOPICS.

The *Asahi* has an article on the visit of Secretary Taft, which the editor welcomes, as it will tend greatly to enhance the good feelings between America and Japan. The editor says that Japan needs continued sympathy on the part of the American public.

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