

MCKINLEY'S
MESSAGE.

President McKinley in his message to congress, gives a very complete resume of our relations with China. It appears that trouble originated on account of oriental prejudice toward our civilization. This prejudice, in part justifiable, was intensified by many untruthful reports concerning foreigners that were industriously circulated by designing boxer leaders. This feeling of hostility culminated in an attack upon foreign missions in which several missionaries were murdered. The foreign powers then decided to send warships into Chinese waters as a moral demonstration against the government and to exact pledges for the security of foreigners and respect for treaty rights. This combined fleet assembled off Taku.

Up to this point the illfeeling toward foreigners had asserted itself only in occasional riots,

Attack of Taku. more or less local in character and not unlike the race quarrels in our own country. The powers now attempted to land a considerable force at Taku, but met with stubborn resistance from the native garrison. The fleet then opened fire upon the fort with deadly effect. In this demonstration, be it said to the credit of the American admiral, he did not take part. As war with China had not been declared by his government, he did not believe it to be in accord with the rules of international law to fire upon a fort garrisoned by regular soldiers of the Chinese government.

The bombardment of Taku added fuel to the flame. It aroused to a frenzy a feeling of hostility to all foreigners, solidified the boxer movement and made it almost national in character. It was not a difficult matter for crafty ones to make the ignorant natives believe that this attack, without a declaration of war, meant that the "foreign devils" intended to invade the country, to pillage and murder and that the only hope for the native was to anticipate them and kill foreigners wherever they might be found. Thus the unprovoked attack of European powers appeared to the Chinaman.

It is difficult for us to look at the Chinese question from the standpoint of the native Chinaman.

In Their Place. To better appreciate the motives that animate him we should put ourselves in his stead. Imagine ourselves a primitive, clanish people, who did everything in the old rather than the new way, who were without railways, the great modern means of communication, and were lacking in the broad and enlightening influence of the telegraph. Suppose we had a religion that made sacred the remains of our ancestors. Then try to conceive of some great modern power

representing the wealth and influence of 19th century civilization suddenly pouncing down upon us; trying to change instantaneously our mode of life; ruthlessly violating the sacred traditions of centuries; ambitiously pushing railway enterprises in all directions and in so doing destroying the burial grounds, the homes of our sacred dead; and in addition to this wanton sacrilege trampling upon our property rights by constructing railroads without due compensation to the owners of the property appropriated. What would we probably do?

Upon much less provocation American mobs have killed foreigners and it is quite possible that some American citizens might lose their accustomed self-restraint and seek vengeance by killing a few of the intruders. And if some of our citizens should do this, suppose the country whose citizens had been the victim of our violence, should send an armed fleet to New York City and attempt to land a large force and, in the event of resistance, shell the forts of the city, how would we construe the act? Would we not view it as contrary to the law of nations? Those who recall the effect throughout the country of the firing upon Fort Sumpter, how it electrified the people, will appreciate the probable reception of the news of such an attack. Would it not thoroughly arouse our people, intensify their hatred of foreigners and all foreign influences and lead to a general uprising? Would not many of our citizens be tempted to regard the defiance of international usage by the offending foreign power as a precedent for them to violate statutory law and as a justification for inflicting summary vengeance upon all foreigners?

The imaginary case is aptly illustrative of the conditions in China. Prior to the attack upon Taku, as indicated by the president's message, there were only isolated cases of riot. Communication to Peking was open. Some four hundred men were sent to Peking as a guard to the legation. There is nothing in the president's entire message to indicate that any difficulty was experienced in getting them there or that there was any reason to expect trouble in future efforts to increase the legation guard. After this attack however communication with Peking was cut off. It was then the siege really began and the lives of the legation became desperately endangered. It would appear from the facts, as presented by President McKinley, that the severe hardships endured by Americans and other foreigners in Peking may be traced as the direct and logical outcome of the unjustifiable attack of European powers upon the Chinese garrison at Taku.

And in view of this ought we not have less severity and more charity for the yellow man? President McKinley is to be commended for the humanity of his policy in demanding of the Chinese

government only the punishment of those responsible for the murder of American citizens and a guaranty for the respect of treaty rights in the future, leaving the question of indemnity to the arbitration board created by the recent peace conference at the Hague.

RECIPROCITY. The most startling statement in

the president's message is that relating to "reciprocity" which merely means homeopathic free trade. His opinion upon this subject is particularly significant because Mr. McKinley has been the leading exponent of the protective idea and owes his political prominence to the association of his name with a tariff bill which fixed almost prohibitive duties to protect American industries.

In his message this year the president thus refers to reciprocity:

"The policy of reciprocity so manifestly rests upon the principles of international equity and has been so repeatedly approved by the people of the United States, that there ought to be no hesitation in either branch of the congress in giving to it full effect.

"This government desires to preserve the most just and amicable commercial relations with all foreign countries unmoved by the industrial rivalries necessarily developed in the expansion of international trade. It is believed that the foreign governments generally entertain the same purpose."

This is more conciliatory and indicative of a wiser and more judicious

international policy than the utterances of other protectionist presidents in regard to foreign commerce. Formerly those who advocated reciprocal commercial regulations with free trade Great Britain were charged with lacking true Americanism and accused of Anglophilism. Now Mr. McKinley acknowledges it to be "manifestly" in accord with "the principles of international equity" to have free trade, not only with England, but with every other nation that will trade freely with us. A tariff is no longer commended or advocated for protection, but is justified only as a means of retaliation. Democratic principles are being vindicated with a vengeance. The republican party is accepting the theory of commerce and revenue of the old-fashioned democracy in addition to embracing and attempting to carry out the financial policy of the last democratic administration. It is a long step toward the realization of an equitable and reasonable revenue system, for Mr. McKinley to proclaim his preference for a retaliatory rather than a protective tariff.

The desire for commercial expansion is responsible in a large measure for

Commercial Expansion. this change of position upon the tariff question.

American commercial interests are today observing that for every dollars worth of foreign products shut out of the markets of the United States there are a dollars worth of American products shut in, and they prefer to get their goods out to keeping them in.