

quiet the feelings of those who were troubled about the matter. The letter did not mean to brand it as a sin, he says in substance, to drink moderately or to sell liquor. It simply meant that Catholics should look to it that their churches, families and business should be so conducted as to be no occasion of sin or scandal. It, moreover, has no binding force except in the diocese over which Bishop Watterson presides, and its chief purpose was to cause the saloon keepers to conduct their business with greater decorum. The unanimity with which this exegesis of the important document is advocated points to its authorization by the ablegate himself.

The idea, then, is that neither Bishop Watterson nor his superior intends throwing the influence of the church in favor of prohibition, and as far as the liquor traffic is concerned, the importance of the letter has been much exaggerated; it will not cause any diminution of the trade, nor deprive it of its political influence.

There is, however, one point in the letter which is almost entirely lost sight of in the discussion, and yet is farther reaching than any other. The ablegate—as has formerly been pointed out in these columns—bases his decision on the general principle that a bishop's duty includes the finding out what is good for the people of his diocese and enjoining that upon them, prohibiting that which may lead to evil consequences. If this principle be accepted when applied to a man's business transactions, the next step is to apply it to his social relations; then why not to his politics?

What is mostly needed now, in regard to that letter, is, therefore, an explanation dealing with that general principle. It would seem to involve the possibility of danger to the individual and the constitutionally guaranteed liberty of American citizens, and is a matter in which the people of the country are far more interested than in the privileges of saloonkeepers.

#### CHINA'S PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

Japan, in the present struggle with her gigantic antagonist, is inspired with a strong hope of success on account of the superiority of her equipment and the enthusiastic patriotism of the people. And to these is added the curious fact that in Corea a tradition is extant according to which in the present year a battle will be fought at Asan, as a result of which the Chinese emperor will have to flee northward. The Japanese consul at New York is authority for the statement that a copy of this prediction has been in the hands of an official at Fusan for eight years. It is conceivable that the existence of this tradition in eastern Asia, though the belief in it may be characterized as superstition, will have a decided moral influence on the soldiers of both combatants.

It certainly seems that near Asan the first great battle will have to be fought. This is a small seaport on the coast of Corea. The Chinese have a fort and garrison there and are now engaged in strengthening their position. On the land side the place is assailable only in one direction and on

the sea side the approaches are narrow and can easily be cut off by means of torpedoes. This natural stronghold is now further being strengthened by means of trenches and various obstacles and the garrison has been augmented so that it numbers 6,000 men. A fleet of twenty ships have also arrived at Asan.

China's plan seems to be to make this place her basis of operations in Corea. By holding it she secures a line of retreat and a port through which supplies may be brought to the army now marching across the northern frontier of Corea and whose business it is to subjugate the country, recover possession of the capital and finally effect a junction with the division at Asan. Japan's object must be to prevent this. She will endeavor to cut off the northern army from the basis of supplies and destroy the fleet and finally drive the Chinese out of Corea. This seems to be the plan of campaign so far as can be gathered from the dispatches on the subject.

It is noticeable that those most familiar with the two countries generally refrain from expressing any opinion as to the probability of Japan or China coming out victorious. The latter country is ten times as large and populous as its assailant. The whole population of Europe barely equals that of China, and any one of the most densely populated provinces of that empire has nearly as many inhabitants as the United States. Were all this mass of humanity united in the defense of the country and led by intelligent officers, the outcome would not be uncertain. As it is, no one can foresee what may happen. There is no doubt that the secret combinations which hate the present foreign dynasty will seize the opportunity of making an effort for rebellion, and should the Japanese troops be landed on China's shores and there find allies in the millions who are sworn to overthrow the government, Japan's chances would be much greater than they at first appear.

The present commotion in Asia derives much interest from the fact that in ages past wars in those remote parts of the globe exercised an influence in the whole world, felt to this day. It was due to the political upheavals there that the Huns and Vandals and later the Turks were compelled to migrate westward. They broke up ancient Rome and devastated the Byzantine empire, leaving their imprints of barbarity everywhere and completely changing the map of Europe. Napoleon said once that the East is the theater of mighty events, and the present war is possibly one of them.

#### THE SEA OF AZOF.

The dispatches today give an account of a terribly disastrous heaving of the sea beyond its bounds, caused by a cyclone in Southern Russia. The loss is estimated at present at a thousand human beings and several towns that border on the Sea of Azof. The latter is a body of water about 235 miles in length from southwest to northeast and 110 miles in its greatest breadth. It lies north of the Black

Sea, and is for the most part comparatively shallow, its greatest depth being but forty feet. Its surface is greatly disturbed by fierce and continuous winds during July and August, chiefly from the southeast, from which direction the cyclone appears to have come. The sea is of great importance to Russian commerce, and consequently a number of flourishing cities have grown up around its border.

If the general statements regarding the work of the cyclone are true, it is quite probable that a full report will increase the number of fatalities. Mariupol, which is said to be practically blotted out of existence, is a town of some 10,000 inhabitants. Nogaisk is almost as large, and the whole of the low lying country around is dotted with small villages, whose residents are engaged in fishing, coal mining and brick and tile manufacture, and in the commerce in grain and fruits, which is very heavy. In the season of heavy winds it is not unusual for one portion of the sea bed to be swept almost entirely clear of water, which is piled up several feet high against the embankments that have been constructed to keep it within bounds, and the circumstances are such that when the waves are hurled over these obstructions, as appears to have been the case in the present instance, a condition of awful devastation must follow. The situation of the unfortunate people there must be extremely pitiable.

#### AMERICAN COAL FOR ENGLAND.

There is a possibility that the old English saying regarding "carrying coals to Newcastle" may have a literal test as to whether or not it expresses an absurdity. Recently an English coal expert visited the Colorado coal fields, and the state coal mine inspector has received word from Sheffield that representatives of a large syndicate are about to leave England for the purpose of locating and purchasing bodies of coal land in Colorado. The land referred to can be purchased for about \$20 an acre. It is said that the English investors have in view the shipment of coal to Great Britain, under the theory that, as many of the mines in the old country are worked out or are getting too deep to be worked at a profit, it is cheaper to transport coal 10,000 miles than to go down 2,700 feet for it. The English capitalists who seriously consider the foreign shipment part of the scheme, however, probably have not considered railway freight rates to the seaboard. With these as they are now, it will be a very long time before coal from the Rocky Mountains can compete with even deep-mined coal in England.

NOTING THE fact that the express companies have a good deal of unclaimed money on hand as a result of the money order business which they have carried on for ten years or more, the *American Banker* pertinently asks: Why is it that the states which compel savings banks to publish lists of unclaimed deposits do not investigate the unclaimed funds now in the possession of express companies?