

## THE COMMERCIAL INDEPENDENCE OF CHINA.

The export trade of China reached the handsome total of over \$4,000,000 in 1913. It has increased in volume in spite of all the handicaps placed in the way through the ignorance of the people and inadequate co-operation of the government. Travellers and inspectors learn at first hand that there are commodities for which the world market is offering good prices and which China has in abundance in some isolated and neglected regions. In order to make these available for export, several barriers must be removed. The development of transportation facilities, the abolition of likin taxes and proper revision of export duties and the up-building of a Chinese merchant marine are among the most important steps. But aside from all these, there is one phase which has not been sufficiently emphasized and which is nevertheless essential and fundamental to the successful promotion of export trade. A recent interview which the writer has had with one of the leading merchants in America calls for serious reflection by our countrymen. The following is a gist of the discourse:—

“Why is it that when we want Chinese products such as the Chiha wood oil, soya bean oil, vegetable wax, peanuts, silk goods, even rice and tea, cotton seed oil and goods of that kind, that the first organisation we go to and ask for a price on these goods, is some Japanese firm, and not a Chinese firm. We will write to Osaka, Kobe, or Tokyo; we will go and see one of the big Japanese houses in San Francisco. There is no Chinese firm in our city (San Francisco) handling Chinese goods on a large scale that we know of. There is no Chinese firm throughout the States which compares with the Mitsui Co, Nosami or a dozen others that we could name. We receive by every mail a versatile flood of circular letters from firms large or small, located in Kobe or Osaka, offering us *Chinese goods*, (not Japanese), and what is the result? The result is that when the American merchant wants Chinese goods he goes to Japan, and of course, you will admit with me that this situation is all wrong. In the year 1914, China shipped to San Francisco \$113,477.00 worth of peanuts and Japan \$194,104.00, making a total of \$307,501.00 worth of peanuts shipped to San Francisco from China and Japan. But when I tell you that \$285,000.00 worth of these peanuts came from China through Japanese firms, it will cause you to elevate your eyebrow and sit down and think. In like manner, about one third to a half of the goods exported from this country to Japan is destined for China. Why should there be a middleman to eat up the profits from both ends? We might as well all stop and inquire.”