

## THE PROBLEM OF THE FAR EAST.

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THE problem of the East is a wide and far-reaching subject, but its focus, it appears to me, is concentrated in the war now being waged between Japan and her mighty northern neighbor. It also seems wise to approach the subject with the Anglo-Japanese relation as the key-note of this discussion. Japan is now in alliance with Great Britain; she may not perhaps be worthy of that alliance, but you may be assured she is doing and will always do her best to deserve it. Some people might think that that alliance was an outcome of mushroom growths, but, on the contrary, it was the climax of long evolution, the fruit of a tree with deep-rooted trunk. For a long time English policy in the Far East, though subject to the tidal waves of diplomacy, has had a trend in that direction, and what Great Britain has done in the Far East has inevitably resulted in benefit to Japan.

It was in the year 1851 that Japan opened herself to America, and in the course of a few years to England, Russia, France, and other Occidental nations. It was that year when England, together with France, fought against Russia near home, in the Black Sea, and, as its consequence, the combined fleets of England and France chased in the Far East the Russian fleet and attacked the fortified port of Petropavlovsk on the coast of Kamskatka. In its course England lost her Commodore by a most tragical ending of life; in its course also she met with a heavy repulse, sustaining a loss of 200 men. At last with reinforcements she captured and demolished the fort, but, taking advantage of fog, the Russian fleet had escaped a month before. The Russian fleet thus escaped met with heavy shipwreck; the survivors sought the helping hand of Japan. We did not know what was passing between England and Russia, neither were we

concerned in the matter; so, out of sheer philanthropy, we received these survivors kindly. We gave them shelter at a secluded place called Hetta, in the Province of Idzu; there they wished to build some new ships in order to return home. We gave them materials, we lent them our shipbuilders, our artisans, and they succeeded in building two schooners, on board of which they sailed away from Japan, if I remember correctly, after the conclusion of peace.

In 1861 the so-called Tsushima affair took place. Tsushima is an island situated in the mouth of the Japan Sea, a most important strategic point for Japan. In the year in question the Russian fleet suddenly came to that island and landed marines, and occupied part of it with the evident intention of seizing the island. This was done without any cause or reason whatever, without any prior notice or diplomatic negotiations, and in spite of the fact that she had entered into friendly intercourse with us by treaty several years previously, and in spite of our giving them a helping hand in their hour of calamity. Remonstrances were of course made by the island authorities, followed by those of the Central Government, but they took no heed. It was then and there that the English fleet made its appearance on the scene and demanded the instant retirement of the Russians; which they obeyed, and the Island of Tsushima was saved to Japan!

In 1868 the new régime of the Imperial Government was inaugurated. For some years previous Japan was divided into two great factions, one for the Imperial Cause, the other for the Shogunate Cause. At that time England was represented in Japan by the energetic and sagacious Sir Harry Parkes; there were also men like Glover, Lowther, and Ernest Satow, now Sir Ernest; they all espoused the Imperial Cause, led by Sir Harry Parkes, in opposition to the strenuous support of the Shogunate Cause by another foreign power. Most of these facts are contained in the unwritten pages of the Secret History of Diplomacy, so that they are not known even in Japan, still less in Europe. But one thing is certain, that England has done much toward the consolidation of our Empire.

In 1874 we had the so-called Formosa affair arising from the Formosa aborigines murdering a number of Japanese subjects, which ultimately led to some complication between Japan and China. That complication was amicably settled at last through the good offices of the then British representative in China.

In 1885 the Iazareff-Hamilton affair took place, which was briefly this: Russia attempted to snatch Port Iazareff from Korea. England, objecting to this Russian action, at once occupied Port

Hamilton as a counter-check, and thus at last succeeded in compelling Russia to abandon her project. This being effected was all England wanted,—she gave up occupation of Port Hamilton soon after. This affair did not directly concern Japan herself, but she derived benefit from it all the same.

In our war with China, 1894-1895, Great Britain kept her neutrality, and on the whole was friendly with Japan. Some say England might have gone a step further at the time of the intervention of the three Powers, but *we* do not complain of that; her keeping aloof was sufficient for us.

During that war the revision of our old treaties with Occidental nations was effected, which placed Japan on an equal footing with other nations, admitting her for the first time to the circle of civilised nations.

Then came the Boxer rising, and the march on Peking by the allied forces to the rescue of their several legations. The history of this is too fresh to reiterate here. It suffices to say that we, the Japanese, spoken of as Pagans, fought side by side with the troops of Western nations, especially keeping up the best relations with British and Americans. It is not necessary to dwell in detail upon what passed in diplomacy in the Far East, or what was done by Russia after the rescue of the various legations. It seems, however, necessary to me to give a brief resumé:

Russia gave repeatedly to other Powers the pledge that she would vacate her occupation of Manchuria which had taken place during the Boxer trouble as a part of the common action of the Allied Powers when they went to the rescue of Peking, and for which she directly afterwards had received from China for the trouble she had taken, a compensation to an amount far exceeding its value.

At the same time in another direction Russia had been trying to exact from China humiliating concessions, which were quite contrary to, and irreconcilable with the pledges given by her to the other nations. From the beginning to the end the chief efforts of diplomacy in the Far East were directed to check the clandestine attempts of Russia, and make her keep her pledge. In this effort England, America, and Japan stood fast together.

Then came the Treaty of Alliance between England and Japan in 1902,—the Manchurian question had not then come to an end, and it was still the pending theme.

I do not doubt but that much of this has been done out of kindness, and with a sense of justice, but was this all? Was there not also something else behind?

Upon looking at the map you will easily see why England had adopted her policy in the direction described. England has great commercial interests in the Far East; no small political ones as well, and it is necessary for her to protect them. These interests which she has to protect are identical with those of Japan. Japan has to do exactly the same thing as England in guarding and protecting her interests and safety. Such being the case, I venture to say that the Treaty of Alliance between England and Japan is the climax of a long evolution, having for its basis the mutual interests of the two countries.

So far this is a matter of plain fact as concerns the political aspect. There are, however, some insinuations to discredit Japan, set forth in some quarters, I fear, with malignant intent. In the first place it is said that Japan's modern civilisation is only outward, and that there is every possibility of a reaction setting in. Nothing can be further from the truth than this assertion. We have strenuously striven to civilise our country by assimilating ourselves with European methods and ideas in everything, and we have, I believe, succeeded to some extent. It has cost us many lives and much money. We have eaten Western apples and found them delicious, and we are not likely to give them up. No, we are even going to make further improvements and so keep pace with those nations with whom we have friendly intercourse. The adopted material side of civilisation which we have we are not likely to give up. We have electric light in Japan, and we shall never return to oil or wax. We have railways; we shall not go back to pedestrianism. Shall we cut the telegraph wire and again employ messengers?

With regard to the mental parts of civilisation, it may not be so easy to convince others, but with us it is exactly the same. The introduction of Western civilisation into Japan is not limited to its material side only. In laws, in science, in art, and in all the other branches of human activity, we have striven to introduce Western ideas, just in the same degree as we have done in material affairs. All this we shall never give up; they have taken deep root in the Japanese mind, and they have already become essential elements in the making of a compact nation.

Sometimes people express amazement at the changes made in Japan in so comparatively a short period as thirty or forty years, as though doubting its genuineness. It is true that Japan has effected a great transformation, but, without in the least entertaining any idea of self-glorification, I may say that Japan has always had some kind of unique national civilisation and conditions of social organisa-

tion which, together with a considerable precursory preparation, have given her a special power of adaptability to the adoption of the new phase of Western enlightenment; and it will be, I venture to say, a fallacy to think that any aborigines or tribes scattered in different parts of the globe could emulate Japan—raise themselves in the same way as she has done at a moment's notice.

Some comments have also been made about difference of race and religion. Well, the difference of race is a matter we cannot transform except perhaps by gradual internixture. The difference, however, seems to me not very important for keeping friendly relations, so long as other assimilation could be thoroughly effected. I may also say the same thing with regard to religion. Our moral precepts and ethical rules are exactly the same as those of the West, though some of their points might be more developed in Japan, while others might be more developed in Western nations. Where any matters of charity or virtue are concerned, the Japanese entertain the same ideals and act in the same way, as do their Western brethren. For instance, the organisation of the Red Cross Society is working very well in Japan; its members consist of about one million, and its annual subscriptions amount to about two million yen. It is under the direct patronage of the Emperor and Empress, and of course all this is done irrespective of any special faith, Japan being a most tolerant country as regards religion. Perfect freedom of conscience is guaranteed by the Constitution, and not the slightest difference is made in the eyes of law on account of church affiliations, and in social intercourse it is the same.

Here I may be permitted to relate an instance: Mr. Kataoka, who died last autumn, was a Protestant, and yet was one of the leaders of the largest political party. He was President of the House of Representatives for several terms, and he died while still holding that office. There was a Christian hymn which he liked more than any other, and on his dying bed he asked his friends and relatives to sing it, and he passed away while it was being sung. Even the Salvation Army is parading our streets under the command of its English officers. Nay! even the Mormons are allowed to preach, though under strict conditions which bind them not to make proselytes for polygamy, which is contrary to our laws. With these facts in view, one might even say that we, as a nation, are almost too tolerant.

People speak of the Japanese being brave in war, and fighting well. Perhaps it is true, but we should be sorry if we were regarded a warlike nation. We aspire to be as energetic and as clever in

other branches of human culture as in war—in fact, our endeavor has always been directed to achievements of peace.

The general tendency in Japan is that the more one is versed in the Western ideas, the more chance one has of becoming a prominent figure in all directions, especially in politics and official occupations even in the army and navy. It amounts to the same thing as saying that the brain, as it were, of Japan, which regulates the wheels of the Empire is and will continue evermore animated with the Western modes of thought and reason. And I may also add that a state such as this will make a nation feel her international responsibilities the more, and she will never allow herself to become a kind of wanton bandit, or act with a sudden outburst as if she were an untrained nomadic tribe.

Some fear that the Japanese soldiers might become restless and unruly after achieving great success over their formidable foe. But of that there is no danger. Our army is founded upon the conscription system; the soldiers are patriotic and fight gallantly when ordered to advance, but they are not bellicose by nature, rather preferring peace, and perfect order, and discipline prevails among them. It was just one day after the rupture of diplomatic relations with Russia that I met with General Count Katsura, the Premier of Japan, when he told me that during the long protracted negotiations with Russia not one of our military or naval officers or men had come to him to disturb him with their opinions on diplomacy or politics. This will perhaps give you some idea of what are the characteristics of our army.

It appears also that some apprehensions have been entertained that some kind of amalgamation might be effected between China and Japan, which might cause danger to the Western Powers. But I am far from believing this. China is a very pleasant country. The Chinese are not a warlike or ambitious nation. China is, and has always been, and will be, a good market for all civilised nations, so long as she is left undisturbed and her integrity is respected. The characteristics of China and Japan are of such marked difference that it is a matter of impossibility to amalgamate these two nations, nor does Japan ever entertain such ambitious ideas. All that Japan wishes is to maintain a peaceful, commercial intercourse with her, in common with other civilised nations, and Japan's policy will always be directed on these lines.

Our English alliance does not antagonise other nations; on the contrary we wish to keep up friendly relations with all, which I presume is also the intention of Great Britain, and hence the Jap-

anese are not jealous of Great Britain making *l'entente cordiale* with any of these nations. In fact, I do not doubt that among these nations too, even in France or Germany, there is many a heart which is beating with its sympathy for Japan at this trying hour of her's. By all that I say, however, it must be understood that in these friendships all round there must be some difference of degree. Amongst these other nations we desire the best friendship with the United States of America. Almost all the sentiments I have expressed relating to England are also applicable to the United States, and besides there is no difference in the Far East in the interest and policy of England, the United States, and Japan. The Americans have shown their sympathy with Japan at this momentous hour in no less degree than Great Britain. I would fain that America would advance a step further and enter upon, with us, a closer relationship. Let then Great Britain and America be closely united, and allow Japan to stand by their side—it will be a sight worth seeing. Were England, America, and Japan to stand thus together in the Far East, that fact alone could not but be a great bulwark for the preservation of permanent peace and the furtherance of civilisation without in any way prejudicing the equitable rights and interest of other civilised nations.

Japan has embarked on a great task. She thoroughly recognises its magnitude and gravity. She is, however, convinced that she is not fighting merely for personal political aims, but that she is defending also the interests of civilisation and humanity. She is fighting for her own sake, of course, but she promotes thereby the cause of England and America—the cause of civilisation and humanity.