

KIAO-CHAU AND BUSHIDO.

BY JOHN T. BRAMHALL.

THE cherry trees were blooming in Kagoshima in the old province of Satsuma in Nippon two years ago, when the old volcano on Sakura-shima in Kago Bay gave warnings of activity. But the busy Nipponese had heard these rumblings and felt these tremors many times before,—why worry?. The cherry blossoms and the wistarias made the earth an Eden, and the warm soil, fertilized by volcanic ash, promised abundant harvests. Nowhere did the rice paddies give a more generous yield than on that southern island of Kiusiu. Summer and winter passed, and then Sakura-shima broke loose, with clouds of smoke and ashes twenty miles in height and torrents of lava that buried fields and villages, changed the geography of the province and resulted in the loss of thousands of human lives.

In the *Kultur* of Nippon there is much of the cherry blossom, the wistaria and the chrysanthemum, and there is something of the treachery and the inhumanity of the Sakura-shima. Among the most cherished traditions of the feudal age of Nippon—the rule of the Samurai—is the doctrine of Bushido. In his introduction to the instructive little book of Inago Nitobe, *The Soul of Japan*, William Elliot Griffis characterizes it as “a weighty message to the Anglo-Saxon nations.” Mr. Nitobe defines *Bushido* as “military-knight-ways,” or “the *noblesse oblige* of the warrior class.” He explains that “the elements of *Bushido* belong mainly to the realm of practical ethics, and comprise such subjects as justice, courage, benevolence, politeness, veracity and sincerity, honor, loyalty, self-control, suicide and redress, the ethics of the sword, the training and position of women.”

“Christianity and materialism,” he goes on to say, “(including utilitarianism),—or will the future reduce them to the still more archaic forms of Hebraism and Hellenism?—will divide the world

between them. Lesser systems of morals will ally themselves to either side for their preservation. On which side will Bushido enlist? Having no set dogma or formula to defend, it can afford to disappear as an entity; like the cherry blossom, it is willing to die at the first gust of the morning breeze. But a total extinction will never be its lot. Bushido as an independent code of ethics may vanish, but its power will not perish from the earth."

Bushido, then, is the unwritten code of ethics of Nippon, expressing the knightly honor of the Samurai,—the soul of Japan. Its interpretation is a weighty message to the Anglo-Saxon nations. In veracity, sincerity, honor and loyalty, it perhaps exceeds the Hebraic and Christian ideals. In all trust and courtesy, we of the West have been inclined to take Dr. Griffis's word for this and ask ourselves if we would not better revise our code by the Light of Asia. What a shock, then, is the unlooked-for conduct of Nippon in February and March of this year, toward her peaceful neighbor, the republic of China! At a time when all the powers of the West are either engaged in a life-and-death struggle or are using every endeavor to preserve their neutrality, when there is no friend to whom China can turn for aid,—Nippon, under the guise of her alliance with Great Britain, expels the German power from China and the Pacific, tears to shreds the scrap of paper on which she promised to restore Kiao Chau to China, and follows up the move with Nipponese celerity by a series of demands upon China so far exceeding those of Austria upon Serbia or those of Germany upon Belgium as to provoke her former allies to protest, according to the press dispatches, with a declaration that unless the demands are very much modified it will be difficult for the powers to negotiate diplomatically with Japan in the future. A striking comment, certainly, on Bushido, this "weighty message to the Anglo-Saxon nations."

For, whatever explanations or assurances Nippon may give, this much is evident: that should China in her extremity grant but the first of the Nipponese demands, her sovereignty is surrendered to the Mikado, as much so as that of the independent empire of Korea which Nippon, by the way, solemnly recognized by treaty. Germany laid violent hands upon a nation of seven million people—promising in the Reichstag to make full restitution after the war—but Nippon seeks to grasp at a single blow an independent and ancient nation of four hundred million people.

So contradictory have been the reports regarding the Nipponese demands that conservative journals have been very reserved in their comments on the situation; but there seems to be no doubt upon

two points, besides the concessions in Manchuria which may be regarded as a *fait accompli*. These points are: first, a transfer of all the German concessions to Nippon; and, second, a diplomatic or advisory control of the Peking government. Mr. William R. Giles, the Peking correspondent of the San Francisco *Chronicle*, writes to his paper that Japan demands that no other country shall be given any part of the coast or islands of China by lease or concession, and that China shall purchase at least half of her arms and ammunition requirements from Japan, with the alternative that arsenals under Chinese-Japanese ownership shall be erected in China. In case of necessity China must call upon Japan alone to preserve her integrity, and if it be found necessary to appoint foreigners to work in arsenals only Japanese shall be appointed. China shall appoint high Japanese officials to military, financial and police services. Japan, it is demanded, shall have joint administration with China of the Yang-tse valley, which has hitherto been regarded as a British "sphere," without, however, any British administrative control. In Eastern Mongolia,¹ which has been regarded in the same manner as under Russian "influence" (without administrative control or any specific governmental rights), Japan demands exclusive mining rights and that no railways shall be constructed without her consent. This would put the projected Kalgan-Urga-Kiakhta railway, along the old caravan route between Peking and Lake Baikal, under Japanese instead of Russian control. Considering that the leading powers, at the instigation of the United States, have already guaranteed the integrity of China,² the stipulation that no other country than Japan shall be given any part of the coast or islands looks very much as if it were designed to be given a more definite and affirmative meaning later on.

The above points form only a portion of those cabled by Mr. Giles early in February. At the end of March he sent this:

"I am able to throw light on these matters affecting the existence of China as a sovereign state, as I myself translated the original text. There can be no possibility of mistake, despite the ingenious protestations of Tokio and all the conflicting official explanations (*ipso facto*, under German influence). The subheads, which are too long to telegraph *in extenso*, are:

¹ Unless the demand be limited (which does not appear) to the small district east of the Khan-gan mountains.

² In 1905 Great Britain and Japan concluded a treaty guaranteeing the integrity of China, and this was followed by a similar one between Russia and Japan in 1907. These were the outcome of the John Hay note of 1899.

"First—China appoints Japanese advisers in every needed direction, and will not enter into agreements without consultation.

"Second—Privileges throughout the country.

"Third—Mixed police forces shall be established, assisted by Japanese whenever needed.

"Fourth—A minimum of 50 per cent of all war munition contracts shall be by Japanese, with joint Japanese and Chinese arsenals.

"Fifth—A network of Japanese railways from King-tse province (Kiang su?) and the Yang-tse valley southward to the Fu-kien and Canton coast.

"Sixth—Fu-kien province shall be declared a special area and no rights shall be conceded to any nation other than Japan.³

"Seventh—The propagation of Japanese Buddhism shall be permitted."

Such are the demands, as reported by a presumably respectable authority, which are made upon the oldest, the most peaceable, and it may not be too much to say the most honorable nation on the globe. Mr. Giles adds: "I can most emphatically state that China will not concede a single one of these articles, save perhaps the seventh, which has already irritated foreign opinion as being a secret thrust at the missionaries." Just why Nippon should demand a privilege that heretofore has been freely granted to all, and why the younger Buddhist church should have the audacity to offer to teach the mother church, it is difficult for the Western mind to comprehend. If this proposition has any meaning at all, it must be that the Buddhist church of Nippon deliberately contemplates claiming a precedence over the ancient Dalai-lama of Lhasa and the Bogdo-lama⁴ of Urga,—an assumption that can scarcely be enforced by any show of physical power. What show the Christian churches would have under such an arrangement they can, perhaps, best figure out for themselves.

Americans, and perhaps Englishmen, unacquainted with the unbushidness of the Japanese, and inclined, like some of our too disingenuous and credulous statesmen, to take diplomatic platitudes at their face value, may possibly accept the statement from Tokio that the propositions submitted to Peking contain nothing of a nature to disturb the territorial integrity of China, and that the sole purpose of the negotiations is to arrive at a decision of the future relationship between the two governments, as well as certain ques-

³In 1898 Japan obtained from the Tsung-li-yamen an "Assurance" respecting the non-alienation of Fu-kien province.

⁴Or Bogdo-Guiguen Khoutouktou.

tions regarding the future of the Chinese republic. Possibly our merchants also will be satisfied with the assurance of a strict fidelity to the policy of the open door—as open, no doubt, as it is now in Manchuria.

But let us inquire into the situation as regards the relations of Nippon toward her continental neighbor on the west. China has immense natural and agricultural resources that Nippon regards with covetous eyes. China is populous, but weak. Nippon is few in numbers, but strong in arms, poor in mineral wealth and in land; her people overtaxed, but valorous in war; arrogant and flushed with her recent victories, and imbued with the spirit of conquest.⁵ Look at the fifth and sixth heads of the Japanese demands, as quoted above. The purport of these is to annex some of the natural and industrial wealth of China, while the other demands insure the burglars—if I may venture to use the expression—against molestation by any meddling outsiders, by putting none but Nipponese on guard and providing them with arms. The fifth proposition places the interior transportation system of China (the Manchurian and the German concessions being already taken care of) in the hands of the clever Nipponese; and this alone binds China hand and foot and places her as entirely at the mercy of her exploiters as though they had taken her cities by assault,—far more so, indeed, as they have left uninjured the commercial and industrial resources for their own loot.

Moreover: “Fu-kien province shall be declared a special area,” etc., or in other words a special and private preserve for the Nipponese hunters. Fu-kien province lies opposite to the Japanese island (formerly Chinese) of Formosa and is one of the richest districts of China.⁶ It is more than four times as large as Belgium, and has almost three times its normal population, or, to bring the comparison nearer home, it is as large as our states of Rhode Island, Connecticut and Ohio combined, with more than three times their population. Compared with Nippon, while its population is only about half as large, its arable area is probably greater than that of all the islands of Nippon. Agriculturally, the importance of Fu-kien province lies in its rice production and the probability of a considerable

⁵ The return of the Okuma ministry to power in March is interpreted as a triumph of the militarist party. Parliament, which meets in April, is expected to take action for a greater army and navy, and a stronger foreign policy is demanded.

⁶ Japan's designs upon Fu-kien are doubtless owing to its strategical importance as being the province opposite to Formosa,—counterbalancing Kiaochau.

increase of the crop under scientific cultivation,⁷ as the Japanese have done with the soya bean in Manchuria. China, next to British India, is the greatest rice-producing country in the world, but she is not an exporter of the grain, requiring annually to feed her people, from 250,000 to 500,000 tons in addition to her large production. Japan is also a large importer, and in some years the heaviest of all countries, her imports in 1904 reaching nearly one million tons. It is easy to see, therefore, why Nippon is looking for a larger rice acreage. If her supply from British India and French Indo-China were cut off, Japan would starve.

An elaborate spy and information system is maintained by Nippon in Fu-kien (and, indeed, all through eastern China), as reported by Gardner Harding, of the London *Telegraph*, and he adds that Japanese merchants are steadily pouring into the province, armed with digests of the information procured by the agents of the intelligence department, which gives them an incalculable advantage over all competitors. The railway (south from Hankow on the Yang-tse), goes steadily forward, and the drift of other affairs shapes itself toward the familiar process of absorption which has reached its maturity in Manchuria and Korea. Mr. Harding has also drawn attention to the immense deposits of coal and iron in Hu-peh province on the northern side of the Yang-tse, which the Japanese have practically absorbed, taking almost the entire production of the Han-yang foundries (58,000 tons out of 68,000 tons exported), and a like proportion of rails, which are turned out at about one-third of the Pittsburg price. And these mines are not only mortgaged to the Nipponese, but preparations have been made for their armed protection.

The meaning of Nippon's demands upon China may be better understood in the light of the grip which the islanders have already got upon the transportation system of that populous and wealthy country, a grip which is made all the stronger by the acquirement of the German lines and concessions. As far back as last November Mr. Harding, whom I have quoted above, pointed out in the *Outlook* that the Germans had built and were operating two railways in China, that from Tsing-tao (Kiao-chau) to Tsi-nan, the capital of Shan-tung, and that from Tien-tsin to the southern border of Shan-tung, where a British section continues it to Nan-king on the

⁷ Fu-kien is not one of the leading rice-producing provinces, the leading production being tea. Formerly it was the leading camphor-producing district, until Japan promoted the industry in Formosa. The exports in 1908 were 1,743,000 pounds.

Yang-tse, which is in turn the terminus of a British road to Shanghai. The first opens Kiao-chau to the western outlets via Manchuria or Mongolia, and the second forms what might be called an intercepting road for all eastern and southern traffic. The value of these lines alone is shown by the growth of the trade of Tsing-tao, from \$3,000,000 in 1900 to \$33,000,000 in 1911. But the concessions of lines now begun or to be built are still more important, and form a network of lines that puts the vast and productive interior of China in direct communication with the coast through the former German port of Tsing-tao. Not only the Yang-tse valley at I-chang, 800 miles from its mouth, is thus tapped, but the great Peking-Hankow trunk line and the transcontinental route which will some day form a rail line along the fortieth parallel, reaching the Caspian through eastern Turkestan, is brought into this great system. "This is the reason," writes Mr. Harding, "for that little railway pointing toward Kai-feng (on the Peking-Hankow line on the Hoang-Ho); this is the reason for the elaborate connections, capitalized at over \$75,000,000, which concentrate at Tsing-tao. Not a mere Port Arthur is at stake, but a gateway to commercial empire."

We need not, perhaps, be surprised if our Uncle Sam has gone to sleep over the whole business. We are very careful to avoid "entanglements," and any one who invests in enterprises abroad is presumably no better than he should be, and, in the opinion of Washington, if he is robbed it serves him right. But what of Russia, Great Britain and France? Even if they are in a death grapple with Germany it would seem that they might be able, by a vigorous presentation of the consequences of the wrath to come, to hold the hand of aggressive and unscrupulous Nippon. Kaiser Wilhelm, when he warned Europe of "the yellow peril," had in mind a coalition between China and Nippon—a racial and social impossibility—but it would now seem that his warning would apply to the "brown peril" alone.

One thing appears to be certain: Great Britain has lost, for the time at least, her prestige in the East, and her "ally" Nippon has taken, or threatens to take, her place. Will she be content to resign her proud position, or will the grim necessities of the situation force her, upon the conclusion of the present destructive war, to take up the quarrel of China and begin anew the struggle where Russia left off?

And what of Bushido? It has perished from the earth.

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What should be the attitude of the United States at this junct-

ture? We should not, certainly, be influenced by any prejudice for or against Japan and her allies in the European war, nor for or against China or Japan on account of any occurrences which have taken place in our relations with either. Our attitude should be influenced solely by the situation in which either nation is placed by the changes which may occur, and our own interests as affected thereby.

China and the Chinese are greatly misunderstood, not only by our own people but by all the Western nations, and even by the traders and merchants of the treaty ports and by many of the diplomatic agents who have had dealings with the old Chinese empire. Few of us ever see a cultivated, educated Chinaman, and should we meet such a one we would regard him as a phenomenon, or an abnormal example of his race. We prefer to judge the people by the coolie class of the Pacific coast and the steamer servants, who are, despite their low rank, their ignorance, and their "oriental vices," in some respects (e. g., sobriety, industry, faithfulness, honesty and commercial reliability) far superior to their white or indeed any competitors. Some of our newspapers, who should know better, are found still referring to China as the "Flowery Kingdom," and to the people as "opium-smoking heathen," despite the fact that the country has been a republic for three years, without a revolution, and that the authorities, cordially supported by public opinion, have waged the first successful warfare against intoxication that has been undertaken by any nation in the world. And yet it is said that the Chinese have no such thing as public opinion, and do not comprehend the idea of patriotism!

Western critics persist in regarding China as a possible aggressive military power, and delight to speculate on the possible consequences of the yellow races "waking up" and joining in throwing their "hordes" upon Europe. One of our magazine writers went so far as to indulge in a nightmare of poisoning the "yellow hordes" by wholesale, as the only possible means of preserving European civilization! The truth is that while China was conquered by the Mongols, who were quietly assimilated, and attacked and defeated by their little brown brothers of Nippon, and suffered grievous injury at the hands of the "barbarians of the Western Ocean," (can we blame them for the term?), she has never made an offensive war. China is not, nor ever was, a military power, although the Mongol invaders kept up an antiquated army. China is the greatest cooperative commonwealth on earth,—where the government is always poor and the people control the wealth, reversing the rule of

the "civilized" countries of the rest of the world. China has no money (except that which has very recently been introduced, as a concession to Western methods and demands), and is the only land where the word of the people is as good as their bond. China is tolerant toward all religions (where the Western "barbarians" do not attempt, as they have generally done, to use the cloak of religion in which to serve the devil), and hospitable toward all traders when they do not attempt to force their trade upon her, which has been the invariable rule of all countries, except the United States.

It is quite proper that we should consider our commerce, in an honorable way, since a people should live by commerce rather than conquest. Peaceful commerce is the handmaid of civilization, and the proof of a consistent religion. It is well to note, therefore, that the commerce of the New China is one of the greatest prizes on the globe. The country, exclusive of Mongolia and Tibet, has a population of about 325,000,000 of the most industrious of earth's children, just beginning to learn the mechanical arts, manufacturing, engineering, mining, railroading, etc. Her public debt, imposed upon her by the Western powers (nearly \$1,000,000,000), is one-fourth less than that of Japan, and only about \$3 per capita as compared with \$10 per capita, in round numbers, for the United States. Her foreign trade is reported at \$625,000,000 (1912), of which the American share is but \$64,000,000, or, including Hong Kong and Japanese and German China, about \$67,000,000. Figuring our possible commerce with China on the same ratio of population as that with Japan, we find it would amount to close to a billion of dollars annually, to say nothing of the enterprises in which our people might be legitimately and profitably engaged, in railroads, public works, mines, manufactures, etc.—the prize for which Japan is now eagerly contending, to the exclusion of all others.

What course, then, should be pursued, to save China's national integrity, and the open door for the commerce of the world? It is true that Europe is now in the throes of bitter and destructive war, but that war cannot last forever. Some day, perhaps soon, Europe will be at peace, and the victors, in all probability, will not be entirely exhausted. And all Europe, as well as America—friends and enemies alike—are deeply interested in the Nippon-Chinese negotiations. Would it not be opportune for the United States of America (a party interested only on the commercial side, and to a far less degree than Europe), to propose to the powers a re-iteration of the Hay note, declaring the integrity of China and endorsing the "open-door" policy, and deferring the Kiao-chau settlement, including

the "demands" of Nippon, to the adjustment of the final treaty which will be negotiated to settle the peace of Europe. Germany, on the one hand, and the allies no less on the other, would welcome, it may well be believed, such a proposition to ensure the *status quo ante bellum* in the Far East. And Nippon would surely hesitate to disregard the united voice of Europe and America, backed as it should be by their united power. She would gain, with all the rest of the world, in China's renaissance, losing no prestige in agreeing to an honorable settlement. As for the United States of America, to bring about such a peaceful adjustment of the affairs of the two great peoples of Asia, insuring the integrity of the oldest and largest of her nations, would redound to the credit of this young nation of the West to a far greater degree than it is possible for us to imagine.