THE CHALLENGE OF ASIA.

BY HERMAN JACOBSOHN.

THIS is the white man's world. He owns it. He inhabits two-fifths of it and lays down the law for nine-tenths of it. His armies master the continents. His navies circle the seas. His flags wave from pole to pole.

He outnumbers every other race. He has doubled his population in the eighteenth century and tripled them in the nineteenth. Two hundred years ago he made up a bare hundred million. Today he makes up more than six hundred million. In 1700 A. D. he totaled ten per cent of the human race. Today he totals thirty-five per cent. If all men—whites, blacks, browns, yellows, reds—were mustered on a single field more than one in every three would be white.

He is the world's master—infallible, invincible, secure—as secure as have been the countless races before him who have once shaken this earth with their ephemeral joys.

But since the Russo-Japanese war, and especially since the beginning of the Great War, Asia has begun to challenge his mastery.

The Russo-Japanese war has sent a tremor of surprise down the spine of Asia, reverberating throughout the "color" world, which till then had stood in awe and fear of the uncanny wisdom and power of the white man: He was not invincible! Liliputian Japan, a mere suckling at the breast of the white man's civilization, had sent reeling the war-inveterated white giant who had bullied all Asia and had sprawled out, dog-in-the-manger fashion, over half the white and yellow men's worlds.

Indeed, even the white man himself was thrilled. He had found his peer. He shook his hand with a profusion of respect; flattered him, made much of him; invited him to table and led him to the seat of honor.

The little yellow man was perplexed: "We have been sending him our works of art, our silks, our joinery, and decorations for generations, but he still regarded us as mere barbarians. We show ourselves at least his equal in scientific butchery, and at once we are admitted to his council tables as civilized men. . . . The imbecility of white wisdom!"

Then came the Great Disillusionment—the World War. That monstrous fratricide exposed all the weaknesses of the white man, showing him up at his worst. Among other things, it brought home to Asia the fact that the white man's most cherished treasure—his Science—was a double-edged weapon in the hands of a spirited youngster at the height of his pugnacity. She had been led to believe that that instrument was for the purpose of creating beautiful and necessary things. Now she saw him cut his own throat with it.

Unlike in America, in Asia the stupendous catastrophe was not minimized by distance. The hundreds of thousands of Asians, whom Europe had imported to assist in her self-annihilation, understood the significance of the struggle better than we did, better than Europe. They were outsiders and had no occasion to be swept off their feet by the emotion of the moment. They understood at once that no matter who came out victorious, the fight would knock to atoms the whole economic, physical, moral, and cultural life of the white man's home-land.

After the carnage, Asia watched Europe's convalescence. And she saw that recovery would not be so soon—if at all.

For, among many other things less possible of exact calculation, the Great War cost the white man three hundred and fifty billion dollars, "a figure too overwhelming to carry conviction." More, all the machinery of production and exchange were in a heap. Her whole financial system was represented by a vast sea of banknotes—some genuine, some spurious, but all worthless. All Europe was living by the beggar's staff. Even the countries which emerged least damaged—the countries which won the most signal victories had to turn themselves into vast charity institutions, doling out free rations on an internation—wide scale.

More frightful yet was the physical collapse. Even before the war, factory production, accompanied by long hours indoors, underfeeding, poor housing, had sapped the strength of her manhood. One-third of the English people, among the sturdiest in Europe, could not qualify physically for military duty. The

Great War killed off nearly ten million and maimed nineteen million more of the most fit. The least fit survived—to reproduce themselves and their unfitness. To these must be added the twelve million children which would have been born under normal circumstancs, as well as the tens of millions that were born of mothers whose constitutions had been too shattered by the roar of cannon to grow up fit—if they grow up at all. Millions more were carried off by typhus, influenza, and other plagues. There are today fifteen million adult women in Europe doomed to a life of celibacy, for there are no husbands for them. As a result of moral and mental distress, physical shock, and world-wide insecurity, millions of married women in Europe have been rendered sterile.

More. Asia sees a bloodless generation growing up in Europe. A writer with the Hoover Mission says: "I visited large country districts where ninety per cent of all the children were ricketty and where children of three years are only beginning to walk . . . tiny faces with large dull eyes overshadowed by huge, puffed, ricketty foreheads; their small bodies just skin and bones. . . ." The investigation commission of doctors appointed by the medical faculties of Holland, Sweden, and Norway, reported: "Tuberculosis, especially in children, is increasing in an appalling way, and, generally speaking, malignant, . . . assuming unprecedented aspects, such as have hitherto only been known in extreme cases. The whole body is attacked simultaneously, and the illness . . . is practically incurable. . . . It appears in the most terrible forms, such as glandular tuberculosis, which turns into purulent dissolution."

In a word, Asia sees that Europe is face with the zero hour, "the first cold flicker of the dawn for the signal to go 'over the top.' The people behind the trenches are now going 'over the top.' . . . An extraordinary tremor has run through the spinal marrow of Europe. . . . She recognizes herself no longer. . . . The rolling of the ship was so heavy that the best burning lamps have been upset." (Paul Valery).

On the other hand, the least informed knows that rejuvenescent Asia, with her teeming millions and vast spaces, containing more than half the human race, is today a mighty giant ready for a race after a long rest. From the white man's war, she has suffered not at all. Japan is dazzling the world with her powers of assimilation and initiative. Her industrial, literary, philosophic,

commercial, scientific, and agricultural achievements have become the marvels of our day. China is not far in the rear of Japan. And India is just now holding the earth breathless. It is thus safe to say that if Asia continues at her present rate of progress she will be in a generation or two where Europe was in 1914. Then, if not superior, surely the equal of Europe, she will demand a Day of Reckoning.

The feeling of Asia on this point is best expressed by a Central Asian of great vision and powerful intellect: "Hatred universal reigns from the Siberian tundras to the burned south of India. We hate the European because we consider him an intolerable barbarian, who bullies where his wheedling is unsuccessful. We hate him because . . . he is tortuous and cannot speak the truth; because he prates about his new-found hygiene, but is personally unclean compared to the majority of Asians. We despise him as a hypocrite who ships whisky, rifles, disease, and missionaries in the same mixed cargoes. We despise him because he is a recent parvenu. We are convinced that in spite of his present leadership in mundane affairs, he is our inferior physically, morally, and mentally."

With this Day of Reckoning in view Japan has turned herself into a veritable Prussia; and is rapidly adjusting her present strained relations with China. Pacific China has begun to study the manuals of arms which in the ages past her military leaders have composed, and which the greatest European soldiers—Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Hindenburg, etc.—have used with success. India has entered upon a career of passive resistance which threatens to become more potent than the pagodas of arms of the whole Western world. In Central Asia and in Mongolia, whether at the camp fire at the end of the caravan's day's journey or at the feet of the itinerant story teller in front of the mosques in Bukhara—the tale is heard again how mighty Attila had shaken the white world like a reed; how Genghis Khan and Tamurlane had lorded over two continents and had kept the white man in humble subjection. All Asia—in fact, the whole "color" world—is being welded together by the most potent of all life forces—Self-preservation.

At any rate, a Race War is no less possible in the near future than the Great War was quarter of a century ago. Many, many wise men showed then that a big war in Europe was impossible—religious and moral ties; mutual sympathy, understand-

ing, blood-relationship; socialism, unionism, internationalism; finance and exchange; immigration and emigration; music, art, letters—would make war in Europe impossible, we were assured by the optimist. Then all these theories went up in smoke.

Yet the causes for a Race War are today far more numerous —with practically none of the preventive factors—than were the causes for the Great War twenty-five years ago.

Of course, the members of the "Rocking-Chair Fleet" will shout: "Let her come! Let John Chinaman and his crew put up their dukes! We will show them who is who!"

Mr. Swashbuckler is always certain who is to come out victorious. When the Russo-Japanese war broke out General Kuropatkin shouted: "Me yikh shapkami zakinnim!" (We will shoo them off with our caps.) But the man who investigates, thinks, and weighs, is not so sure. Professor A. E. Ross, one of the foremost social students in America, says:

"To the West the toughness of the Chinese physique may have a sinister military significance. Nobody fears lest in a stand-up fight Chinese troops could whip an equal number of well-conditioned white troops. But few battles are fought by men fresh from tent and mess. In the course of a prolonged campaign involving irregular provisioning, bad drinking water, . . . loss of sleep, exhausting marches, . . . excitements and anxiety, it may be that the white soldiers would be worn down worse than the yellow soldiers. In that case the hardier man with less of the martial spirit might in the closing grapple beat the better fighter with the less endurance."

It is worth recalling that this is just what happened during the Russo-Japanese war.

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Above all else, while considering the Asian problem we must not allow our minds to become befuddled by the base propaganda which would lead us to believe that the Asian is a barbarian, inferior to ourselves morally, spiritually, and mentally. Let us keep before us the fact that it was Asia which has given the world all the basic discoveries, without which the greatest part of our civilization were absolutely impossible. Among many other things, China has given us the water-wheel, the cart-wheel (without which practically none of our machines, from the simple pulley to the locomotive, would be possible), the science of irrigation, bridge-building, finger prints, bronze-casting, porcelain-making, printing,

paper-making, gunpowder, the compass, silk-culture, etc. In political life, the Chinese are in some respects our superiors even today. They know nothing of racial prejudice, religious intolerance, nationalistic fire-eating. They have outgrown them thousands of years ago. When all Europe was torn to pieces by religious bigotry, inquisition chambers, witch-burning; when the sole object of government in the white man's world was the gratification of the vicious caprice of the governors—China held in her dominion all sorts of races, religions, and creeds, exercising herself almost always prudently and equitably. Her officials got into office by means of competitive examinations, which we are copying in the best ordered departments of our own government. And popular opinion among us to the contrary notwithstanding, her literati officials have not yet been matched in honesty and integrity.

If we are ever to solve the Asian problem, let us not forget during moments of self-exaltation that it was India which gave us the decimal system, our algebra and most of our geometry, without which no mathematical science—the bedrock of our material civilization—were possible. With all our achievements in architecture, what have we to match the Taj Mahal, perhaps the most noble monument to human building ingenuity of all time. It was India that taught us our knowledge of anatomy and much of our physiology. India has fathomed the mysteries of the circulation of the blood a thousand years before Harvey saw the light of day. In the realm of abstract thought, remarks Professor Rawlinson, "There is scarcely a problem in the science of ontology, psychology, metaphysics, logic, or grammar which the Indian sages have not sounded as deeply and discussed as elaborately as the Greeks." The reader who would dwell on the poetic fervor and intellectual magnitude of the Persian need but think of the Tent Maker, Omar, whose verses—Rubaiyat—shall endure as long as human tongue utters speech.

Last, let us not forget that it was Asia which gave the world her greatest religions. Confucianism, Buddhism, Zoroasterism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, Christianity—they all hail from Asia.

Under these circumstances, is the Asian to be reproached if he remarks: "We look with a smile at the paralyzing feeling of superiority of the European. . . . We know how very recent is the present European hegemony, how shallow, how tinselly, how altogether parvenu. . . . We smile when we are called 'barbarians.'"

Let us be frank, the best of us, are full of the prejudices of barbarians when dealing with Asia. From childhood on, we are taught the dark side of Asia. We grow to manhood with no other knowledge or understanding of her than that her inhabitants are barbarians, heathens, idol-worshipers, and what-not, most of whom, like so many sheep, owe us their wool. All we know about them is that they are ignorant—though there is not a Chinaman, assures us Mr. Hyndman, who does not know how to read and cast accounts—superstitious, filthy, lazy, vicious, criminal—yellow devils who spend their worthless lives smoking opium and cheating white men—the best of them fit only to bake our beans and make our beds.

On the other hand, the white man forgets that he really is an upstart. The average European, even the cultured one, often thinks of his greatness—his science, his art, his hygiene; his whole culture—as reaching back to the day of creation.

In reality nothing is further from the truth. Before the Reformation the life of the average European was but a step above the life of the barbarian. Shakesperian England, to mention one illustration, consisted of clusters of filthy hamlets dignified by the name of towns, where plagues, due to an unmentionable lack of sanitation, periodically carried off half the population. The pedestrian paddled through the streets knee deep in mud. The crowd was often entertained by gallants pommelling each other over the heads to hasten a decision as to who had the right of way afforded by a couple of brickbats in the middle of a mud-puddle at the street-crossings. Even in London, the world's metropolis of our day, the visitor of a hundred and fifty years ago was warned to "hug the wall," meaning that if he ventured within throwing distance from a window, he ran the risk of having a slop jar emptied on his new silk hat. Our standards of comfort, of wealth, hygiene, were undreamed of by the European of two hundred years ago. His chief asset usually consisted of a huge pile of manure decorating the front entrance of his house. He lived with his pig and his horse under the same roof—as he still does in many parts of Europe. His political life consisted of his own total exclusion from any participation in the affairs which governed his world. The vast majority of his governors were men who bought their way to office with money, blackmail, or both—and were not ashamed of it. (Think of Francis Bacon.) The slightest concession of freedom was wrung from his governors

only at the threat of immediate hanging. One needs not stretch his imagination too much to catch a peep of the Europe of two or three centuries ago as a vast penal colony where the inmates lived solely for the glory of the king and the priest.

Our apologists have succeeded in making us believe that our ill-treatment of Asia is due to her senseless determination to remain in isolation. From the child in the grades to the writer of our encyclopaedias, we have all been painstakingly rehearsed in the myth of Asia's stubborn opposition to our Promethean efforts to bring her Light, and her refusal to accept it—her determination to stay in Darkness. If this were true we would have reason to rejoice. The fate of Prometheus is no longer visited upon the bearers of Light. Prometheus illuminates the earth with his torch and the children of darkness are chained to a rock, a vulture devouring their entrails. Christ is in His Kingdom and Satan is on the Cross. Truly, the Messiah is at hand!

But is this really the case? Well, let the reader think the matter over.

So far as this point concerns Asia, Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Chinese scholar of great erudition, challenges: "Can the combined intellect of Europe and America point to a single period of Chinese history in which the country was closed to foreigners? Is there a 'Cycle of Cathay' during which the Chinese refused to receive new arts and sciences from outsiders?" Then he proves that China had intercourse with Byzantium, Rome, Western Europe, Africa,—with the whole known world. He further shows that China never knew what it meant not to tolerate strangers. From time immemorial there lived in China Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, etc., etc. And none ever met with a lack of toleration. Indeed, the very word toleration, which, in the West of even our own day, presupposes the privilege not to tolerate if those in power so choose—has no existence in China.

The reason Asia refused to deal with the modern European is to be found in the fact that from the moment he landed he proved an arrogant trouble-maker, in spite of the fact that he was most hospitably received. He sent armed bands into the interior and hunted and victimized the inhabitants, selling the women into a life of shame and the men into slavery. He set afoot a multitude of intrigues and waged wars to gain concessions to sell poison to the people, (the Opium War) and put up signs on the parks he chose to frequent: "No dogs and Chinamen admitted." In fact,

even the best of his immigrants proved not altogether desirable. Asks Mr. Hyndman: "What would be the fate of a body of Chinese propagandists who occupied themselves in London in publicly denouncing the faith of common Englishmen, and wax insistent upon pointing out what seemed to them the absurdities of the Trinity."

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Confronted with the possibilities of such a monstrous catastrophe as a Race War is sure to precipitate, even if we came out victorious, the white man must turn about in search of something that promises to halt it. For at best, such a war would thrust us back to the plane of the cave men.

The first thing to do is to begin combatting the hate literature among us. Hate literature may help win wars but it does not help win peace.

The next thing is to take some of the billion and a quarter which we are now annually appropriating for armament, get a few great philanthropists to contribute liberally, and set afoot a campaign of education along the following lines:

Put a chair on Asian affairs in every university and a brief course in every high school—the courses being prepared by a joint commission of whites and Asians; launch a number of publications of a popular nature dealing with the life of Asia, past and present; put out a few million feet of film picturing their life honestly and truthfully and sympathetically; organize a few groups of liberal and broad-minded men of both sides to co-operate in curbing the greedy aggressions of their respective trouble-makers—and a new understanding and a new sympathy will arise between the "color" world and the white world in the course of a single generation.

Those who think this too optimistic and too easy, need but think of the fact that it was really "Education" that "won" the Great War. There is no reason why we should not be able to put forth as much effort in time of peace as we have put forth in time of war, if need be, to prevent war—war more certain and far more catastrophic than all previous wars combined.

There are a few who insist that a clash is imminent, no matter what is done to prevent it. They assure us that the Asian problem can be solved by no amount of sympathy, understanding, and education. They point out that the whole problem is based on the difficulty of finding room for the eighteen million new

mouths which yearly come to the world's dinner table. Those left without seats have no choice but start a fight during which they hope to grab a seat. "The enemy of the dove of peace is not the eagle of prey nor the vulture of greed; but the stork."

These people must be shown that the problem of finding room at the world's dinner table is far from serious. In fact, it is no problem at all for the present. Statisticians have shown that even if both production and the present rate of increase in population remain the same, there is room enough and food enough for the next two hundred years. The United States alone could easily support, under existing conditions, more than two hundred million people. Siberia could support twice as many; while she at present contains only about twenty million. The unoccupied tracts of Central and South America, Canada, Australia, etc., are equally spacious. In fact, the problem of finding room at the world's dinner table may be dismissed even if everything remained the same.

Whereas in reality the present rate of production is bound to increase and the rate of increase in population is bound to diminish. In the past fifty years Swift's dream of two blades growing where one used to grow has been surpassed twenty fold. Again, half a century ago not one man in a hundred knew anything about the secret of directing the flight of the stork. Today from five to ten per cent know all about it; and their percentage is constantly on the increase with the increase of intelligence.

For the past few decades we have been living by the jingo dictum pronounced by Kipling:

> East is East and West is West,
> And never the twain shall meet.

If we are to save ourselves from the consequences of this barbarian dictum we must adapt the more noble one pronounced by Goethe:

> Who himself and others knows
> . . . is rightly guided;
> Orient and Occident
> Are no more divided.
> Proper it is through both to roam
> And in either feel at home.