

The Sun

WILLIAM M. LAFFAN. FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1904.

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Is War at Hand?

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Assuming that this is so, it is interesting to inquire what course the contest is likely to take in its earlier stages.

It would be of obvious advantage to Russia to test as quickly as possible the naval strength of Japan, for if the fleet of the last named Power could be driven from the sea it would prove almost impracticable to land a considerable body of Japanese troops in Korea.

The Russian naval force, now marshaled outside of Port Arthur in readiness for an aggressive movement—a movement which, according to some reports, has begun—is said to consist of eight battleships, ranging in displacement from 10,960 to 13,600 tons; of seven cruisers and a number of torpedo boats.

Even if it be true that this fleet started eastward on Wednesday or Thursday, it is unlikely that the Japanese warships would permit it to effect a junction with the Vladivostok squadron.

It is more probable that the Port Arthur fleet, unsupported by any reinforcements from the North, will have to face in Korean waters almost all of the Japanese warships.

An impression prevails among naval experts that unless some phenomenal torpedo boat should be done by the Russian torpedo boats the result of the encounter would be a victory for Japan.

The Russian naval commanders, doubtless, do not underestimate the risk they run by challenging at the outset a trial of the relative sea power of the combatants, and if they face the risk it is because should they prove successful the war would be practically over.

Let us suppose that the Russian fleet is beaten and that the surviving vessels are compelled to seek refuge at Port Arthur. In that event the Vladivostok squadron would also be unable to keep the sea and would have to remain under the guns of the northern naval fortress.

Japan could then proceed as leisurely to land an army in Korea, which she would naturally desire to use as a basis for an advance into Manchuria.

The Russians, stationed on the north bank of the Yalu, would probably attempt to prevent the passage of that river by their opponents, but this, owing to Japan's maritime preponderance, they would scarcely be able to effect.

Japan's warships would render it comparatively easy for her soldiers to cross the Yalu near its mouth. Once north of that river, the objective of the Japanese army would almost certainly be Harbin, which, as a glance at the map will show, stands at the junction of the railways running to Vladivostok and Port Arthur.

If that place could be occupied in force, the transportation of supplies and reinforcements from Siberia could be stopped, and the two Russian naval fortresses just mentioned would be isolated. They could then be besieged by land and sea.

When we say that Harbin would doubtless be Japan's ultimate objective, we of course recognize that a Japanese army would first essay to strike the Port Arthur branch of the Siberian railway at some intermediate point like Mukden.

Before Harbin, or, for that matter, Mukden, could be reached, more than one hotly contested fight would probably take place, and even if Japan should be continuously successful, her losses would be heavy, and a large proportion of her military force would be needed to keep open the long line of communication with its base in the Korean peninsula.

An advance beyond Harbin would be impracticable, and the question arises, How long could Japan afford to maintain an army at so distant an outpost? Would not a retreat soon be rendered inevitable by the exhaustion of her resources?

This we see that even should the first campaign be marked by an uninterrupted series of victories for Japan the troubles of the Island Empire would probably have begun. The spirit of the Russian people would never permit the Czar to sue for peace to a weaker Power, especially since a Japanese invasion of Siberia must be regarded as impracticable. It is conceivable that Japan might continue to hold Korea and Manchuria for an indefinite period, but at what a tremendous cost!

Shoes for the Million.

In point of volume of business, the year 1903 is reported as the largest on record in the boot and shoe trade.

The man of to-day is perhaps less durably shod than was the man of the preceding generation, but his footgear is certainly more stylish in its shape and probably more comfortable in its fit.

The custom made shoe still has a place in the market, but the ready made article is the shoe of the million.

The increase in the shoe trade is readily accounted for. A generation has doubled the number of American shoe wearers; has seen the establishment of an export trade which now reaches a value of about \$6,000,000 per year; has marked a very considerable increase in general purchasing power; and has reduced prices to a point where two pairs can now be bought for the money formerly paid for one pair.

Rapid fire chemical processes

now convert hides into leather in days, while the old style tanning was involved a process of months. The results of the new method are doubtless inferior, but few object to that except the fathers of large families of energetic shoe-destroying youngsters.

Whirlwind machinery has supplanted the oldtime bench shoemaker, and finishes as many shoes in a minute as the bench man could make in a year.

Sharp competition among manufacturers who are also retailers, with their stores in all of the leading cities, has reduced profits to a perhaps dangerous minimum; but so long as wearers can buy good shoes at low prices they are not keenly solicitous regarding the profits of the manufacturers.

The demand for free hides recurs persistently, and it is probable that the present home demand, taken in connection with the fact of a very rapidly increasing export trade, would make the removal of the duty on hides a highly desirable measure, productive of no serious injury to the domestic supply of hides.

We now import nearly \$60,000,000 worth of hides per year. Of this, however, \$25,000,000 is represented by goat-skin, with which we have practically no home competition, and which is admitted free; \$15,000,000 worth of other hides are also admitted free, leaving only some \$17,000,000 worth of cattle hides on which duty is paid.

All of this does not go into the shoe business, and even the whole of it would be only about 10 per cent. of the value of the raw material annually used in this country in the manufacture of nearly \$300,000,000 worth of boots and shoes.

Our boot and shoe industry now represents an invested capital, in manufacturing alone, of a little more than \$100,000,000, and pays about \$60,000,000 a year in wages to nearly 140,000 American wage earners.

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A masterpiece of eloquence it was and a miracle of friendly self-abnegation. To his unequalled mastery of the methods of the juriconsult, Mr. ROOT added the enthusiasm of a sincere personal admiration and devotion. The effect could hardly have failed to be notable, and notable it was.

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"Parsifal" at our opera house; but it is feeling very similar to that aroused by the religious ceremonies of a church, in which the theatrical is a large and desirable element. No church congregations are more under the sway of religious emotion in its aesthetic form than are the audiences which listen to the music of "Parsifal" and watch the solemn and gorgeous movement of the drama on the stage.

Applause comes in, at decent intervals, as a relief for intensity of feeling and not as a provocation to excitement; but otherwise the audience is as self-restrained as a church congregation. And the same may be said of the theatre audiences generally. Nor in their composition do they differ notably from the congregations in churches. They are made up of people of the same general type. In times of great religious excitement, moreover, in a period of religious revival, the intensity of feeling aroused, would make the removal of the duty on hides a highly desirable measure, productive of no serious injury to the domestic supply of hides.

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or that our harness shall be black or yellow." Why not? If Congress regulates the tails of horses, why shouldn't it regulate the tails of their owners' coats or the color scheme of their cravats? Mr. PERKINS tried to shift the centre of attack by asking why the focus of cruelty didn't legislate against the use of the check rein, a device that causes the horses "ten thousand times as much torment" as the slitting of their tails.

"Let us be sensible," he said. Mr. PERKINS asks too much. He is not a practical man. He is not much more or better than one of "them damned literary fellows." Gen. GROSVENOR brought the discussion to the high moral plane on which he always stands.

"I was nashed with very high notions about the perfection and complete perfection of the works of the Almighty on an early occasion when He planned out, among other things, the dumb animals of the world. I am now driven to believe, if I may take the opinion of the gentleman from New York, if God Almighty had only had some wise advice before He would have made a horse with a tail sticking right up."

With these views as to the perfection of nature, it is a little strange that Gen. GROSVENOR can bring himself to wear clothes. But he is "in favor of an acknowledgment of the universal and supreme wisdom of the Almighty," and Mr. PERKINS was very dippant in saying to him, after that "recognition" of universal and supreme wisdom, "Well, you do not follow it in many respects."

The House "repudiated" Mr. PERKINS and the man-made horse by 85 to 8, an emphatic endorsement of Gen. GROSVENOR and dumb animals as they are made.

Several bills before Congress prohibit the use of the national flag for advertising purposes, under the pain of penalties provided for, and one of them has been reported favorably in the Senate, with, it seems, a fair prospect of passing. Within a few years eighteen States have enacted laws for the same purpose, and six others are expected soon to imitate their action.

The bills in Congress, as advocated by the American Flag Association, forbid attaching advertisements or pictures to the flag, printing on its stripes, or defacing it in any way. Except in the case of laws in flags slightly different from the legal requirements are made illegal.

In Europe national flags are protected by law from such desecration. In England "outrages to the national colors" are dealt with under the laws treating sedition and treason. A few years ago an advertiser was prohibited from throwing flashlight advertisements on the Nelson column in Trafalgar Square.

THE GRAND VIZIER OF PERSIA.

Mr. Mohammed Barakatullah Tells About a Recent Visitor to This Town.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: When a stranger in a strange costume makes his appearance in the streets of New York, the eyes of the crowd are turned to him, and boys and girls gesticulating and uttering all sorts of names—a strange scene, indeed, to behold. Similarly, whenever a distinguished person in his grand attire of state or war is reported favorably in the Senate, with, it seems, a fair prospect of passing. Within a few years eighteen States have enacted laws for the same purpose, and six others are expected soon to imitate their action.

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