

IS THERE ANYTHING IN YELLOW PERIL?

Uncle Sam Has Naught to Fear if He Is Vigilant.

HONGKONG.—Students of Oriental politics are busy forecasting the results of the Russo-Japanese war. The "Yellow Peril" advocates believe that the success of Japanese arms is certain to cause an alignment of the Asiatic races for the purpose of resisting the white man's influence. Japan is claimed to have designs upon the whole east. While I was in Manila an American army officer told me that the Japanese had spies all over the Philippines, and that the authorities in Tokio knew more about the islands than the officials in Washington. The same system of espionage is reported from the French possessions in Indo-China, and even as far south as Australia.

The agents of the Mikado are masquerading as fishermen, cooks, clerks and travelers—all quietly gathering data for maps and reference. During the Chinese war, and later in Manchuria, the Japanese knew every foot of ground they had to traverse, and it is undoubtedly true that the archives in Tokio are being filled with information about the entire Orient. Much of this intelligence may be intended for commercial purposes, but even if Japan really intends to put it to further account, let us see how far she may be expected to go in her ambition for expansion.

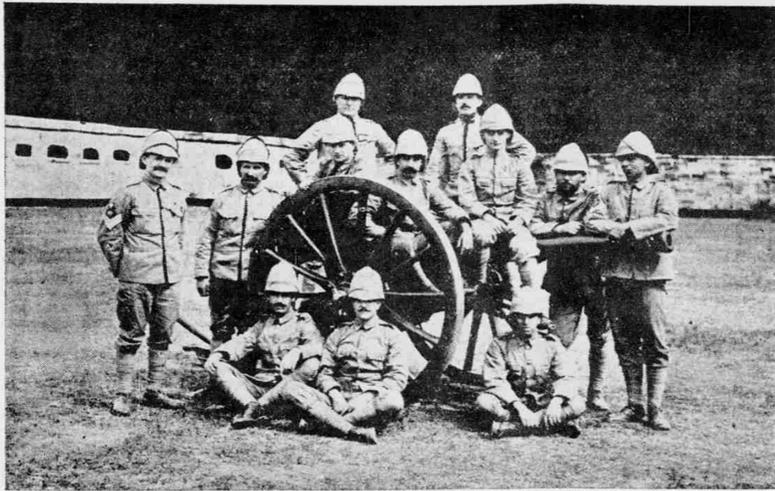
OUR OPINION IS BIASED.

While I think I can show conclusively that the "Yellow Peril" supporters are sounding a false alarm, and that Japan's ambition is not likely to interfere with American interests for many years, it is nevertheless well to examine every phase of such an important subject. There is no denying the fact that the wave of admiration for Japanese valor which has swept over America has in a measure blinded our people to any faults the little warriors might possess. While they have undoubtedly given the world a wonderful example of military genius, it does not follow that their future course will be faultless. Two influences which have caused Americans to be un-mindful of any remissness in Japanese character are, first, a strict repression of every unfavorable feature of news by the Japanese themselves, and secondly, the coloring of all accounts by friendly correspondents.

American sympathies were freely given to the Japanese because our interests were directly in line with their cause, namely, the maintenance of the open door policy in the territory under dispute. Japan plainly asserted that she was not fighting for the acquisition of territory, and guaranteed the independence of Korea, yet she is already accused of not being as honest in this declaration as we were led to believe. During the first stage of their occupation the Japanese are charged with not recognizing the personal and property rights of the individual Korean. The press agencies favorable to the Japanese cause have reported that the latter are "paying liberally for everything," but from other sources it is claimed that the Japanese are appropriating people's houses and fields, ostensibly for military purposes, and only paying a fraction of the current market price. Their scale of wages for coolie labor is said to be less than that which prevailed in the peninsula during the old regime. These complaints are so numerous and come from such reliable sources that they cannot pass unnoticed.

WILL JAPAN BE FAIR?

The prevailing impression in America is that Japan was robbed of her rights in Manchuria and Korea at the close of the Chinese war, but in reality it was only Korea or Manchuria that were checkmated. Japan has no more legal right to Korea or Manchuria than Russia—Manchuria belongs to China and Korea to the Koreans. A fair protectorate over both these countries



BRITISH TROOPS IN HONGKONG.

would benefit them, but unless the rights of the inhabitants are to be respected there is nothing gained—the outcome of the war will merely mean a transfer of privilege from Russia to Japan. This is the truth of the matter stripped of all sentiment for the brave little fighters whose popularity has reached such a height in America. It is to be hoped that Japan will not forfeit the respect she has gained by violating her pledge to preserve the integrity of Korea.

Although Japan disclaims any intention of territorial expansion, let us consider just how far she may go if her word is not to be depended upon. There are several reasons why she cannot run rampant even if she were so disposed. Now that the terms of peace have been negotiated, we find that Japan is not as free from Russian influence as was supposed. The relinquishing of all interned ships to Russia gives that country quite a respectable fleet in Asiatic waters, which she may be expected to strengthen at once since she is allowed that privilege by the terms of the agreement. While Russia agrees to abandon Manchuria, her word to that effect will not be binding any longer than Japan maintains the force necessary to make her keep it. Therefore Japan is not free to undertake much in the way of new enterprises on account of having to husband her resources as a safeguard against the encroachments of her old enemy.

THE JAPANESE MILLSTONE.

The one thing which is certain to handicap Japan for many years, and to reduce the prospect of her causing trouble, is the heavy financial obligations of the empire. As I have stated before in these letters, she is head over heels in debt and is top-heavy in a military way. It will take many years to develop the commerce of the island to a state equal to its fine military organization. The government will have to patiently work its way out of debt or be swamped. The entire assets of the nation are pledged for the various war loans, and the wealth producing powers of the population are exceedingly small. Debt is bound to be a serious thing in any country where the scale of wages is only a few cents a day.

One of the great problems of Japan's future is the delicate and difficult task of placating Korea. It will require all her skill to win the confidence of these people. This is true because the Korean has an ingrained dislike for the Japanese. For a thousand years the inhabitants of the peninsula have despised the islanders. The two people have absolutely nothing in common. The Koreans are slovenly and unorthodox, while the Japanese are orderly and precise. The Korean has rude manners and the Japanese is punctilious. The Korean is dirty and the Japanese is clean. The Korean

abominates ceremony and the Japanese revels in it.

THE SWORD AND THE PEN.

Another great barrier is the difference in dress. The ordinary Japanese thinks nothing of going about with no more clothing than a loin cloth, while even the common Korean considers that only a barbarian will expose his person. The Japanese has a natural tendency for the pursuits of war, while the Korean is scholarly and loves to harangue his fellows in the language of the ancients. One is a land of the sword and the other of the pen. The Korean's prejudice against the Japanese is so great that he can see no good in him at all. A Japanese general who has won a hun-

dred fights against the Russian can have no standing with the Korean if he has an ugly sounding name that is offensive to poetic sense. In short, the feud between Korea and Japan has lasted for centuries and its elimination will prove the quality of Japanese diplomacy.

THE LEAVEN IS WORKING.

While the European powers have vied with each other in land-grabbing, the American government has been the pioneer in introducing education. It encouraged Japan to embrace western civilization, and is now breaking virgin soil in the Philippines. The leaven seems to be working. The desire for improvement is spreading. There has recently been organized in Shanghai a society called the World's Chinese Students Federation, which is a non-political and non-religious association, purely educational and social in its character, having for its chief purpose the following objects:

(1) To help the advancement of the Chinese Empire by establishing a translation department for the dissemination of western knowledge.

(2) A press for the publication of modern books, newspapers and periodicals.

(3) An educational mission for the propagation of modern education through all parts of China and the introduction of one common language among the masses.

(4) To promote social unity and sympathy among Chinese students residing in all parts of the world, and to assist intelligent and deserving students to prosecute their studies abroad for a period of no less than four years.

Commenting upon the organization of this society, the principal foreign journal of the Orient says: "What opinion throughout the European continent is obviously afraid of is lest the example of Japan may not induce China during the twentieth century to get some satisfaction for what she has suffered at European hands during the nineteenth." While Europe may well be apprehensive, the United States has nothing to fear on this account. The more intelligent the Asiatics become, the more they will appreciate what the United States has done for them.

"YELLOW PERIL" A HOAX.

This enumeration of influences which are likely to shape eastern affairs makes it evident that there is little cause for Americans to become frightened at the noise about the "Yellow Peril." It is nine-tenths a hoax. Of course the Japanese are the main performers in the far eastern drama, and while they may not live up to the high standard that is expected of them they will hardly dare to offend one or both of the great English speaking nations whose friendship has made it possible for them to make their fight un molested. It will not be surprising if the Japanese have their heads turned a little by their unbroken chain of successes. They have conquered one of the proudest and hitherto invulnerable nations, and have been lauded and praised by the whole world. They may be inclined to swagger some, but their statesmen understand that the supreme test of their national mettle is yet to come.

In the meantime nothing but negligence and indifference can prevent the United States from receiving the lion's share of the benefits which will result from the development of the East. Both our geographical position and our national policy make us the natural heirs to the bulk of this great trade. Our portion of it would be much greater at this time but for the fact that we are defaulting from our opportunities. We ought to have the ablest of our consular and diplomatic representatives stationed in this part of the world to vigilantly guard our interests and promote our welfare. Our business people need a stronger and more active organization. We have but to make the effort to become masters of the situation.

FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

A case has been reported in Germany which suggests the curative value of fear. The subject, an old woman, had been bedridden on account of paralysis for ten years. Last August a tempest burst in the region where she lived. Her house and the vineyards were destroyed. A gale shook the houses. Premature darkness settling down caused general terror. The old paralytic, influenced by fear, leaped from her bed. There has been no relapse, and she may be set down, perhaps, as the only case of cure by tempest.

"Did you feel at all embarrassed when the count asked you for your daughter?" "Oh, no, not at all. He had an interpreter with him, so it wasn't necessary for me to try to answer him in French."—Chicago Record-Herald.



KOREAN OFFICIAL.

And China has no more love for Japan than Korea. While the sympathy of the dragon empire was largely with the Japanese in the conflict with Russia, it was because the success of Japanese arms was in the nature of a guarantee to China against further land concessions to foreign powers. But this sympathy will hardly go far enough to result in an alliance and a rally to the policy of "Asia for the Asiatics." China fears Japan. She would rather be partitioned by the European powers that become a vassal of her brown rival. The Chinese have almost as distinct racial antipathy to the Japanese as the Koreans.

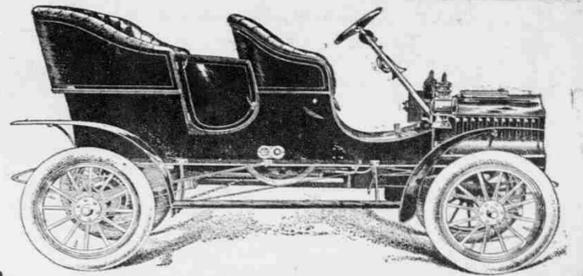
CHINA JEALOUS OF JAPAN.

Commercial jealousy and religious difference are other factors which add to the opposition. China gave to Japan its first civilization, and she will be loath to take lessons from her young rival, which is itself hardly more than a student in western ideals. Thus it will be seen that the dissimilarities existing between the inhabitants of China, Korea and Japan, as well as the other Oriental countries, are equally as pronounced as those between the various states of Europe, and the prospect of a coalition between them to make common cause against the west, is not more likely to be realized than the oft rumored bugbear of Europe uniting against the United States.

No nation has a greater interest, both political and financial, in the outcome of affairs in the Orient than the United States. This is true because our foreign trade is practically in its infancy, and opposite our Pacific seaboard there is located one-third of the population of the world, yet if there should be anything in the "Yellow Peril" our country would have less cause to fear it than any other white nation. Our security is due to the fact that we have steadfastly refused to join with other powers in wresting parts and territories in the Orient from their rightful owners. Our statesmen have always used their influence to protect rather than to despoil the East.



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