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Title: The Englishman in China During the Victorian Era, Vol. 2 (of 2)

Author: Alexander Michie

Release date: December 31, 2013 [EBook #44548]

Language: English

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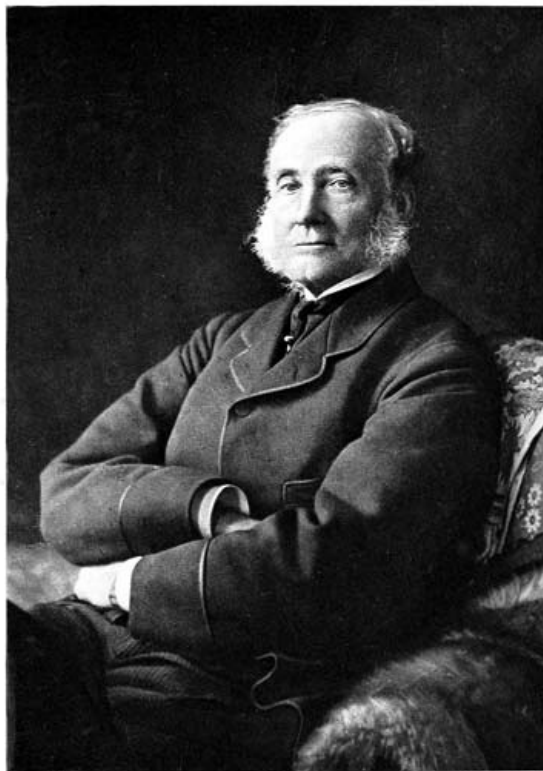
Index inconsistencies with the text have been regularized with the text.

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THE ENGLISHMAN IN CHINA

CHAP. XXIII.: *Tsze-kung asked, saying, "Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" The Master said, "Is not RECIPROcity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."*



*Very truly yours
Rutherford Alcock*

**Very truly yours
Rutherford Alcock**
J. Thomson, photo.
Walker & Cockerell, ph. sc.

THE ENGLISHMAN IN CHINA

DURING THE VICTORIAN ERA

AS ILLUSTRATED IN
THE CAREER OF

SIR RUTHERFORD ALCOCK, K.C.B., D.C.L.

MANY YEARS CONSUL AND MINISTER IN
CHINA AND JAPAN

BY
ALEXANDER MICHIE
AUTHOR OF
'THE SIBERIAN OVERLAND ROUTE,' 'MISSIONARIES
IN CHINA,' ETC.

VOL. II.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

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In the contents under chapter xix. the date of Commodore Perry's expedition is by a misprint given as 1883-84 instead of 1853-54.

[1]

THE ENGLISHMAN IN CHINA.

CHAPTER XIX.

JAPAN.

I. THE TREATIES AND THEIR NEGOTIATORS.

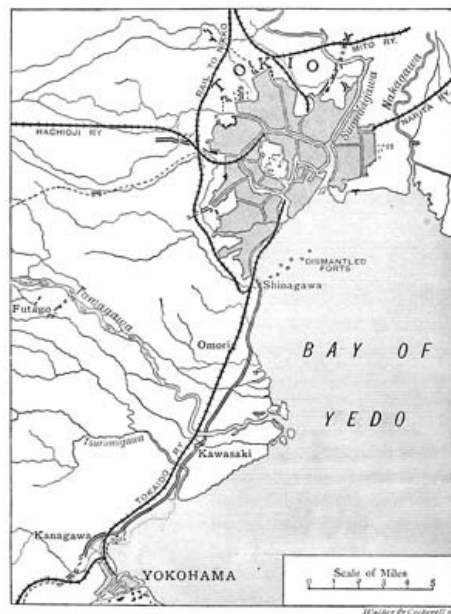
Commodore Perry's expedition, 1853-54—Townsend Harris—Count Poutiatine—Lord Elgin—The treaties of 1858—The solidarity of Western Powers—The practical attitude of the Japanese—Their yielding to circumstances—The condition of the country—The character of the people—Nagasaki—The Dutch—Their two hundred years' imprisonment.

A mystery hung over the island empire, which had been sealed against foreign intercourse for two hundred years, and its mere seclusion, apart from the weird romance that gilded such fragments of its history as were known, invested the efforts to reopen the country with a romantic charm. It was in Japan that Lord Elgin achieved the real diplomatic success of his life, in the briefest possible time, at the least possible cost, and with the most far-reaching consequences; for undoubtedly he hastened the entry of the Land of the Rising Sun into the family of nations. [2]

The poetical side of the mission was done ample justice to by Laurence Oliphant in his 'Narrative,' by Captain Sherard Osborn in the pages of 'Blackwood,' and elsewhere. The prosaic side and the practical issues of this rediscovery of an old world were not so clearly apprehended by them or by any other contemporary writer. The Powers of Europe and America had long been watching for opportunities to effect an opening in the barrier, but all tentatives proved in vain until force was resorted to. This was first done by the United States, whence a naval squadron under Commodore Perry appeared off the coast in 1853, repeating the visit, on a still more imposing scale, in 1854. The apparition deeply impressed the minds of the Japanese Government and people, who, Lafcadio Hearn tells us, speak to this day of the "black ships," birds of omen foreshadowing events for which it behoved them to prepare themselves. Black, indeed, they were, grim of aspect, huge in bulk, and looming larger than they really were, with their high sides, great paddle-boxes, and "smoke-stacks." The ships were armed with a few guns of such calibre and power as had not till then been placed on any floating battery. Jonathan is never second-best in naval artillery. Commodore Perry with his three black ships, the steamers Powhattan, Susquehanna, and Mississippi, and his squadron of sailing-vessels, opened the door of Japan—not very wide, it is true, yet so that it could never again be closed. The rudimentary treaty he made was little more than a covenant to supply wood and water to needy ships and to be merciful to their crews. A similar treaty was made by the English Admiral Stirling in 1854, and it included the "most-favoured-nation" clause, only excepting from its application the privileges enjoyed by China and Holland. [3]

To carry the work forward to a more practical stage a man of affairs was required, and he was found in the person of Townsend Harris, who was accredited to Japan under the title of Consul-General for the United States. Mr Harris had been nearly two years in the country when Lord Elgin, with his modest escort, arrived and made his acquaintance. With infinite patience Mr Harris had been prosecuting his negotiations, against wind and current, it would seem, until a propitious gale wafted his venture into port. The black ships had gone, but another fleet more numerous was assembled on the neighbouring coast, whence their fame had reached the secluded empire. Riding on the shoulders of the Anglo-French exploits in China, and not obscurely hinting at the prospect of the allies shortly visiting Japan, Mr Harris induced his Japanese friends to "hurry up" with his treaty, that it might not only serve as a model of moderation for the other Powers when they also should come to negotiate, but provide in advance friendly mediation between them and Japan. Lord Elgin justified the forewarnings of Mr Harris by appearing in the Bay of Yedo within a few weeks after the signature of the American treaty.

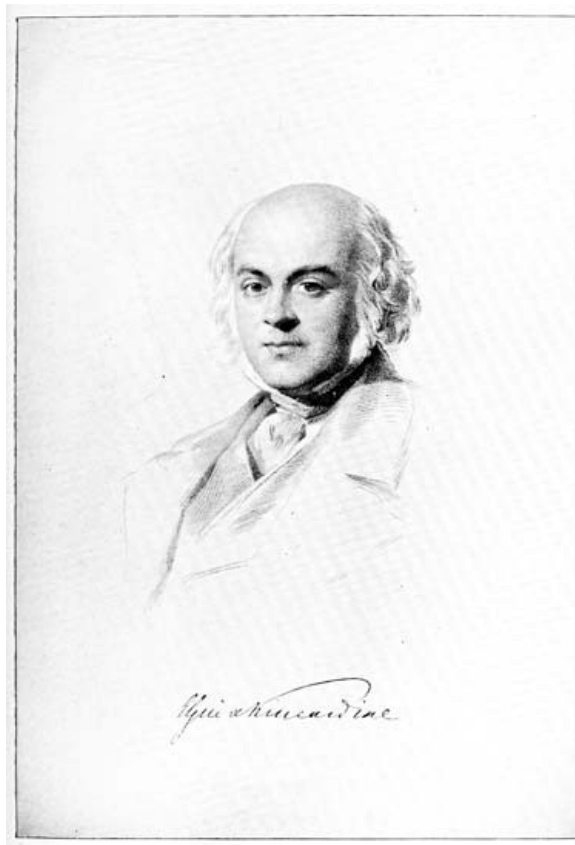
How much both Mr Harris's treaty and the one which Lord Elgin was about to sign owed to the previous Russian negotiations cannot be estimated. Admiral Count Poutiatine concluded a treaty in 1855, and improved it in 1857, on the basis of Sir James Stirling's opening the ports of Nagasaki, Hakodate, and Shimoda for ship's supplies, with sundry minor privileges. When Lord Elgin reached the Bay of Yedo in August 1858 he found Count Poutiatine already there with a frigate and a gunboat. [4]



BAY OF YEDO.
Walker & Cockerell sc.

This convergence of the great Powers of the world upon a single object, that of breaking down the seclusion of Japan, was clearly recognised, and its proximate effect weighed, by the Japanese statesmen of the day. Too wise to oppose an uncompromising resistance to the pressure, they employed their skill more profitably in deflecting its course. In accordance with this policy, Lord Elgin's demand, backed as it was by the prestige of his recent achievements in China, was promptly conceded, and within the short space of fourteen days from his arrival in the bay a treaty was concluded of the same tenor as the American, of which Lord Elgin had obtained a copy from Mr Harris, who also lent him the invaluable services of his Dutch interpreter, Mr Heusken. By the two treaties three of the chief ports of the empire were opened to foreign trade within one year, and two more at later dates. In some respects the English was an advance on the American treaty. By the latter the import tariff had been reduced from the old Dutch rate of 35 per cent to a general rate of 5 per cent *ad valorem*. The British treaty specifically provided that cotton and woollen manufactured goods should be included in the class of merchandise paying 5 per cent. The immunities of extra-territoriality were unreservedly conceded, and were only rescinded by the revised treaties, the first of which was made with Great Britain in 1894, coming into force in July 1899. [5]

One general remark applies to all treaties made between foreign powers and China or Japan, that the interests of each separate Power were safeguarded by the virtual solidarity which existed among them, through the operation of that convenient diplomatic save-all, the "most-favoured-nation" clause. This comprehensive provision inserted in the treaties secured for all the Powers the advantages gained by any one of their number. Faith in this ultimate protection may have led occasionally to slipshod negotiations. There might even be a temptation in some cases to seek special credit for moderation, with the foreknowledge that the exactions of any of the Powers would inure to the benefit of all. Lord Elgin wrote the simple truth when he said that, "as regards all these important commercial privileges, I have to fight the battles of the Western trading nations single-handed." This feature had been particularly noticeable in the negotiations in China, where it was so well understood that the English treaty would be the common standard that it mattered little that the signature of some of the others was hurried forward so as to take priority of the British in point of date. The treaty which Lord Elgin negotiated with Japan was destined to occupy the same ruling position as the treaty with China, and therefore it devolved upon him to make provision for all manner of contingencies which no experience could enable him to foresee. Considering that these treaties were drawn up with so little knowledge of the circumstances of the country and of the future exigencies of trade, the fact that they have stood the test of forty years' experience redounds greatly to the credit of the negotiants. [6]



LORD ELGIN.

Lord Elgin had to learn what a Daimio was from Count Poutiatine, who probably had but just acquired the knowledge himself. It is strange at the present day to read the solemn preamble, "Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and his Majesty the Tycoon of Japan." "It was not till some time later that it was discovered that there was a still higher power than the Shôgun," said Earl Russell in 1865. The imperfect knowledge, however, attests the general soundness of the principles adopted. [7]

It must be admitted that on the Japanese side, also, nothing seemed wanting to render the treaty a workable instrument. The Japanese negotiators were animated by a more practical spirit than any Chinese diplomatist with whom foreigners had had dealings. There was no idea in their minds of blind obstruction; they were bent, if not upon efficient working, at least on the minimising of friction and risk. And though it is probable, indeed quite certain, that no treaty whatever could have been made without substantial force in the background, intelligently apprehended by the Japanese Government, yet, that being conceded, it was clearly their object to make the best of the position in which they actually found themselves. Under no other circumstances could treaties so complete in detail and so effective for their purpose have been concluded.

To judge of the acts of the pioneers of foreign intercourse, or to form a just opinion of the conditions under which the treaties came into force, it would be necessary for the critic to regard the whole surroundings as a painter does his subject, not representing what he knows or may afterwards discover to be there, but considering only what actually meets his eye. This, of course, is next to impossible in the case of Japan, where the transformation resulting from the contact with foreigners was so rapid and so kaleidoscopic, and while foreign knowledge of things Japanese has increased at so marvellous a rate, that only a series of microscopic photographs could have preserved the sequence. Opinions were at first, and for some time after, unduly affected by the preconception of a certain analogy between China and Japan founded on geographical propinquity, and in a measure on language: this bias influenced the first influx of foreigners in 1859, who were largely drawn from the commercial ports of China. Yet those who had been habituated to the manners and customs of the Chinese were at once struck, not by the similarities, but by the violent contrasts, which the two peoples presented. These visitants had left behind them filth and squalor; they met cleanliness and tidiness of an extreme type. They left behind vagueness of thought, slovenliness of action; and they encountered pedantic precision. They left behind indifference and stolidity, with ignorance cherished as a proud possession; and they encountered a keen and intelligent appetite for knowledge. These features met the stranger before even his ship had cast anchor, or he had set foot on shore. He soon perceived, also, that existence was carried on under an elaborate prescription which left but a narrow margin to spontaneous action, and such a minute supervision that a sparrow could hardly cross the road without being noted by the official guardians of the peace; that every function, whether of official or private life, was under the undisputed control of the same vigilant organisation.^[1] On entering the narrow waters approaching the harbour of Nagasaki, he would pass under forts where through a telescope he could see guns and gunners' quarters all spick and span. If there happened to be another vessel approaching from seaward, he would know it by the booming of [8] [9]

two guns from the outermost fort, the signal being taken up and passed on by those inland, and so all the way to Yedo. This, he learned, was the mode of announcing to the capital the appearance of any foreign craft off the coast. On entering the inner harbour he would see boats full of men who looked like women, pushing off to his ship; and then a posse of officers, each armed with two sharp swords, would come on board. They, by means of a very imperfect interpreter, would at once ply the master with questions on every conceivable subject, as if he were competing in an examination in universal knowledge. The tedious catechism, with its admixture of seeming frivolity, would have been exasperating but for the imperturbable suavity of the catechists. Every answer was promptly, yet deliberately, committed to writing. Such was, and is, the custom of the race.

Nagasaki being still, in the first half of 1859, the gate of Japan, and the only sample of the country known to foreigners, the bright welcome with which it greeted the new arrivals was of happy augury. It was there, also, that the first observations of the ways of Japanese commerce were made, for Nagasaki had carried on trade with China and with Holland for two hundred years,—a trade which was conducted on the one side by officials of the Government, who fixed the prices of the commodities exchanged, and which was all but strangled by monopoly. The restricted annual "turn-over" must have required a high percentage of profit to support the Dutch factory, and the privilege of trading on so petty a scale seemed to be dearly bought by the perpetual imprisonment of the agents. The unfortunate Dutchmen were confined, with their whole establishment of warehouses, residences, &c., within an area of less than three acres of reclaimed foreshore called Deshima, thus described by Sir Rutherford Alcock in 'The Capital of the Tycoon':—

[10]

A low fan-shaped strip of land, dammed out from the waters of the bay, the handle being towards the shore and truncated. One large wide street, with two-storeyed houses on each side, built in European style, gives an air of great tidiness; but they look with large hollow eyes into each other's interiors in a dismal sort of way, as if they had been so engaged for six generations at least, and were quite weary of the view.... But the view from the Dutch commissioner's residence, with its quaint Japanese garden and its fine sweep down the bay, is very charming.... There flitted before me a vision of the solitary chiefs of the factory in long succession taking up their present station in long rotation and looking forward upon the fair bay with which their sight alone may be gladdened. How often must the occupants of this lone post have strained their eyes looking in vain for the solitary ship bringing tidings from Europe and home!

The imprisonment of the Dutch was aggravated by many degrading conditions imposed by the Japanese Government. Their position bore some analogy to that of the English and other foreigners in Canton previous to 1839. In both cases the Europeans endured indignities at the hands of Asiatics for the sake of profit, but beyond that point it is the differences rather than the resemblances which are significant. The humiliation of the Dutch in the island of Deshima was indeed unmitigated so far as it went, but it was neither capricious nor spiteful. Once the yoke was peacefully adjusted, what remained of life to the Dutchman was made as agreeable to him as to a cockatoo in a cage. His jailors had no particular animus against him; they had a purpose of their own to serve in keeping open, through the foreigners, a channel of communication with the West, and they had as valid reasons of State for tethering him as one may have for tying up his ox or his ass. These purposes once served, however, the Japanese did not revel in harshness or cruelty.^[2] With the Chinese it was otherwise. They also had a political object in restricting the barbarians, only they were never satisfied with its attainment, but continued heaping up insults on their victims to the utmost limits of their submissiveness.

[11]

The petty trade which the new-comers were able to do at Nagasaki was, in the beginning, managed through the existing agency of the Dutch, from whom, however, there was nothing useful to be learned, much indeed to be unlearned; and in a few months it was the Dutch themselves who had to go to school to the interlopers. As commerce had been kept entirely in the hands of the Government officials, there had been no opportunity for the rise of any mercantile class among the natives: that was to be a product of the new era.

[12]

II. THE OPERATION OF THE TREATIES.

Japanese preparations for trade at Yokohama—Mr Alcock's arrival as consul-general—Assumes the rank of Minister—The situation as he found it—The establishment of diplomatic intercourse at the capital—The location of the foreign settlement—The currency—The low value of gold—Its rapid exportation—Friction caused by conditions of exchange—Efforts of Mr Alcock to set matters right—Report by Secretary of H.B.M. Treasury—Japanese double standard, gold and copper—Japanese courage in meeting difficulties—The Daimios' coinage—Beginnings of trade—Amenities of residence—The charm of the people—The two Japans, official and non-official—Complete despotism and complete submission.

The treaties of 1858 took their proper effect at the two ports of Hakodate and Kanagawa; but the former being remote from any centre of population, and its trading resources so obviously limited, it attracted little attention in commercial circles. It was in the more southerly port that the new foreign interests became concentrated; and it was so near the capital—only seventeen miles distant—that the political and commercial currents soon acted and reacted on each other with direct, and sometimes violent, effect. To Kanagawa, therefore, the merchants of all nations gathered in anticipation of the official opening of the port on the 1st of July 1859.

We say "Kanagawa," to follow the official nomenclature, but in reality the adventurers who came there to seek their fortunes did not land at that place, but three miles away from it, at an obscure village called Yokohama. There the Japanese Government had decided should be the future settlement for foreigners, and they had made costly preparations, according to their lights, for the accommodation of the strangers. Roads were marked out, a certain number of wooden bungalows had been run up, a few shops had been opened in the quarter which was designed for native occupation, a custom-house was built, with warehouses attached, and stone landing-places had been constructed for boats and lighters. The area thus marked out for the native and foreign business quarter was a narrow strip along the sea-shore, having in its flank and rear an immense lagoon, or, as it was called, "the swamp," intersected by boat channels, where punting after wildfowl provided amusement for idle foreigners. Being an inlet of the bay, the swamp made a peninsula of Yokohama, which had just been connected with the *tokaido*, the great trunk road between the capital of the Tycoon and that of the Mikado, by a new causeway and several good bridges, admitting of boat traffic between the swamp and the sea. [13]

In the middle of the swamp, in rear of Yokohama, was a reclaimed portion whereon was erected an extensive range of buildings connected by a causeway with the dry land of the settlement. From its balconies there waved pendants of cotton cloth bearing the legend, "This place is designed for the amusement of foreigners," a class of amusement of which there has never been any lack in Japan.

Such were some of the outward and visible preparations made by the Japanese Government, on its own initiative, for the reception of the foreigners under the new treaties,—preparations which surprised and somewhat disconcerted the representatives of the Western Governments when they arrived on the eve of the opening of the port. [14]

Mr Alcock, who had recently returned to his post as consul at Canton, was chosen as the first representative of Great Britain in Japan, with the rank of consul-general. As this rank placed the representative of the leading Power in an inferior position to his colleagues, and consequently derogated from the influence he could exercise on the Japanese, Mr Alcock took it upon himself to assume the title of Plenipotentiary, placing his resignation in the hands of his Government in case they should disavow his action. At the same time he recommended that the future British representative should bear the title of Minister Resident. So far from disavowing his action, the Government appointed him Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, a higher rank than that suggested by him, and he was authorised to at once assume the title, although so unusual a proceeding as the transfer of a consular official to the diplomatic service involved considerable delay while the needful formalities were being arranged. The appointment, however, was coupled with the conditions that the step should not be made a precedent, and that it should confer no claim to future diplomatic employment in the countries of the West.

Mr Alcock was conveyed from China in one of her Majesty's ships, arriving at the port of Nagasaki in June 1859. There he found a fleet of foreign merchantmen already in the harbour, and some fifteen British subjects resident on shore, under the ægis of the old Dutch conventions supplemented by more recent enactments. Mr Alcock remained some days, and having made arrangements for the carrying on of trade under the new treaties, left a consul in charge of British interests and proceeded to Yedo, where he arrived on June 26. [15]

It is a date to be remembered as that of the practical initiation of diplomatic intercourse with the ruling Power in Japan. The difference between a mission to negotiate treaties and one to carry them into effect is thus set forth by Sir Rutherford Alcock in the preface to his valuable work, 'The Capital of the Tycoon,' in terms the simple truth of which must commend itself to every candid reader:—

The Ambassadors Extraordinary had only to extort certain privileges on paper; it was the business of the resident Ministers to make of these paper-concessions realities—practical, everyday realities. As this was the very thing the rulers of the country had determined to prevent, it cannot be matter of wonder that there was not, and never could be, any real accord, whatever the outward professions of good faith and amity. Hence also it naturally followed that, although the original negotiators were received with smiles, and their path was strewn with flowers, their successors had only the poisoned chalice held to their lips, thorns in their path, and the scowl of the two-sworded braves and Samurai to welcome them whenever they ventured to leave their gates—while the assassin haunted their steps, and broke their rest in the still hours of the night with fell intent to massacre.

To say the situation was novel is to say little. The forces at work in the Japanese state economy were either unknown to, or, what was perhaps even worse, misunderstood by, foreign Powers. The lurid history of previous intercourse, followed by rigid exclusion for two centuries, would have sufficed to establish one factor in the problem, the iron resolution of the Japanese rulers. With such men neutrality or indifference was out of the question, while there was nothing as yet to indicate what was henceforth to be the ruling motive of Japanese policy. Both parties were embarking on an unknown voyage, and the avoidance of shipwreck depended in a very large measure on the character of those who had to discover for themselves the winds and currents, the rocks and shoals, through which they had to steer. The leadership among the foreign Powers was tacitly assigned to Great Britain, and it was a born leader who was commissioned to represent her. Mr Alcock had had fifteen years' experience of Asiatic relations, during which time he had proved himself the possessor of those qualities which were now in special request. These were indomitable energy, earnestness of purpose much beyond the common run of official service, fearlessness of responsibility, and alertness to grasp the nettle danger in order to avert [16]

greater evils, and a spirit which would neither shirk nor postpone an unpleasant duty nor tolerate lukewarmness nor dilatoriness in others. He was fifty years old—matured in character and experience, while yet in the prime of his intellectual vigour.

Mr Alcock arrived in Yedo Bay in time to arrange for the opening of trade at the appointed date, July 1.

Nagasaki to Yedo! Two centuries lie between these points, so near on the map, but so far and completely separated by the determined policy of the Japanese rulers. A policy of isolation so effectually carried out that no foreigner, though he might under the Dutch flag gain access to Nagasaki, could force or find his way to the capital.

Steaming up the Bay of Yedo, and leaving Kanagawa unvisited, Mr Alcock anchored as close to the capital as the depth of water would allow, and at once informed the Foreign Minister that he had come to stay. This was done advisedly, as he has explained, to obviate all discussion as to his place of residence, for he knew that efforts had been made—*more Sinico*—through Lord Elgin to induce her Majesty's Government to postpone the residence in Yedo for a couple of years, and to keep their representative at a distance. His first object was to obtain a suitable residence for himself and the Legation staff, in which assistance was cheerfully rendered by the Government officials, as soon as they saw he was resolved to remain in the capital. Diplomatic intercourse became thus an established fact. [17]

The opening of the trading-port did not prove quite so simple, for the consul-general found he had been forestalled in the choice of a site for the merchants' residence, which the Government had, as we have seen, prepared at great expense some three miles away from Kanagawa, the port named in the treaty. Interpreting this hurried action of the Japanese as covering the ulterior design of segregating the foreigners from the natives by thrusting them to a distance from the trunk road which led through Kanagawa, of keeping them in a kind of imprisonment like the Dutch at Deshima, and of retaining the power to stop their supplies, whether of the materials of trade or of sustenance, Mr Alcock warmly contested the action of the Government. In the end he extorted from them the concession of a commercial site at Kanagawa itself, which, however, was never taken up. Events proved too strong for the consul-general, for the merchants of all nations as they arrived settled in Yokohama, where there was deep water for shipping and every convenience for business. And it soon began also to be felt that there was an element of safety in this foreign settlement being removed from the great imperial road along which armed processions were continually passing to and from the capital. Within a year the controversy had died a natural death, and Yokohama speaks for itself. [18]

The second obstacle to the free course of trade was a more deep-rooted one, being nothing less than that chronic bugbear of commerce and finance, the currency. There was no circulating medium in Japan in the least degree adequate for the service of international commerce. The trade in miniature that had been carried on in Nagasaki had been a simple exchange of commodities without the intervention of the precious metals. Mr Consul Winchester says that neither in the Dutch nor in the Chinese factories was a Japanese coin ever seen. But the commerce inaugurated in 1859 could brook no such limitations, while the extent of its requirements was of course absolutely unknown to the negotiators of the treaties. In this state of doubt and ignorance on both sides it seemed that the best temporary provision that the circumstances admitted of was for the Tycoon's Government to undertake, after twelve months, to make all foreign money current in Japan at its natural value, and that until the expiration of that period Japanese coin should be supplied in exchange for foreign, weight for weight. Yet it was a monstrous stipulation to insert in any international treaty, and could never, in fact, be enforced.

The amazing laxity in this respect with which the treaties of 1858 were drawn opened the door to unfathomed abuses in the matter of currency. The coin which was in the minds of the American and English negotiators was what was then current on the coast of China, the dollar, or more specifically the Mexican dollar. Yet, as was afterwards pointed out by Mr G. Arbuthnot, Secretary to her Majesty's Treasury, no provision was made in the treaties expressly for exchanging that, but only British and American money. In his opinion the Tycoon's Government might have refused altogether to receive the Mexican dollar, which was the only coin tendered to them, and thus the currency clause in the treaty would have been a dead letter from the first. But since they did not know the weakness of the ground which the foreigners had chosen, they had to fight out the question under all the disadvantages of a false position. [19]

By the treaty provisions, then, as interpreted by both sides, the foreign merchants who chose to import specie were to be supplied in exchange with current coin of the realm whereby they could purchase the produce of the country without awaiting the slow and uncertain realisation of imported merchandise. But the Japanese, apart from any question of good faith, had vastly underestimated the demand which this agreement was to make on their mintage resources. They could only supply tens where thousands were required, and in consequence of their scarcity native silver coins were soon run up to a high premium. These coins were needed not alone for the purchase of produce, but for the more lucrative investment in the gold coinage of the country; for an extraordinary anomaly presented itself to the foreign traders in the relative value of silver and gold in Japan. The ratio between the two metals throughout the commercial world was at that time about fifteen to one, but in Japan, owing partly to the fact that the silver *ichibu* was a token coin, and yet interchangeable, weight for weight, with foreign silver coins, the ratio in the market was reduced to five to one. Nothing could better show how completely the country had been isolated than this simple phenomenon. Since the seclusion of Japan no such opportunity of profit [20]

without risk had ever tempted merchant adventurers outside the dreams of romance.^[3] It could not be the intention of the treaty-makers to deprive Japan of her gold, yet the exportation of it was not only not prohibited, it was expressly sanctioned by treaty, the export of copper coins alone being forbidden; and once the conduit was opened no power could arrest the flow from the higher to the lower level. The currency question presented many intricacies and anomalies against which the foreign representatives struggled in the dark, but the ratio of gold to silver was the ruling factor which underlay the whole problem, and until every *koban* was exported, or the relative value of gold and silver had been assimilated to that of the outer world, there could be no settlement of the currency question in Japan. [21]

In the mean time the friction caused by the unsatisfied demands of the traders was considerable; it became in time ludicrous. There was a daily exchange held at the custom-house, and various arbitrary systems of distribution were adopted by the officials there. The discovery that a kind of manhood suffrage was recognised, and that an employee received as much as his employer, led to applications being made in the names of servants and even of fictitious persons, to each of whom an allotment was granted. Again, the discovery that allotments were also made *pro rata* according to the amount applied for led to the applications being sent in for ever larger and larger sums until billions and quintillions were reached. By such devices, no doubt, some of the applicants may have gained a momentary advantage over their neighbours, but at no time did the merchants receive a sufficiency of Japanese coin to carry on the most restricted business. At one time, about a year after the opening, it was estimated that there was in the hands of foreign merchants one million and a half of dollars which were not exchangeable, and were a "drug in the market."

Their wants were, however, partially supplied in another manner. For among the anomalies of the place and period one must be mentioned which had a quite peculiar bearing on the supply of currency for commercial purposes. The precious coin, which was doled out homœopathically to merchants, was supplied to foreign officials in liberal measure. Every minister, consul, and assistant; every admiral, captain, and lieutenant; every paymaster, for himself and for the service of his ship, received his quota of Japanese money on a scale graduated according to rank. The amount put in circulation by these means was given by Mr Winchester as \$2,000,000 per annum. The recipients, whether directly or through agents, were able to sell their surpluses to the merchants, of course at a handsome profit, and no doubt abuses grew out of what was in its original intention a simple measure of justice to salaried officers. The practice was condemned by Mr Arbuthnot, and was discontinued by order of the Foreign Office in 1864, on the initiative of the Prussian Government, whose agent in Japan had voluntarily renounced the privilege. But, oddly enough, the official exchange was resumed by request of the Japanese Government, and continued for several years longer, until, in fact, foreign and native coin had found their common level. [22]

Trade certainly suffered much in the beginning from the incongruous state of the currency, which was greatly more complicated than we have attempted to outline. Even after the year of probation foreign coins were neither received by traders at their value nor exchangeable in accordance with the treaties. Whether the Government was at the bottom of the obstruction or was overruled by circumstances beyond its control was uncertain, but the British consul-general made masterful exertions to set the matter right. Currency reform, however, has baffled so many generations of expert economists that, even assuming the goodwill of the native Government, an alien official new to the country must have found it difficult to accomplish much, with the time and means at his disposal. Earl Russell in 1862 "declined to pronounce on so large and intricate a question," and would not even discuss it with the Japanese envoys. [23]

Japanese currency formed the subject of four elaborate reports by the Secretary to her Majesty's Treasury, extending over twelve months, from December 1862 to December 1863, drawn up after personal conference with Sir Rutherford Alcock and on information derived from various other sources, especially from a series of very able papers by Consul Winchester. In each of these reports Mr Arbuthnot remarks on the paucity of data, and in each he qualifies the deductions of the preceding one. Had the series been still further extended, it is even doubtful if finality of judgment would have been reached; for in his third report he says, "The whole question, both as regards the condition of the currency and the real intentions of the Japanese Government, is involved in so much obscurity that no sound judgment can yet be formed on the subject" (May 1863).

It would be a mere weariness to the reader to attempt to elucidate a problem which an expert student found perplexing, but a few salient points brought out in Mr Arbuthnot's review may repay citation, as illustrative of the general state of relations beyond the immediate question of the currency. "We found," he says, "the Japanese with a carefully devised system of coinage, presenting indeed anomalies, when regarded from a European point of view, but apparently well adapted to their domestic wants; and their coins were found on assay in London to be well manufactured." The Chinese had no such system, and the evolution of a metallic currency entitled to such high praise, in a country from which the rest of the world had been long shut off, is one of the most striking evidences of the high originating faculty of the Japanese. [24]

As to the stipulation in the treaties that foreign coin should be current in Japan on a par with native, weight for weight (not a word said about purity), it was not only preposterous and absolutely unworkable, but it was imposed by the ignorance of the foreign negotiators against the superior knowledge of the Japanese; for it is remarkable that in the negotiations carried on by the Americans in 1854 the Japanese took up the impregnable ground that "American coin was only

bullion to them." Force alone—or the fear of it—drove them from that position in 1858, and in yielding to the unreasoning pressure of the subsequent negotiators the Japanese probably consoled themselves with their resources of secret evasion to save them from the worst consequences of the obligation—a characteristic of the whole treaty-making campaign.

It appeared to Mr Arbuthnot that the Japanese had a double standard—itsself "a contradiction in terms"—gold and copper; silver occupying the position of a token currency between the two, at a highly artificial value, strictly governed by law. The fact was exemplified in many ways. Art objects in silver contained more metal than the coin paid for them, the work of the artificer thrown into the bargain. Gold and copper, on the other hand, bore about the same relationship to each other as prevailed in other countries. It was silver alone that was maintained at a conventional level three times above its value in the outer world. And the philosophy of this is explained by Mr Winchester, who tells us that, whereas the supply of gold and copper was in many hands, the sources of the supply of silver were in the exclusive control of the Tycoon's Government, which derived great advantage from maintaining the silver coinage at a high fictitious level. [25]

The efforts of the Japanese to readjust the currency to meet the demands of the treaty were naturally first directed to silver, which was recoined and revalued, but confusion was worse confounded by all these attempts. Eventually the gold *koban*, worth intrinsically 18s. 4d. sterling, or 4 *bus* of the intrinsic value of 1s. 4d., was reduced to a sterling value of 5s. 6d., but was still rated at 4 *bus*, while the copper coinage was disestablished and iron substituted of no intrinsic value. "I am aware of no other example," says Mr Arbuthnot, "of so sudden and violent a rending of the monetary regulations of a country; certainly of none which has been produced by the interference of foreigners."

The effect of these inquiries by the Treasury was to discourage further interference by foreign Governments, to trust much to that great solvent of anomalies, the silent operation of commerce; while the only complete remedy was recognised as the establishment of a mint under European regulations.

The problem was still further complicated by the separate coinage of the Daimios. Their *nibukin*, as a general rule, passed only at first in their own provinces, but gradually they filtered down to the open ports, and at one time considerable embarrassment arose from the mixture of the coinage thus caused. In 1871-72 the Imperial Government, then just come to supreme power, took the matter up with the thoroughness they showed in all their doings. They gave secret notice to the foreign Ministers of their intention to call in all princes' *nibukin*, and thereupon issued an order that during one week these coins should be brought into the custom-houses at the treaty ports, where they would be fastened up in sealed packets of \$100 value, and notified that coins so stamped within the week would be accepted by the Government as legal tender, but that thereafter their use would be prohibited. Now, as the Daimios' money stood at about 90 per cent discount at the time, the fact that some of the foreign officials who had access to this confidential information were also merchants created immediate speculation, with the result that within a fortnight these silver-gilt *nibukin* rose from 90 per cent discount to 2 or 3 per cent premium, the officially sealed packets being a most convenient form for the payment of duties. [26]

The alacrity with which the Government applied heroic remedies to a disastrous predicament was typical of the energy of the Japanese, which has been displayed since in wider fields. They do not sit down and bemoan their troubles, but at once arm themselves against them.

When to the inherent difficulties common to currency problems generally were superadded the complexities of the monetary system of a non-commercial and long-secluded country, surprise should be felt that the regulation of the circulating medium in Japan was accomplished so soon, rather than that it took so many years to arrive at the solution. The Tycoon's Government did not live long enough to settle the currency, but left the problem as a legacy to the Restoration. A good many years elapsed before the Mikado's Government succeeded in evolving order out of chaos. [27]

In the mean time, in spite of many drawbacks, trade was making headway in other directions besides the exportation of gold, and quaint indeed were the beginnings of it. The staple products happened to be the same in Japan as in China, tea and silk, and they soon began to be regularly brought down to Yokohama for sale. But business was at first on such a lilliputian scale, and was introduced in so dainty a manner, that to merchants accustomed to the large transactions of China the whole affair wore something of the air of comic opera, or as if children were playing at being merchants. This impression was strengthened by the aspect of the fragile wooden structures with their sliding doors and windows, but without sitting accommodation, wherein business was transacted, which to those habituated to the massive, if inelegant, buildings of Hongkong and Shanghai irresistibly suggested the idea of a doll's house. The Chinese methods also were inverted. Instead of sending samples of substantial quantities, such as a thousand chests of tea or fifty bales of silk, and the owner or his broker coming to chaffer in the silk-room or the tea-room of the foreign merchant, the latter had to go the round of the Japanese shops to find out what they had got. Early every morning the leading merchants might be seen booted to the thighs—for the rain was frequent and the roads unmade—trudging up and down the Japanese bazaar to see what novelties had come to hand. The more zealous would sometimes make a second round in the afternoon, in case there might be some late as well as early worms to be picked up. The bodily fatigue and consumption of time involved in this process would have rendered a large business impossible. There were as yet no Japanese merchants properly so [28]

called, and their endless parley resembled more the tenacious higgling of peasants than the negotiations of men of business. Moreover, the native dealers seemed scarcely conscious of any law which should hold them to a bargain in the event of a more acceptable offer turning up.

Conclusions unfavourable to Japanese commercial morality have been drawn from some of those early—and later—experiences; but commercial like other kinds of specialised morality has necessarily something of a professional character. The *akindo*, or merchant, was a sort of pariah in Japan, his social status being inferior to those of the peasant and the handicraftsman. His sense of honour was not, therefore, sustained by tradition or stimulated by *esprit de corps*. There being no mercantile body in Japan, there was no mercantile code, at least none applicable to international trade, and those unwritten laws without which large commerce is impossible had not yet been called into being. Contrasts between the two neighbouring nations have just been mentioned very much to the advantage of the Japanese; but in matters of commerce, it must be conceded, the advantage lay entirely with the Chinese, a nation of traders from their birth.

In the sale of lacquer ware and objects of art the Japanese were much more at home than in dealing in raw products of foreign manufactures, and the treasures which were in the early days exposed in the shops of Yokohama would make a modern dealer sigh for opportunities which are no more. Speaking roundly, it would have been safe to buy the stock indiscriminately at the sellers' own prices, when fortune would have awaited the investor as surely as if he had bought up the gold coinage at the ratio of 5 to 1. The same remark would apply to such of the raw produce of Japan as had been in large demand in China; and conversely the rule applied also to selected articles of foreign manufacture, which the Japanese were satisfied to buy at a price midway between the high level of the Dutch monopoly and the low level of what would remunerate the free importer. Therefore the sudden inroad of open trade on a market artificially confined resulted in profitable trading while a new equilibrium was being found; but such prosperity was in its nature evanescent.

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Irrespective of the material aims which attracted foreign residents to Japan, the life itself presented several novel and interesting features. Nothing could have been pleasanter than the social relations which sprang up between the foreign communities and the unofficial natives. The strangers were received everywhere with open arms, and the residence among a smiling people (excluding altogether the meretricious allurements of the country, which have also not been without their influence) and amid enchanting scenery was found to add a new pleasure to existence. Here again we must resort for illustration to a comparison with China, where strangers at the best were sullenly tolerated, where one might live a lifetime without entering a house, or seeing a respectable woman, or making a friend save on a business footing. The Japanese of Yokohama and Kanagawa, as well as in the surrounding villages and temples, never failed in courtesy and hospitality to passers-by, and were eager for conversation with foreigners. A useful smattering of the language was soon acquired under the stimulus of a quick-witted and sympathetic people alert to jump at the meaning and patient to help the novice to find his words. The women of the household were always charming, and if their domestic conversation sometimes startled the stranger by its freedom, there was neither malice nor any such impropriety as leaves an evil odour in its trail. Friendships were formed, not deep perhaps, but genuine as far as they went, and certainly not the less sincere on the Japanese than on the foreign side.

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The intelligence also of the common people enhanced both the pleasure and the value of friendly intercourse with them: apt as they were to receive, they were no less ready to impart, information. Their appreciation of their country—its beauties, history, traditions, and folk-lore—was conscious and unrestrained, indeed it amounted to a passion. This afforded endless subject for talk. Everything save the politics of the day might be freely discussed, and though the first-arrived foreigners came poorly prepared to assimilate so much that was novel, they could not help carrying away a good deal from their frequent confabulations. The native guide-books formed a reservoir of suggestive topics: surprisingly minute they were, noting every gem of scenery or point of interest, with the legends of history, romance, or mythology attaching to them. So accurate were these itineraries that with their contents well studied foreigners might make excursions inland lasting several days without the aid of guide or the necessity of inquiring the way.

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It need not, of course, be said that the mutual intelligence of Japanese and foreigners did not penetrate below the surface of every-day phenomena. Of their festivals, their pilgrimages, their votive offerings to temples and shrines, their ancestral worship, and their whole relation to the Unseen—call it religion, superstition, or idolatry—the strangers had no comprehension. Although its outward symbols were passing constantly under their eyes, esoteric Japan was to them a sealed book, as the mental processes of the Oriental always are to the Occidental, whose imagination is cramped by the syllogism, and whose faith languishes for demonstration. There was, however, ample outside the region of mysticism, outside the concerns of trade, and equally apart from political questions, to nourish the best relations between Japanese and foreigners.

The impressions of the British Minister on his journeys of relaxation are by no means the least interesting portion of his important work, 'The Capital of the Tycoon.' Having shaken off the official incubus, and breathing the free air of the country, the intercourse with the common people in which he was able to indulge was fruitful of reflections of a brighter hue than any that were prompted by his strenuous life in the capital. He observes:—

They are really a kindly people when not perverted by their rulers and prompted to hostility....

I had begun to forget I was in Japan, so much goodwill was shown.... There may be a good deal of tyranny and oppression, but the people show no marks of it.... The feudal lord is everything and the lower and labouring classes nothing. Yet what do we see? Peace, plenty, apparent content, and a country more perfectly and carefully cultivated and kept, with more ornamental timber everywhere, than can be matched even in England.... The material prosperity of a population estimated at thirty millions, which has made a garden of Eden of this volcanic soil, and had grown in numbers and in wealth by unaided native industry.

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Such were the observations made during a few days' rest at the mineral springs of Atami, and they coincided exactly with the opinions formed by those whose daily intercourse lay with these same common people, in which term, of course, were included such town populations as foreigners had acquaintance with. A contemporary writer, Nagasaki, 1859, remarked: "The Government of Japan is the most absolute despotism in the world, and perfectly successful.... For the present it is consistent with great prosperity and contentment on the part of the people, but it seems to me it is only their exclusive policy that has kept it so."

The great, industrious, prosperous masses of Japan, enjoying the gifts of the gods with thankful hearts, and drinking the cup of life as presented to them without any acidulating scruples, seemed to be happiest of all in this, that they were not burdened with the dignity of wearing swords. The storms that convulsed the upper regions passed over their humble heads without interrupting the cast of a fishing-net or hindering by a day the gathering of their harvest. How different the life of the nobles and their following! their humanity dominated by an elaborate and intolerable ceremonial, settling their quarrels at the sword's point, and ever on the alert for bloody intrigue.^[4]

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For there were two Japans, that of the people and that of the ruling class, separated by an impassable gulf. "The very existence of the plebeian seems unrecognised by the patrician in his lordly progress," wrote Sir Rutherford Alcock. "And for that very reason there may be more real liberty among the mass of the people than we imagine."

The members of the official class were distinguished by carrying in their girdle two heavy swords with a razor's edge, one long, one short. The functionaries of the custom-house, with whom alone the foreign lay community had contact, also wore swords as part of their official uniform, which they placed with delicate ceremony on a rack in front of them as they sat on their mats at the receipt of custom,—for there were no chairs, and the habitual posture was squatting on the hams and heels. To the aristocratic caste the Japanese people were as absolutely submissive as if every two-sworded man wielded the power of life and death, which, so far as the common people were concerned, was not far from the simple truth.^[5] The only great concourses of armed men which the foreign residents were in the way of seeing were the Daimio processions, which, hundreds, sometimes thousands strong, were constantly travelling along the highroad; and in the long town of Kanagawa they could observe the people prostrated by the sides of the road with heads abased while the great man with his scowling retainers passed. Residents in Yedo—that is, the *personnel* of the foreign Legations—had less agreeable experience of these feudal swordsmen, who, living in idleness during their prince's sojourn in the capital, were quick in quarrel, especially in their cups, and far from agreeable to meet in the streets.

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III. ASSASSINATION PERIOD, 1860-61.

Storms begin—Russians murdered at Kanagawa—Two Dutchmen in Yokohama—Prince regent assassinated—Servant of French Minister attacked—Mr Heusken, secretary to American Legation, murdered—Ministers withdraw to Yokohama—And return to Yedo—First murderous attack on British Legation, 1861—Mr Oliphant wounded—Attempt on a Japanese Minister—The causes of these outrages—Partly anti-foreign feeling—Foreign treaties imposed by force on Tycoon never received sanction of emperor—Hence universal hostility to foreigners—Internecine jealousy—Mr Alcock makes ascent of Fujiyama—Against the wish of Japanese Ministers—Makes a second overland journey from Nagasaki to Yedo—Sullen attitude of Daimios.

The ports had not been many months opened when storms began to disturb the political sky, and the idyllic charm of the new life became tempered by assassination. The why and the wherefore of these outrages was imperfectly understood at the time, though it has since been copiously expounded. The uncertainty as to the moving cause or causes rendered precautions difficult, and the only safe resource was a watchful eye and the nimble revolver.

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Much bad feeling had been displayed towards the foreign diplomatic staff in Yedo, and assaults had been frequent, but nothing of a tragic nature had occurred until the arrival of a Russian squadron of ten ships, with Count Mouravieff-Amurski on board. He landed in August 1859 with an escort of 300 men in Yedo, where he was safe; but an officer and two men at Kanagawa, buying provisions, were cut to pieces by armed Japanese. This was what Sir Rutherford Alcock designated as "first blood." The next was the assassination of a native linguist employed in the British Legation. Early in 1860 two Dutch shipmasters, one over sixty years of age, were hacked to pieces in Yokohama. Next the prince regent himself was, within the precincts of the castle, set upon by an armed band of retainers of the Prince of Mito and killed, his head being carried off to assure the said prince of the accomplishment of an act of long-meditated revenge.

Before the end of the year 1860 the Italian servant of the French Minister had to defend himself at the entrance of the Legation from the murderous attack of a couple of two-sworded men; and

the year 1861 was ushered in by the assassination of Mr Heusken, secretary to the American Legation, on his way from the Prussian Minister, whom he had been assisting in the negotiation of his treaty. This crime filled the cup for the time being. The Government proved itself unable or unwilling to protect the diplomatic body from their bloodthirsty assailants, and three out of the four foreign representatives—the Dutch minister not being at the time resident in Yedo—made a protest to the Tycoon's Government, struck their flags, and withdrew to Yokohama. The American Minister alone remained in Yedo. Soon the Prussian and Dutch returned thither, leaving only the British and French representatives in Yokohama, where they remained until specially invited back to the capital under conditions which they had demanded of the Government. [36]

The following summer witnessed the most desperate attempt of all to exterminate the inmates of at least one of the Legations. Mr Alcock had just returned from a long, venturesome, dangerous, but most fruitful journey overland from south to north—from Nagasaki to Yedo—which included a sea passage through the Inland Sea, when an assault was made on the Legation at midnight on 4th July 1861. The Tycoon's guard of 150 men are charitably credited with having been asleep, for they opposed no obstacle to the entrance of a band of men who cut an opening through a substantial bamboo stockade at the outer gate, and on their way thence to the apartments of the Legation staff, a distance of some three hundred yards, killed, at intervals, four men, some of whom defended themselves, and a barking dog. The scene is fully and graphically described in 'The Capital of the Tycoon.' The central object of the attack seems to have been the Minister himself, who however escaped unhurt, while two members of the Legation were wounded,—Laurence Oliphant, who had recently come out as secretary of Legation, having a very severe sword-cut in the arm and another in the neck. Being more than common tall, Mr Oliphant's head was saved by the intervention of a low beam, in which a deep sword-cut was found. If that brilliant writer had seen Yedo rose-tinted in 1858, he had now at least a chance of judging it in a greyer light. The guard did not put in an appearance until after the assailants had been beaten off from, or at least baffled in, their attempt on that portion of the temple buildings which was occupied by the Minister, and a fierce struggle ensued in the precincts, in which two of the assailants were killed and one badly wounded, while twelve of the guard were wounded and one of the Tycoon's bodyguard killed. The details of Japanese sword-play are not pleasant matters to dwell upon, but a few words from Mr Alcock's notes of the tragedy will suffice to give an idea of the manner in which these massacres were carried out. "I have seen many a battlefield," he says, "but of sabre wounds I never saw any so horrible. One man had his skull shorn clean through from the back and half the head sliced off to the spine, while his limbs only hung together by shreds." "There is probably not in all the annals of our diplomacy an example of such a bloodthirsty and deliberate plot to massacre a whole Legation." [37]

This is a sufficiently full list of the outrages of what may be called the Yedo period, to distinguish it from a subsequent chapter of history which was opened in connection with the new port in the Inland Sea, but which is beyond the range of the present work.

The only conclusions to be drawn from these occurrences, and those yet to be related, were—(1) that either the Tycoon's Government itself or some powerful faction was in deadly opposition to the admission of foreigners into the country, and (2) that the Tycoon's Government was either unable or unwilling to protect the persons of foreigners either within the capital or out of it; (3) that certain great Daimios were concerned in these murderous outrages. The Prince of Mito's men assassinated the regent, and were most probably the assailants of the British Legation, while the Prince of Satsuma's retainers killed Richardson. Another great Daimio, whose forts commanded the western gate of the Inland Sea, put himself a year later in a state of war with all the foreign nations. [38]

The motives of these powerful feudatories were not free from ambiguity, for they might be animated by a *bonâ fide* desire to expel the foreigners, or they might be plotting to embroil the Government with the Western Powers. It was evident that the authority of the Tycoon over the great Daimios was far from absolute, and that at any rate he dared not enforce it in defence of the hated foreigners.^[6] Thus the Legations were left to the mercy of a ferocity which has known no parallel. The midnight attempt on the British Legation on July 4, 1861, typified the whole situation. The inmates were ignorant whence the several attacks on them came, the imperial and Daimio's guard were asserted to have slept through the crucial stage of the assault, and the provoking cause of the attempt to exterminate the English was unknown. In such a maze of occult forces it was almost as difficult to adopt precautions as against earthquakes. [39]

What lay at the root of all these troubles, according to the deliberate opinion of Mr Alcock, was that the foreign treaties had been forced on the Government against its will and in violation of the fundamental laws of the empire. He says the treaties were not sanctioned by the Mikado, and that therefore the opposition of the Daimios was on strictly legitimate lines. Also that the law of the seventeenth century which made it a capital offence for a foreigner to land in Japan had not been repealed. The Tycoon's Ministers had been scared into signing even Commodore Perry's almost platonic treaty; for though that officer had strict orders to use no force, he did not impart this information to the Japanese, and they could not otherwise interpret the naval demonstration than as an intimation that the ship's guns would support the commodore's demands. The case of Mr Harris's treaty of 1858 was even clearer. It had been drawn up, but the signature postponed *sine die* until the great nobles should have been gained over, and Mr Harris retired to his retreat at Shimoda to wait events. The news of the forcing of the Peiho forts by the Anglo-French squadron and the imposing of a treaty on the Emperor of China was conveyed express to Mr Harris by the steam frigate Mississippi. Another vessel, the Powhattan, arrived fortuitously at the

same time, in which Mr Harris proceeded to Kanagawa, where commissioners were sent down at once to meet him, and in three days the treaty was signed. Of course the Allies who had forced the door of China, having no quarrel whatever with Japan, had no more thought of coercing that country than the United States had in 1853 and 1854; but it was perhaps scarcely conceivable to the oriental mind that any nation should deny itself the exercise of a power it consciously possessed. Naturally, therefore, the Japanese were predisposed to believe in the aggressive purposes of the invaders of China. No less natural was it that subsequent evidence of the self-imposed limitation of their pressure on China should lead the Tycoon's advisers to deplore the panic-haste with which they had been hustled into making treaties against the will of the great council of the Empire. In the interval between the signing and the execution of the treaties the Government had time for reflection on all that: the malcontent majority of Daimios had also time to consider what resistance they could offer to innovations which they detested.

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The reactionary policy that had set in was also clearly shown in the obstacles thrown in the way of the negotiation of the Prussian treaty. Count Eulenberg had been six months at work, and as his treaty was but a copy of those already signed there was no reason in the thing itself for the obstruction. But Prussia was not then a nation from which there was much to be feared at such a distance, and therefore the true disposition of the Japanese Government had free play.

The Tycoonate itself was a perpetual cause of jealousy among the three great families, one of which was Mito, who had themselves pretensions to the honour; and the combination of their private grievances with a quasi-patriotic and probably sincere hatred of foreign intruders raised a storm against the Tycoon with which his advisers found it hard to cope. The Government being committed to the protection of foreigners, massacres of the latter offered a ready means of gratifying the double passion of hatred of them and of the Tycoon.

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But although the foreign representatives and the Tycoon were thus to an unknown extent the objects of a common enmity, it was yet impossible for them to make common cause, for they were not in harmony. The Government would willingly have got rid of the treaties or reduced them to a dead letter. The foreign Ministers, on the other hand, had no choice but to insist on the fulfilment of the engagements into which the Government had entered. Not for them to count the cost, the difficulties, or the danger: relaxation of their demands would have aggravated all three. So there was nothing for it but the "rigour of the game."

The British Minister held decided views on the importance of keeping alive all rights and privileges by exercising them. China would have taught him, if the knowledge did not come by nature, the value of the modern principle of "effective occupation" as the only valid sanction of an abstract title. The treaties of 1858 conferred upon the representatives of Foreign Powers the right of travelling throughout Japan. The Tycoon's Government desired to restrict or nullify the privilege, no doubt for reasons quite sufficient from their point of view. Mr Alcock on his part saw good reasons for opposing this tendency from the outset. Consequently, as a first experiment, he organised a journey by the *tokaido* to the "matchless" mountain, Fujiyama, distant about eighty miles from the capital. Every effort was made by the Government officials to dissuade him from the undertaking; dangers natural and supernatural were conjured up, a more convenient season was recommended. At length their pleas for the abandonment or delay of the expedition having been exhausted without any effect on the resolution of the Minister, the officials became helpful in the preparations and most careful to provide for the success of the journey. The party—eight Europeans in all with a large native contingent—set out on September 4, 1860, rather late in the year for the ascent, which was, nevertheless, successfully accomplished, and for the first time the foot of the stranger trod the sacred summit, the object of constant religious pilgrimages. The whole journey, including a detour to the hot springs of Atami, occupied one month: it was fruitful in first-hand information, and replete with agreeable experiences.

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A more important journey was undertaken eight months later, on the occasion of a return voyage from China and Hongkong, whither the Minister had gone on certain legal business. Being at Nagasaki, Mr Alcock arranged to travel in the company of Mr de Wit, the head of the Dutch mission, across the island of Kiusiu, then by junk up the Inland Sea to Hiogo, thence by the highroad to Yedo. The proposal met with the same kind of opposition from the Japanese authorities as the going to Fujiyama the previous year had done: the dangers of the journey were depicted in strong colours, and the unsettled state of the country was alleged as a cogent reason why a foreigner should not trust himself on the highroad. When these arguments proved unavailing, and the journey was finally resolved upon, the authorities endeavoured to minimise both its pleasure and its usefulness by an attempt to extort from the two Ministers an undertaking in writing never to go in advance of the escort or to leave the highroad. The plea for the latter restriction was that the road alone was under imperial control, the land on either side belonging to the Daimios. The feudatories on their part took effective measures to enforce the condition by supplying guards through their respective domains, who blocked up every byway, and in the towns and villages where the party rested screened off the side streets even from view by means of large curtains stretched on high poles, emblazoned with the Prince's arms. When the party landed at Hiogo to resume the journey by the *tokaido*, they were met by a "Governor" of Foreign Affairs, sent expressly from Yedo to warn the foreign Ministers once more of the dangers of the road, and to persuade them to complete their journey by sea. This had become such a stereotyped formula that the two diplomats paid no attention to the warning, though they had some reason afterwards to think that on this single occasion the cry of wolf was genuine; for the assassins who attacked the English Legation on the night of the return of the party to Yedo were said to have tracked the foreigners the whole way from Hiogo.

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These two interesting and—the second one especially—arduous journeys, each of one month's duration, settled the question of the right of the foreign representatives to travel through the length and breadth of Japan. They also afforded much insight into the state of the country and the real feeling of the general population. But they were only interludes in the drama of sensational diplomacy, which had now to be resumed with redoubled energy. The Legations had been two years located in Yedo, and no progress whatever had been made towards establishing a state of security for foreign life. Matters were, indeed, going from bad to worse. One point had been gained after the murder of the American secretary in January—the Government had formally assumed the responsibility for the protection of the foreigners. Moreover, strong guards of the Tycoon's men were posted in the different Legations; but, as we have seen, they added nothing to the sense of security. The demonstration of the inadequacy of all these precautions left the conditions of foreign life in the capital in worse plight than ever. The attack on the British Legation therefore called for a fresh review of the position. [44]

IV. NEGOTIATIONS AND RENEWED ASSASSINATIONS, 1862-64.

British and French guards brought to Yedo—Marks a new era—Decided position of British Government—Concessions asked by Japanese, refused by Mr Alcock, granted by Earl Russell to Japanese envoys—Retrogression—Position of foreign Ministers assimilating to that of the Dutch at Deshima—Mr Alcock's departure for Europe, 1862—Bad effects of Lord Russell's concessions to Japanese—Encouraged them to make fresh demands—The building of a British Legation in Yedo—*Chargé d'affaires* resides mostly in Yokohama—Colonel Neale's account of the system of guarding the Legation—Midnight attack on the guards—British sentries murdered—Suspicious behaviour of Government—British guard increased—Admiral Hope's opinion—Attack on an English riding party and murder of Mr Richardson on highroad—Admiral Hope's proposal to "nip assassination in the bud."

The question now, therefore, entered on a new phase. Since reliance on the Government afforded no sense of security, the foreigners must abandon the position or find some more effective protection, not to supersede, but to supplement, that which was afforded by the Government. There was fortunately a British despatch vessel, the Ringdove, at the moment at Yokohama, to the commander of which Mr Alcock appealed for a guard of marines and bluejackets. These arrived the next day, twenty-five all told, with Captain Craigie himself at their head, and they were happily accompanied by a detachment of fifteen men from the French transport Dordogne, brought up by the French Minister, Mons. de Bellecourt, always a staunch supporter of his British colleague. That gentleman, on hearing the tragic news at Yokohama, where he had been staying, returned promptly to his post with this most welcome reinforcement for the defence of the Legations. This simple proceeding marked the beginning of a new era in the foreign relations with Japan—the era in which the Powers represented there took the law into their own hands, with highly important consequences to Japan and to the world. The British naval guard was reinforced within a few months by a mounted escort of twelve men drawn from the force then in China. This step was strongly objected to by the Tycoon's Ministers, but the answer was complete: the Government's acknowledged incompetence had forced this measure of self-defence on the Legations. The position taken up by Mr Alcock was confirmed in the most explicit manner by Earl Russell a year later, who thus addressed the Japanese envoys in London:— [45]

Her Majesty's Government will not agree to any proposal which may be made by the Ministers of the Tycoon having for its object to preclude the representatives of the Queen in Japan from maintaining a cavalry escort for the protection of her Majesty's servants in that country. The Tycoon cannot ensure the safety of the British officers within the precincts of the capital and its immediate neighbourhood; and even if the Tycoon were to engage to do so, it is notorious that he would not have the power to fulfil his engagement. [46]

This plain speaking defined the status of "old" Japan, and gave the clue to the remarkable train of events which followed.

Much anxiety and many sinister rumours, but no serious outrages, disturbed the peace of the Legations and the general foreign community during the remainder of the year 1861. Mr Oliphant was sent home in consequence of his wounds, and the occasion was taken advantage of to have certain private conferences with the Japanese Foreign Ministers, at which that gentleman assisted, when the "past, present, and future" were confidentially discussed. Mr Oliphant, thus thoroughly "posted," was able personally to explain the state of affairs to her Majesty's Ministers, which greatly assisted them in forming their decisions. He was also the bearer of an autograph letter from the Tycoon to her Majesty the Queen.

The Japanese Government had long been pressing the foreign representatives for the relaxation of some of the articles in the treaties, which were not to come into operation until a subsequent date. These provided for the opening of Yedo for general residence on 1st January 1862, and for the opening of the trading ports of Hiogo, Osaka, and Ní-í-gata on 1st January 1863. The Tycoon's Government was most anxious to postpone all these privileges to an indefinite period, nominally seven years, and as the foreign Ministers in Yedo had no such authority—Mr Alcock had been instructed to grant "no concessions without equivalents"—the Government prepared to despatch special envoys to the five Courts of Europe with which they had treaties. A similar mission to the United States the previous year had been so well received as to encourage the second effort. The principle involved in the Japanese plea was precisely the same as that which had kept Canton closed for so many years, notwithstanding the treaty provision opening it; but there was this [47]

difference of fact between the two cases, that whereas the danger apprehended and alleged by the Japanese was probably real, that which had been put forward by the Chinese was false, and manufactured by the authorities themselves.

The Japanese were now in full retrogression, and every point they might gain was certain to become a new fulcrum for forcing more and more concessions from the foreign Powers. This was proved in many kinds of ways. For example, the restrictions placed on the foreign envoys, by which they were kept as prisoners in their Legations, and were attended in their walks abroad by officious guards who prevented them from seeing more than could be helped, and forbade intercourse with the people, were almost tantamount to those formerly imposed on the Dutch in Deshima. Mr Oliphant frankly speaks of his "jailors." Then repression, and yet more repression—as much repression, in fact, as the foreigners could be brought to endure—was the unvarying rule. Even when they were themselves seeking favours, and had therefore every inducement to show their liberal side to the foreign Minister, the rule of repression was rigorously maintained. Mr Alcock relates how this determination prevented him from presenting the Queen's reply to the Tycoon's letter. First, the audience was delayed on frivolous grounds; then the ceremonial was varied. Among other things it was proposed to place the envoy at double the distance from the Tycoon which had been observed on a previous occasion. Being anxious to take his leave, to present his *locum tenens*, and to deliver the Queen's autograph, Mr Alcock waived these innovations under protest—"being reluctant at the last moment to stand upon a point of mere etiquette"; but "having found my desire was strong not to raise difficulties on any minor points, it had been resolved [by the Japanese] to profit by the circumstance to gain some further advantages derogatory to the position of the British Minister," and so after everything had been arranged according to their own wishes the Court officials returned the following day to say they had made a mistake, and that, in fact, sundry further restrictions must be observed. This was too much, and the Minister quitted the capital without his audience, March 1862. [48]

The same tactics were observed by the envoys in Europe. When the mission reached London and had laid their case before the same Foreign Secretary who had instructed the Minister in Japan to "make no concessions without equivalents," he at once conceded the whole of the Japanese demands unconditionally, for the nominal conditions were merely that the rest of the treaty should stand. A detailed memorandum of the agreement was drawn up and formally signed by Earl Russell and the three Japanese envoys on June 6, 1862. Having succeeded beyond all expectation in their demands, the Japanese envoys evidently concluded that the Foreign Office was of plastic substance, and within two days they had formulated a list of nine further concessions which they desired to discuss. This, however, was too much for Lord Russell's patience, and as the envoys had "completed their business and taken their leave," he declined to enter on any fresh questions. [49]

The effect of Lord Russell's concessions could not be otherwise than detrimental, the only open question being whether his insistence on opening the ports on the agreed dates would have been a greater or a lesser evil. Mr Alcock points out the family likeness between the Japanese pleas for suspension of treaty rights and those with which we had so long been familiar in China. "The time," he says, allowed to the authorities of Canton to "soothe the people and prepare the way" was deliberately used by them to "create the very difficulties which they alleged already to exist, and make it each year more and more impossible to admit the foreigners,"—a comment on the Japanese proposal which leaves little doubt as to his opinion of that transaction. Yet there were cogent reasons for the course actually adopted, if the premisses be granted that the ports could only be opened by force, and that England would have been left alone to employ the necessary force. The most that can be said, then, for the concessions to the Japanese is that they represented the choice of evils. No one was benefited by them. They did not help the Tycoon or avert the catastrophe to his dynasty. They did not lessen the friction, or the danger to foreign life and interests, or interrupt the long series of assassinations of foreigners in Japan; nor did they obviate the necessity of using force in that country, to avoid which was the principal inducement to her Majesty's Government to violate its own principle. The analogy with China was, in fact, complete; the old lesson was once more driven home, that there is no safety in doing wrong. As Sir Rutherford Alcock puts it, "To retrograde safely and with dignity is often more difficult for nations and their governments than to advance." [50]

During the year 1861 an important improvement was inaugurated in respect to the housing of the foreign Legations. Hitherto they had been accommodated in temples neither suited to Western modes of living nor, as had been proved, adapted for defence. Independent sites were now allotted on a commanding ridge within the city, where the respective Ministers might have buildings erected on their own plans. These were promptly put in hand, and soon after Mr Alcock was able to bring his first arduous campaign—a term applicable in its double sense—to a close. Having brought the various business of the Legation into a state convenient for transfer to new hands, he left Yedo in March 1862, a few days before the arrival of the future *chargé d'affaires*, Lieutenant-Colonel Edward St John Neale. The Minister was accompanied to England by Moriyama, the chief interpreter to the Japanese Foreign Office, who was charged with special instructions to the three envoys then in England. [51]

From the time that Colonel Neale took charge of the British Legation events chased each other rapidly. While the new buildings were in progress the *chargé d'affaires* divided his time between Yedo and Yokohama, and while in the capital continued to reside in the temple called To-zen-ji, where the Legation had been located from the beginning. The inner buildings were guarded by the mounted escort and by the naval contingent, which had been renewed as one British warship

took the place of another during the year. In the outer enclosure there was a guard of 500 Japanese, the retainers of a certain Daimio who was intrusted by the Tycoon with the protection of the Legation.

In order to understand what follows, it is necessary to give Colonel Neale's account of the arrangements which were in force for the protection of the British Legation:—

I found on my arrival that the usual precautions had been taken by the authorities, and which consisted in placing numerous guards, entirely surrounding this residence, in detached wooden huts: the number of these guards, according to the Japanese return which I obtained, amounted to no less than 535 men, partly of the Tycoon's bodyguard, but chiefly composed of the retainers of a Daimio named Matsudaira Temba no Kami, who had been chosen and charged by the Government with the protection of this Legation.

Small parties of these men came down at short intervals during the night to the very doors of this residence, and remained for a short time with our own sentries, leaving behind them one man at each post to aid in challenging persons approaching and demanding the parole, which was in the Japanese language, and issued at sunset each evening.

These dispositions were uninterruptedly observed up to the evening of the 26th June. At midnight on that day the several British sentinels were at their post, and challenging with vigilance the Japanese guards, who, in parties of two or three, descended from the heights overhanging this building at the back for the purpose of relieving their men.

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What took place at midnight on the 26th June may also be best described in Colonel Neale's own language:—

At half an hour after midnight the British sentry posted at the door adjoining my bedroom challenged some approaching object in my hearing, and received in answer the right parole; but the sentry sharply challenged again in an anxious and eager manner, as if some circumstance excited his suspicion, after which he walked three or four steps towards the object approaching. I rose in bed to hear the result, and in an instant the deadened sound of a rapid succession of heavy blows and cuts reached my ears, given in less than two minutes, and at every one of which followed a cry of anguish from the unfortunate sentry. Silence succeeded for the moment, and was followed by the beating of drums from the heights and the gathering of Japanese guards with their red lanterns.... The assassin having left the sentry at my door, went on towards the corner of the residence occupied by the guard, a distance of twenty paces, where he met Corporal Crimp, R.M., coming alone on his rounds to visit the sentry at my door. A conflict appears instantly to have taken place between them: a revolver-shot was heard about the moment the guard was turning out, but nothing further.

The corporal was found dead with sixteen sword and lance wounds: the sentry had nine sword-wounds—"every cut had severed the member it was aimed at"; but he survived long enough to tell of the instant desertion of the Japanese sentry who was posted with him.

This attack was marked by several distinguishing features:—

1. The assassins belonged to the Legation guard, or were their comrades; the only weapon found on the ground was a lance of the precise pattern of those of the Daimio's guard, which was twelve feet long, and, according to Colonel Neale, no man carrying such a weapon could have passed the strong barricade or crawled through the brushwood: presumably, therefore, the lance was supplied from the armoury within the Legation. According to the Japanese Ministers, there was but a single assassin. In their anxiety to maintain their contention that the wounds were all inflicted by the same man, the Ministers explained to Colonel Neale a little of the science of Japanese sword-play. "They have attained the climax of dexterity. The sword is always carried at the side, and adepts in the use of it wound the moment it is drawn." The fatal stroke, upwards, is given in the act of drawing. Hence, placing the hand on the hilt is equivalent to presenting a cocked revolver, and if the assailant is not disabled in the act it is too late for defence. One only, being wounded by a pistol-bullet and having committed suicide, was found, and though they could not help admitting that the man was a retainer of the Daimio who supplied the guard, the Ministers yet drew a vain distinction between him and the men actually on duty. It could not, however, be denied that he, or they, were allowed free ingress and egress through hundreds of men carefully posted as described by Colonel Neale, and already alert and sounding the alarm, or that the huts of the Japanese were within 150 feet of the spot where two Englishmen were murdered, and while the assassin (or assassins) was inflicting sixteen wounds on one victim and nine on the other.

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2. The intended attack was publicly known beforehand: for several days the Japanese servants had refused to remain in the Legation overnight, absenting themselves against orders. The Government also were aware of the plot, and of the day when it was to be put in execution, which was on the recurrence of a festival, and, according to the Japanese calendar, the anniversary of the attack in 1861. The actual day having passed, one of the Governors of Foreign Affairs was deputed by the Council to call and congratulate Colonel Neale on his escape. Colonel Neale remarked that he had no reason for anxiety. The Governor smiled and took leave. But the "ides of March ... had not gone," In the darkness of that very night the attack was made. Colonel Neale, recounting the circumstances to the Council of Foreign Affairs, asked why the Governor had not warned him of what was impending, instead of congratulating him on his supposed escape; but "the Gorogiu, to my great surprise, replied that I was quite right in my observations, and they regretted they had not thought of warning me."

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3. The Japanese Ministers treated the whole matter with apparent indifference, months having elapsed before any information was communicated to the British Minister respecting either the

cause of the attack or the execution of justice on the instigators, and then it was only such information as had been common property for two months. All that the Japanese Ministers had to say by way of explanation to the foreign envoys was that the attack proceeded from the unsettled state of public feeling and from the Japanese nation clinging to the old *régime*; but that they, the Ministers, hoped gradually to modify this national feeling so that the foreigners might live in the country without apprehension, &c. But in the meantime? Well, they "had given strict orders to increase the protection." Tragicomedies could not well go further. Evidently matters must soon reach a climax.

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As the first outward and visible consequence of the assassination of the two marines, an infantry guard of twenty-five men from the 67th Regiment was sent over from China in addition to the naval guard and the cavalry escort; and thus another step was taken towards the *dénoûment* of the plot. Then the word "retribution" was revived in the diplomatic correspondence, after having been launched by the Foreign Office in 1861 but arrested *in transitu*, so that it did not reach the Japanese authorities. It was Admiral Hope, a man who never shrank from speaking his mind or backing his opinion, who put the case in a pointed form to the British Admiralty. "Deeply as I should lament the adoption of hostile measures against the Japanese," he wrote on August 28, "after the best consideration I have been able to give to the subject I cannot avoid the conclusion that it is absolutely necessary to nip this assassination-system in the bud; and that not to take effectual measures for doing so now will be merely to postpone the evil day to a future, but not far distant, occasion."

If further impetus had been wanting to develop this idea, the Japanese lost no time in supplying it; for the next assassination which has left a dark blood-stain on the annals of the time was perpetrated on the highroad between Yedo and Kanagawa on September 14, 1862.

The victims were a party of three gentlemen and one lady from Yokohama who had crossed the bay in a boat to Kanagawa, where their horses awaited them on the *tokaido*. This broad road not being macadamised made an agreeable riding-course, and it was beautified with lines of old trees, one section in particular near where the tragedy occurred being known as "The Avenue." The party proceeded from Kanagawa towards Yedo, not intending to go farther than Kawasaki, which was the limit of authorised excursions in that direction. On the way they met the *cortège* of a Daimio, the first indication of which was several *norimono* (the heavy palanquin in which the nobles of Japan travel) with armed attendants, forming an irregular train with considerable intervals between. When passing these *norimono* the foreigners walked their horses. In the intervals where the road was clear they cantered, and this mode of alternate progression continued for three or four miles. Then a regular procession was met, preceded by about a hundred men marching in single file on either side of the road. The foreign party thereupon proceeded at a foot's pace, keeping close to the left side, until they reached "the main body, which was then occupying the whole breadth of the road." The English party halted on approaching the main body, according to one of the survivors; but according to another, they were stopped "when they had got about twelve men deep in the procession," by "a man of large stature^[7] issuing from the main body," who, swinging his sword with both hands, cut at the two leading foreigners, Mr Richardson and Mrs Borrodaile, as their horses were being turned round, and then rushed on the other two. Whereupon the advance-guard, who had been described as marching in single file, closed in upon the retreating riders. They were all able by the speed of their horses to get clear of their assailants; but Mr Richardson was so terribly hacked that after going some distance he fell from his horse, dying, or, as his companions thought, dead. He lived, however, until the Daimio's procession reached the spot, when several of his retainers proceeded to butcher and mutilate the dying man in the most shocking manner. It speaks well for all three gentlemen that Mrs Borrodaile escaped substantially unhurt, though a sword-stroke aimed at her head cut away her hat as she stooped to avoid the blow. She saw Mr Richardson fall, and her two wounded companions, unable to render help, urged her to ride on. She miraculously arrived at Yokohama, bespattered with blood and in a state of very natural agitation. Mr Clarke and Mr Marshall, exhausted by their wounds, managed to reach Kanagawa, where they were properly cared for at the American consulate.

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This tragedy made a more vivid impression on the world at large than previous ones had done, for several reasons. The cumulative effect of so many cold-blooded massacres was beginning to tell, and the Japanese cup was nearly full. There was a lady in the case who galloped seven miles for dear life, her horse falling twice under her. The chief victim was a fine specimen of a young Englishman, and very popular. The crime touched the general foreign community in Japan in a special manner, since the party belonged to, or were the guests of, Yokohama, where there were also newspapers and press correspondents to make literature of the event.

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Some friction was created between the foreign community and the British representative by the ghastly circumstances of this murder. The community, seeing their own comrades slaughtered without mercy, were incensed, and called for vengeance, which they deemed to be within reach, for the Daimio's retainers were sleeping at Hodogaya, a station but a few miles off. There was force enough afloat and on shore to effect the capture of the murderers red-handed, and the residents called for this to be done. Reasons of policy and expediency influenced Colonel Neale in a contrary sense, in which he was fully supported by the Foreign Office when the reports reached England.

The Richardson murder, like that at the British Legation, had its special characteristics, though of a different order. The outrage was unpremeditated; the Government was not implicated: it was a fortuitous collision between the spirit and traditions of two opposed civilisations. The deed

might be construed as the natural punishment of a breach of good manners—for Japanese etiquette, of which the party seemed to have been ignorant, required them to dismount—or, as the spontaneous expression of feudal Japan's deep hatred of the foreigner, concentrated in the act of a single moment. There was no need on this occasion to hazard guesses as to the responsible author of the crime, or to keep up a long train of make-believe negotiations. The *cortège* belonged to the Prince of Satsuma, and was escorting his father, Shimadso Saburo, who went afterwards to the Mikado and said he had been grossly insulted by the foreigners on the road, and had ordered them to be cut down.^[8]

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The problem was thus reduced to its simplest expression. The circumstances supplied precisely what was wanting to give shape and point to Admiral Hope's proposal to "nip this assassination-system in the bud"; and a month after the event he followed up his previous despatch to the Admiralty by a detailed scheme of reprisals, with the amount and precise distribution of the force required to give effect to it. And he concludes his despatch appropriately with the remark, that "should it be found necessary to use measures of coercion especially against Satsuma, ... the position and confirmation of his principality render him peculiarly open to attack."

There were now two reclamations on the Japanese Government—redress for the murder of the two marines at the Legation in June, and for the killing and wounding of the Richardson party in September. The British *chargé d'affaires* pressed both demands, without committing himself to specific threats until the mind of her Majesty's Government should be known. Lord Russell's instructions were sent on 24th December 1862, and would reach Japan some time in February. They were peremptory as to the use of force in case of need, whether against the Government or the Prince of Satsuma.

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V. THE TYCOON'S DILEMMA.

Strife of parties in Japan—Impotence of Tycoon—His prospective overthrow—Orders issued by Mikado to drive foreigners out of Japan—Prevarications of Tycoon—Plots and counterplots—French and English troops in Yokohama—Compensation paid for the Richardson murder, but assassin not yet brought to justice—Demand made on Prince of Satsuma—Bombardment of his castle by Admiral Kuper—Happy results—Offensive attitude of Prince of Nagato—Firing on foreign ships of war—Sir R. Alcock's return from furlough—Publication of his book 'The Capital of the Tycoon'—His exposition of the political status of parties in Japan—Dubious attitude of Tycoon—And Mikado—Utmost limit of concession to Japanese pleas of weakness reached.

During the interval that elapsed between the tragedy of September 1862 and the expiation of the crime, revelations of a startling character were made respecting the strife which was raging among the various parties in the State—the Tycoon, the Mikado, the great Daimios, and the lesser Daimios, who followed the Tycoon and the Mikado respectively. These revelations, however, though they lit up as by lurid lightning-flashes some corners of the landscape, left the whole in a fog more treacherous than total darkness. The foreign officials who were called upon to act in the midst of it confessed themselves unable to unravel the mystery that surrounded them, nor is it any part of our task to make such an attempt. It was the chaos which preceded order, a period when the elemental forces were in the melting-pot, a phase of foreshortened evolution such as had never till then been dreamed of. However trying such an ordeal was to the foreign agents who had to go through it, the stress upon them was as nothing compared to that which lay upon the principalities and powers of the country itself during the agony of their national birth-throes—a circumstance which has to be borne in mind when judging of the behaviour of the Japanese Government in that trying time; for truly the defence of their proceedings stood much in need of extenuating circumstances.

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We have seen that the British Government had already confessed its belief that the Tycoon's Government was incompetent to maintain order where foreigners were concerned. Yet until that Government itself should plead incompetence, foreign States could only hold it wholly accountable for all that was done affecting their interests. But the Tycoon's Government fought tooth and nail against such admission, resorting to every subterfuge to maintain their status, while yet evading the responsibilities of the position. The success of this ambiguous policy required that the foreign representatives should be kept in ignorance of the relations which subsisted between the different parties in the Japanese State. Hence secrecy and misdirection governed their diplomatic intercourse. The treaties themselves having been tainted from their origin with deception, every stage of their execution was marked by dissimulation, which came gradually to light as the pressure from within and from without caused now one corner, now another, of the curtain to be raised.

The Tycoon was between the upper and the nether millstone,—foreigners pressing him for fulfilment of his obligations, while a power greater than his own was demanding the complete repudiation, or at least the substantial curtailment, of all these obligations. The straits he was put to to keep up his two faces were pitiable and desperate, for he had to make the Mikado and the Daimios believe he was as much opposed to the foreigners as they were, while to foreigners he was professing loyalty and throwing the blame of the reaction on the hostile Daimios. Instigated by them, the Mikado had fully asserted his authority, and the Tycoon was no longer able to pose as the sovereign ruler of Japan. The allocation of a site for the foreign Legations on Gotenyama, a popular pleasure-ground in Yedo, was attacked, and the Tycoon ordered to rescind the grant, which he endeavoured to do by proposing the substitution of another site. This being refused by

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the British *chargé d'affaires*, the Japanese sentry on the buildings under construction was assassinated, and soon after the whole building was blown up and burned.^[9] So ambiguous had become the attitude of the Tycoon, that Colonel Neale was in doubt whether this conflagration pleased or displeased the Yedo Government. (Six months later the buildings occupied by the United States Legation were likewise destroyed by fire.) The hostile Daimios, in the name of the Mikado, were, in fact, putting strong pressure on the Tycoon, while those Daimios who had favoured the treaties had been punished by confiscation of their revenues. The Tycoon's position was fast becoming untenable, and in the last extremity his advisers decided to take the foreign representatives for the first time into their confidence.

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In January 1863 a Governor of Foreign Affairs informed Colonel Neale that the Mikado was angry because he had not been consulted about the treaties, either before or after the signing of them; and that his Majesty had ordered the Tycoon repeatedly to drive foreigners out of the country. "But," replied the British *chargé d'affaires*, "that is wholly inconsistent with what the Gorogiu previously told Sir Rutherford Alcock." "Quite so," rejoined the Governor; "only what the Ministers told Sir Rutherford Alcock was false." "But if one member of the Gorogiu can thus give the other the lie, what security have we that some successor of yours will not equally disavow what you say? so that at one time we have the Mikado reported as friendly and at another as hostile to foreign treaties and trade, and we shall never know which to believe." This not very promising beginning of "confidences" was quickly followed by singular confessions and proposals—part of the system of "frauds, stratagems, and deceptions practised by the Tycoon's Government," as Colonel Neale characterises them. The Tycoon's Government was ordered to communicate officially to the foreign representatives the mandate of the Mikado to drive out foreigners and close the ports. In obedience to this order a Governor of Foreign Affairs, in announcing the fact to the French Minister, softened its effect by explaining that this was carrying out the Mikado's orders "officially"; but "ce n'est là qu'un stratagème nécessaire pour tromper le peuple japonais." In developing his plan of campaign the Governor laid bare to the French Minister the intention of the Tycoon to deceive the Mikado by pretending to share his views about foreigners; he was in like manner to deceive the Daimios. Ogasawara, the Minister who was responsible for carrying out the edict against foreigners, being "un homme très capable," would find a means of avoiding the execution; he would himself go to Kioto and make the Mikado listen to reason; if he refused, then he would pick a quarrel and employ force against the sovereign. In that case would the foreign Powers assist the Tycoon? All this, however, must be kept from Hitotsubashi, the First Minister of the Tycoon, "whose views were as yet uncertain whether to carry out the expulsive orders from Kioto or not. Ogasawara had formed the plan to declare himself the enemy of foreigners in order to deceive the high officers even of the Tycoon who might not be favourable to his scheme; but everything was to be done to "save Japan." Finally, Ogasawara was to come the day following himself to interview the foreign Ministers at Yokohama, but not a word of all this would he utter "for fear of indiscretions." He would only speak briefly to the point of the notification of the Mikado's order of expulsion. And if the foreign Ministers would be good enough to frame their reply to that message in such severe terms as would make an impression on the agitators in Kioto and Yedo, it would assist the patriotic schemes of this bustling statesman. So everybody in Japan from the highest to the lowest was to be bamboozled—even one's own colleagues in the Tycoon's service—and the only people with whom faith was to be kept were the detested foreigners, as represented by the Ministers of England and France! Well might Colonel Neale recoil in disgust from such a brewage of "fraud, stratagem, and deception." The Tycoon's officers had in all this one definite object in view, which was to induce the foreign squadrons then menacing Yedo to transfer themselves to Osaka and Hiogo and menace some one in that part of the empire. And, curiously enough, the presence of the French troops which had recently arrived in Yokohama was not only tolerated by the Tycoon, but they were to serve him as a lever whereby the astute Ogasawara was to work on the feelings of the Mikado, by representing to his sovereign the indignation of the foreign Governments and the difficulty of giving effect to an order for general expulsion, which would include a body of well-armed troops.

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For while such comedies were being enacted at Yokohama the Tycoon himself was at Kioto under the friendly surveillance of the Mikado and his faithful Daimios, and it was a reasonable enough calculation that the vicinity of foreign fleets might tend to moderate the counsels of these recalcitrants, to ease the tension between the contending factions, and lighten the burden of the Tycoon.

Meantime the pressure of the British demands for redress of the two grievances was met by evasions and delays until the ultimatum stage was reached in June 1863. The pecuniary indemnity charged on the Tycoon, amounting to £110,000, was then paid under circumstances so peculiar as to be worth recounting as affording further insight into the agitations of the period. After exhaustive negotiations, leading to an ultimatum, an agreement was made whereby the Government was to pay the amount demanded by seven instalments, commencing 18th June 1863. On the 17th June Ogasawara, third member of the Gorogiu, wrote a curt note to say the money could not be paid owing to an "unforeseen circumstance," and postponing payment till 22nd June. On the 19th the same Minister wrote to Colonel Neale that he intended to have left Yedo for Yokohama for an interview, but was prevented by sudden illness. This was followed by an intimation from the Government that no payment whatever would be made. Diplomatic relations were thereupon broken off by the British *chargé d'affaires*, and the conduct of affairs was placed in the hands of the admiral. This brought about the interview with the French Minister above alluded to, when the Japanese emissaries promised to pay at once the whole

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amount due under the agreement with Colonel Neale, and the specie was actually conveyed in four cartloads to the British Legation on 24th June. The only explanation given of this strange shuffle was that the numerous enemies of the Tycoon and of foreigners were on the watch, and threatened terrible consequences if any money should be paid to the foreigners. That difficulty, however, had been surmounted by the resourceful Japanese Machiavel issuing strict orders that the payment should be kept a dead secret from all except the Governors of Foreign Affairs themselves,—the four cartloads of silver, drawn each by a dozen or two of men, grunting laboriously at the task, from the Japanese custom-house to the British Legation, remaining for this purpose conveniently invisible to a cloud of hostile witnesses.

The demands made on the Tycoon in respect of the attack on the British Legation and on the Richardson party being thus satisfied, it only remained to carry out the second portion of Earl Russell's instructions and exact equal satisfaction from the Prince of Satsuma, over whom the Yedo Government had shown itself to have no control whatever. Much delay had occurred, due to a variety of circumstances—mainly to the aggressive acts of another great Daimio, Choshu, who possessed the western key of the Inland Sea. This might have necessitated a concentration of the British squadron in that spot—which actually came to pass a year later. Finally, however, Rear-Admiral Sir Augustus Kuper proceeded in August to the Bay of Kagoshima, the stronghold of the Satsuma principality, Colonel Neale accompanying him to present the demand on the prince with which he had been intrusted by the British Government. [67]

The sole reply vouchsafed by the Daimio was a recommendation to Colonel Neale to return to Yedo and treat with the Tycoon, as Satsuma had no relations with Great Britain. It was now the admiral's turn to act, and his first step in the way of reprisal was the seizing of three steamers, then lying in the bay, which were soon burned to relieve the squadron of their charge. Thereupon the Daimio's forts opened fire, and a hot engagement ensued in the midst of a terrific gale, which the prince's people afterwards said was reckoned on as a condition favourable for his attack on the foreign ships. There was considerable loss of life on both sides; much damage was done to the Daimio's defences, arsenal, and magazines. But the inhabitants of the town escaped injury from the conflagration, they having previously been removed to places of safety. The squadron returned to the Bay of Yedo. [68]

Within a short time the Prince of Satsuma sued for terms, paid the indemnity demanded, £25,000, promised to punish the murderer of Richardson, when caught, and became a good friend to the English, to the extent at least of desiring to cultivate relations with them.

Thus happily ended the first hostile encounter between Japan and any Western Power, the first demonstration of the superiority of foreign arms, and, as some think, the baptism of fire which was the inaugurating rite by which Japan entered into the comity and the competition of the Western nations, and into that path of material progress which has since led to such astonishing results.

The attitude of the Yedo Government in this affair may be said to have been one of placid observation. They had nothing to regret in the chastisement inflicted on a prince who set their authority at defiance.

In the interval of time between the settlement of the indemnities for the two outrages and the departure of the fleet for Kagoshima the Tycoon's Ministers had drawn closer and closer to the foreign representatives, and English steamers were chartered for conveyance of the Tycoon's troops to Osaka with the knowledge and approval of the British authorities. The defence of Yokohama was by the Government voluntarily confided to the English and French admirals, and sanguine hopes were held out to the foreign representatives that if the Tycoon should succeed in his endeavours at Kioto, foreign relations would assume a totally different aspect on his return to his capital.

On the other hand, while the negotiations with the Yedo Government had been dragging their slow length along, another of the great princes had taken arms against the foreign Powers indiscriminately. The Daimio Choshu had made a strong stand against foreign intercourse, and in a well-reasoned and moderately worded letter addressed to the Tycoon in May 1862 he urged union between that high officer and the Mikado in order that the country might be placed in a condition to resist foreigners. The territory of the Prince of Nagato, as he was also designated, commanded the narrow strait of Shimonoséki, which connects the Suwonada, or Inland Sea, with the outer waters. This had become the regular route of steamers between the Bay of Yedo and the south of Japan, as at this day. [69]

Moved by an impulse which was not cleared up at the time, if ever it has been since, Choshu began in July 1863 to fire from his forts and from armed vessels in the straits on passing steamers. French, American, and Dutch war-vessels were successively bombarded as they entered the passage. The fire was returned, and damage inflicted on the Daimio's batteries; but such was the power of their guns and their precision of aim that many were killed and wounded on the foreign ships, some of which were obliged to retire without getting through the strait. The prince remained obdurate and continued his hostile proceedings, a steamer belonging to the Tycoon and another belonging to Satsuma, said to be the friend and ally of Choshu, coming in for the customary salutation as they passed. He embargoed or destroyed trading junks attempting to pass the straits, and thus established an effective blockade of the great commercial artery of Japan.

It was droll to find Satsuma, soon after the affair of Kagoshima, appealing to the Mikado against [70]

these outrages of Nagato, and opposing the reactionary policy of his quondam ally. Satsuma had had his lesson; Nagato had yet to receive his.

Sir Rutherford Alcock returned to his post after two years' furlough. His distinguished services had been recognised by the Queen's Government, who conferred on him the honour of Knight Commander of the Bath. In the same year, 1862, he completed his valuable work, 'The Capital of the Tycoon,' which for the first time brought the real Japan of that day to the knowledge of the reading world. This, the most important single literary work left by the busy pen of Sir Rutherford Alcock, is a storehouse of information on the history, civilisation, politics, religion, art, and industry of Japan, carefully sifted and presented in the most attractive form. It contains, moreover, a vivid narrative of the reopening of international intercourse with that country, and of the stirring incidents which marked the earlier years of its progress. It is also a philosophical study at first hand of the most remarkable political evolution that history records. Considering the official activity and high tension under which the materials were gathered, the writing of such a book, of a Japanese Grammar, and other literary and artistic studies, is a proof of the intellectual detachment which is usually associated with the higher order of mind. This work of a single pioneer observer has well borne the scrutiny of the innumerable host of students, grave and gay, who have followed in the same path. After forty years its authority remains intact. A short extract will at once show the character of the book and afford a convenient summary of the then Government of Japan:— [71]

That the Mikado is the hereditary sovereign of the empire, the descendant of a long and uninterrupted line of sovereigns of the same dynasty, and the only sovereign *de jure* recognised by all Japanese from the Tycoon to the lowest beggar—a true sovereign in all the legal attributes of sovereignty; and that the Tycoon receives investiture from him as his lieutenant or generalissimo, *and as such only*, the head of the executive, is known to most readers of the present day. True, the Mikados have been shorn of much of their power since Yoritomo, in 1143, profiting by civil commotions among the princes of the land, and armed with power as generalissimo to humble these turbulent chiefs, only suppressed the troubles to arrogate to himself the greater part of the sovereign power under the title given by a grateful master of Ziogun. Another Pepin d'Héristal and mayor of the palace, he did not care to dethrone the descendant of an illustrious line of emperors, and was content with holding the reins, and transmitting the same privilege to his descendants. And so the power continued divided in great degree, the shadow from the substance, until later, towards the close of the sixteenth century, a peasant's son and favourite attendant of the actual generalissimo, but known in Japanese history by the name he afterwards assumed of Taiko Sama, raised himself, apparently by great abilities as well as daring, to the seat of power on his master's death, and stripped the reigning Mikado of the last remains of secular power.

Since that time the successive emperors, or Mikados, are brought into the world, and live and die within the precincts of their Court at Miaco (Kioto), the boundaries of which they never pass during their whole life. Is it possible to conceive a less desirable destiny? But the Zioguns, or Tycoons, as they are styled in European treaties, have long been undergoing a somewhat analogous process, under which all substantial power has been transferred from them to the principal Daimios, or Princes, who form a Great Council of State, and whose nominee the Tycoon himself has become, as well, I believe, as all his chief Ministers or councillors. They exercise, if they do not claim, the right of removing both Tycoon and Ministers, and a voice potential in all affairs of State. For legislative changes even the almost forgotten Mikado must indeed give his consent, never of course refused when any unanimity prevails.... [72]

The Mikado of the day is the exact type of the last descendant of Clovis, sitting "sad and solitary, effeminate and degenerate," doomed only to wield "a barren sceptre" and sigh away a burdensome and useless existence of mock pageantry; never permitted to pass the gates of his prison-palace....

This double machinery of a titular sovereign who only reigns, and a lieutenant of the empire who only governs and does not reign, from generation to generation, is certainly something very curious; and by long continuance it seems to have led to a duplicate system such as never existed in any other part of the world, carried out to almost every detail of existence. Every office is doubled; every man is alternately a watcher and watched. Not only the whole administrative machinery is in duplicate, but the most elaborate system of check and countercheck, on the most approved Machiavellian principle, is here developed with a minuteness and perfection as regards details difficult at first to realise. As upon all this is grafted a system of more than oriental mendacity, we feel launched into a world of shadows and make-believes hard to grapple with in the practical business of life. Of their mendacity and cynical views respecting it I had many illustrations. One of the official gentry upon a particular occasion having been found by a foreign Minister in deliberate contradiction with himself, was asked, somewhat abruptly perhaps, how he could reconcile it to his conscience to utter such palpable untruths. With perfect calmness and self-possession he replied, "I told you last month that such and such a thing had been done, and now I tell you the thing has not been done at all. I am an officer whose business it is to carry out the instructions I receive and to say what I am told to say. What have I to do with its truth or falsehood?"...

To return to the Tycoon and the governors of the early middle ages, with its suzerain and feudatories, its fiefs and a phantom king, with hereditary mayors of the palace and chiefs with 10,000 retainers, each one holding himself as good as the Tycoon, who must live in constant dread of open revolt or secret assassination, what a pleasant state of existence for all parties it reveals! Each of these territorial magnates or great Daimios is practically independent of the Tycoon when within his own territory, with power of life and death over all his subjects and dependants; ... even an imperial passport will not secure an intruder's life.... [73]

Power has passed in no small degree from the Tycoon's hands, as it formerly did from the Mikado's, and now remains chiefly in an executive Council of State, consisting of five Ministers, and these again held in no small check, if not in subservience, by the Daimios and feudal chiefs of the higher order, amounting to some 360. Although these do not actually form a Chamber of Lords nor assemble in a body at stated periods, nothing legislative, it is said, can be done without their assent obtained.... They hold themselves too high to demean themselves by taking part in the administration, or holding office, under the Tycoon. But neither the Tycoon nor the Ministers, separately or collectively, can venture upon a change in their laws and customs without their sanction and a further confirmation by the phantom sovereign of Miaco....

In the mean time, between the Mikado who nominally wields the sceptre—the Tycoon, a youth who no less nominally governs the kingdom, and is but fourth in rank in the Japan red-book, for three of the Mikado's officers take precedence—and the Daimios great and small, ... the administrative machinery of the realm seems to be kept in order.

Another incident of the year was Sir Rutherford Alcock's second marriage to a friend of the earlier Shanghai days, the widow of the Rev. T. Lowder, first consular chaplain of that settlement. They had been both widowed about the same time. They were about the same age too, and the union, based on a deep-rooted and matured affection, proved an exceptionally happy one during thirty-five years, till death divided them. Lady Alcock accompanied her husband on his return to Japan, where they arrived in March 1864.

During the two years of the Minister's absence affairs in Japan had, as we have seen, been advancing rapidly—whether towards a reasonable solution or to a catastrophe was as yet doubtful. The agitation against the foreign treaties had been gathering force and consistency; the Tycoon's position was becoming more and more precarious, his existence being pledged to the annulment of the hated treaties. Encouraged by the success which had attended his mission to Europe in 1862, he despatched another in the beginning of 1864, to represent to the European Governments that the public feeling in Japan was growing worse every day, that the Tycoon would not be able to protect foreigners in Yokohama, and that, in short, the port must be closed and foreign trade confined to Hakodate and Nagasaki. The mission, already on its way, was met by Sir Rutherford Alcock in Shanghai, where he had an opportunity of personal conference with the envoys. The situation was thus summarised by the Minister in a despatch to the Foreign Office, 31st March 1864:—

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It is just two years since I left Japan in order to be present in London when the first mission sent by the Tycoon to the treaty Powers in Europe should arrive. Returning to my post a month ago, I met a second mission on its way to the same Courts. These two embassies seem to me to form very significant events in the history of Japan and its relations with foreign States.... I consider the signing of the protocol of June 1862 (afterwards adopted with unimportant modifications by all the other Powers), freely granting without abatement all that the Tycoon asked, was the culminating act and fitting end of the conciliatory policy so consistently adhered to from the beginning. It was impossible to concede more without abandoning the treaties altogether. Thenceforth it only remained to gather the promised fruit of greater security to life, and freer intercourse within narrowed limits, which, for the moment at least, appeared unattainable in the wider range of five ports and two cities.... The avowed object of the second mission is to declare that all the hopes held out by the Tycoon of the probable results of the first concessions have been illusory.... The only fruit has been indiscriminate aggression, increased insecurity, calling for measures of coercion on the part of all the treaty Powers; finally, a decree for the expulsion of foreigners, with a mission from the Tycoon to declare his utter inability to maintain the treaties, and to suggest a surrender of all the rights and privileges they were framed to secure in perpetuity.

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The mission was not successful in its main purpose, and soon returned to Japan to report progress.

VI. THE CRISIS.

Foreign rights must be sustained by force or definitively abandoned—Organises a retaliatory demonstration against Nagato—Forts at Shimonoséki attacked by international squadron, after delays—Satisfactory results—Nagato claims authority of Mikado for his attacks on foreign ships—His defeat gave courage to Tycoon—Anti-foreign measures promptly withdrawn—The treaties of 1858 ratified by Mikado—Sir R. Alcock's recall—Lord Russell's *amende*.

The Tycoon's Government had actually succeeded by patient persistence in evil-doing in making Yedo "too hot to hold" the foreign representatives, who had in consequence gradually accustomed themselves to residence in the freer air of Yokohama. "Incendiarism and assassination had done their work and effected the end for which they were employed," writes Sir Rutherford Alcock, who goes on to remark that "the recovery of this lapsed right" (of residence in the capital) "will have now to follow, not precede, other measures." So far had the foreign nations retreated before the forces of reaction, forces which necessarily acquired cohesion and momentum with each retrograde step of the opposing Powers. The country, meaning thereby the official hierarchy, was now at least, if not before, practically unanimous. Mikado, Daimios, the Tycoon himself, however they may have been embittered by their mutual jealousies, were now united, and passionately united, in the determination to expel the foreigners, so far as it might be possible,—on which latter point, however, there was room for great differences of opinion. The Prince of Nagato might be a rebel against the Tycoon's or the

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Mikado's authority, both of whom had disavowed his proceedings, but his determination to block the passage of the Inland Sea and suppress all trade but his own was an important part of the national policy of expulsion. It appeared that the only friend of foreigners at that time was the Prince of Satsuma, who had become a changed man since his stronghold was bombarded, and he began to see that the restoration of imperial rule and deposition of the Tycoon might be accomplished by the assistance of foreigners. That event was undoubtedly accelerated by the policy of the first two British ministers in Japan.

The new position was reviewed under a sense of deep personal responsibility by Sir Rutherford Alcock in several despatches during the spring of 1864, and, as we have seen, the conclusion he arrived at was that the utmost limit of concession to Japanese exigencies had been reached: everything had been given up to them that could be given up without abandoning the treaties entirely and leaving the country. There was not even room left for negotiation. "No attempt at a compromise of such conflicting pretensions could possibly succeed." "Compromise or concession is plainly impossible in the nature of things." Moreover, Earl Russell had enjoined on both the *chargé d'affaires* and the Minister to stand firmly for their rights. His latest instruction to Sir Rutherford Alcock on his departure from England was, "You will in any case require from the Tycoon and the Daimios the execution of the treaty." In the face of a determination to annul the treaties this necessitated some vigorous action. [77]

The most obvious and most straightforward course indicated was to deal a decisive blow against the Prince of Nagato, who for nearly twelve months had set the whole of the Western Powers at defiance. He was more accessible from the salt water than even Satsuma; he was repudiated, hypocritically or not, by his sovereign; and a punitive expedition to Shimonoséki would not involve detriment to trade or inflict injury on innocent people. Such an operation had, moreover, much to recommend it from the point of view of general Japanese policy; for "in attacking in his stronghold the most violent and rash of his class, it may be possible," said the British Minister, "by one blow to paralyse the whole body of Daimios.... The command of the Inland Sea and the whole internal trade of that portion of Japan which must of necessity be in our hands during any operations would do more, probably, to bring the Court of the Mikado and of Yedo to a sense of the danger and folly of entering upon hostilities with the treaty Powers than any course of diplomacy.... The alternative is a probable catastrophe, and a war of a protracted kind at no distant period."

About this time the appeals which for two years had been made in vain to the British military authorities in China for a sufficient force to give security at Yokohama were listened to, and a regiment of infantry, the 20th, and of marines, were detached from Hongkong and a force of Beloochis from Shanghai. One of the anomalies of an unprecedented situation was that the Government, which was concerting measures to expel all foreigners, was nevertheless constrained to provide accommodation for these troops, "which were not to make war, but to prevent acts which would lead to war." For all that, the presence of foreign troops on the sacred soil was far from palatable, even though the Tycoon might secretly acquiesce in the reasoning by which the British Minister had commended a measure which was in any case an unavoidable necessity. [78]

The arrival of these troops had a marked effect on the tactics of the Tycoon. For ten months his Government, which had been powerless and passive regarding the warlike proceeding of Choshu, now became alarmed lest the foreigners were about to take the law into their own hands with that recalcitrant Prince. The Tycoon's Ministers began to affect much concern for his punishment and repression. They would at once move against him, and until the result of their efforts was known they urged that the British garrison should remain absolutely passive in Yokohama.

For effective action against the Daimio Choshu it was necessary that an agreement should be come to among the treaty Powers, three of whom had been in actual collision with his batteries and armed ships. Individually Great Britain had not received this direct provocation, and was only interested in the general question of the obstruction to commerce and in the maintenance of the political status of the Powers. How the concert was brought about would be an interesting inquiry, but we may safely conclude that the achievement owed much to two causes, one positive and one negative. The former was the strong will, clear sight, and absolute fearlessness of responsibility of the British Minister; the latter was the non-existence of any ocean telegraph. For, as we have so frequently seen nearer home, the direct efforts of the Great Powers to arrive at any agreement for common action are always protracted, often abortive, and seldom successful. The decision in this case had to be taken by the agents on the spot, personally intimate with each other, acting on general principles and on a free interpretation of the instructions from their Governments. And so it came to pass that within three months after Sir Rutherford Alcock's arrival in Japan the Ministers of France, the United States, the Netherlands, and Great Britain had signed a protocol in which they agreed to make a fresh representation in the nature of an ultimatum to the Tycoon's Government, calling upon it to adopt means to put an end to the hostilities of the Prince of Nagato, and informing it that on no account would their Governments allow the port of Yokohama to be closed. This agreement of May 1864 was the natural sequel to a declaration of 25th July 1863, by which the same four Powers had intimated to the Tycoon the necessity of reopening the Inland Sea, but which had remained without any acknowledgment by the Government. The new *note identique* addressed to the Gorogiu was equally left unacknowledged by that body. [79]

Nothing therefore remained but to take the respective naval commanders into counsel. The

Ministers had no authority over them, but it was quickly found that the concert of admirals and captains was as perfect as that of the diplomatic body. The ships of the four Powers—Great Britain, France, United States, and Netherlands—were placed under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir Augustus Kuper, and a plan of action was settled upon.

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The advance to Shimonoséki was still, however, delayed by two circumstances. The first was the return from Europe of two Japanese students, out of five who had been sent there the previous year by that very Prince of Choshu against whom coercive measures were about to be undertaken. These young men, hearing while abroad of the proceedings of their chief, and convinced, from what they had seen in Europe, of the overwhelming resources of the Powers, that Choshu was bringing disaster on himself in forcing battle on such antagonists, resolved to hurry back to Japan with the express object of warning their prince of his danger. The arrival of the two youths in Yedo was thought by the foreign Ministers to offer some chance of coming to terms with Choshu without the arbitrament of arms, and accordingly facilities were afforded by Vice-Admiral Kuper for landing the two travellers at the nearest convenient point to their prince's territory. They were intrusted with overtures of peace in the form of a long memorandum from the British Minister, reviewing the whole situation, and explaining the attitude of the Powers and the hopelessness of the armed resistance of any Daimio. The messengers brought back to the rendezvous, where a light-draught vessel waited for them, an oral reply from the prince explaining his attitude and asking for three months' delay to enable Choshu to confer with the Mikado and Tycoon, by whose orders he had done what he had done, and without whose consent he dare not change his policy. It is interesting to recall the fact that the names of the two youthful emissaries were Ito and Inoué, who have since played so distinguished and honourable a part in the development of their country.

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The second cause of suspension of action against Choshu was the news of a convention concluded in Paris between the Japanese envoys and the French Foreign Minister, dated June 20, 1864, in which this very object of the reopening of the Straits of Shimonoséki was provided for. Were this convention to be ratified by the Tycoon the immediate cause of dispute would be removed. The matter, however, was disposed of with more than its accustomed promptitude by the Japanese Government, who curtly refused to ratify the French convention. The Tycoon's Ministers declared themselves unable to carry out the agreement, and to ratify it would merely be to add another to their too onerous obligations. Admiral Kuper was finally given a free hand on August 25, and before the middle of September the forts and ships of the recalcitrant prince were completely destroyed by the Allied squadrons, not without considerable resistance and some loss to the assailants. The action was conducted with admirable harmony among the officers engaged, and the reciprocity of compliments between the respective commanders-in-chief, especially between the French and English admirals, is edifying reading in these later days.

The negotiations which followed on board the British flagship ended in the most satisfactory manner. Choshu submitted with a good grace, while apologetically throwing the blame of his hostile proceedings on the two higher authorities, the Mikado and the Tycoon.

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All the Daimios had been notified of the decision of the Mikado and the Tycoon to break off relations with foreigners from 20th June 1863. Three days after this notice its purport was confirmed, and a positive order given to "make military preparations with diligence that the ugly barbarians may be swept out." This was promptly followed by a third yet more explicit. "Bearing this in mind" (the date of expulsion, 20th June 1863), "you must omit nothing which is required to complete the maritime defences of your province, and you must be ready to sweep them off should they attack you unawares." A liberal interpretation of these imperial decrees might be held to cover the aggressive proceedings of the most powerful Daimio in the empire, whose province happened to command its most important strategic position, and who watched the continual passing of foreign ships under the guns of his forts. The time when Choshu commenced his attacks on passing ships coincided so exactly with the date assigned by the Mikado for the general rupture with foreigners, that it is hardly possible to dissociate his act from the scheme of his suzerain. When subsequently called before the council, Choshu boldly defied both Tycoon and Mikado, declaring that he alone had obeyed the imperial mandate, and deserved gratitude for executing single-handed the law of the empire for the extermination of foreigners. The rupture was decreed for June 20. The American steamer Pembroke was fired on on the 25th, being, no doubt, the first foreign vessel to pass the straits after the 20th. Whatever ulterior designs this great feudatory may have entertained, therefore, he was not altogether without provocation in making a raid on the Mikado's capital, which he did in the month of August following, and for which he was condemned by his suzerain to a term of seclusion within his palace, the usual form of punishment of an offending feudatory, which implies much more than would appear from this mild definition.

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On the capture of the forts at Shimonoséki the Government at once stepped in and assumed all the obligations, pecuniary and other, which the issue of the collision imposed on the Prince of Nagato. The town of Shimonoséki had been spared, but held to ransom. A convention was signed whereby the Tycoon agreed to pay an indemnity of three million dollars, which was eventually paid in full, the last instalment of it after the fall of the Shōgunate.

Taking heart of grace from his defeat by foreigners, the Tycoon, if not the Mikado also, began to coerce Choshu on his own account. Not being able to reach him conveniently in his principality, the Tycoon's Government set to work to destroy his vast establishment at Yedo. The fire brigade was employed in this work, and such was the extent of it that several thousand men were said to be engaged for three days in burning down the buildings and fittings. Moreover, when

categorically questioned by the foreign Minister whether, now that Satsuma and Choshu had been brought under control, "the Tycoon would find it possible to give full effect to the treaties, and to deal with any recalcitrant or rebellious Daimios," the confidential Minister of the Tycoon replied without hesitation, "Yes, certainly."

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The defeat of the two most warlike of the Daimios illuminated the situation and cleared the way for more intelligent action all round. To the Japanese Government it was once for all demonstrated that it was not by force of arms that the "ugly barbarians" were to be driven from the country. The foreign fleets were for the time being invincible, and the Powers had also shown themselves ready not only to act, but to act together. There was, besides, a strong garrison of foreign troops in Yokohama—a British force of 1200 men of all arms, with a marked tendency to increase. The Mikado and the Tycoon wisely acquiesced in the situation, so far as foreigners were concerned, not necessarily abandoning their policy, but at any rate deferring its execution.

Their immediate attention was directed to the internal commotions of the country, which could not now be long in coming to an explosion. A new planet had intersected their system and upset its balance. There could be no rest, therefore, until a new equilibrium was found. Foreign forces chastising the great feudatories, with the tacit acquiescence and for the benefit of the suzerain, could only be a step either towards dissolution and subjugation, or towards renaissance and national unity. Feudalism had had its day and served its turn; it was wholly incompatible with the new relations which had been imposed on the country by the foreign Powers. But where is the State, ancient or modern, that could entirely remodel itself, as it were, on the field of battle and in front of the enemy? That must remain the proud speciality of Japan.

The effect of the action at Shimonoséki on the position of foreigners was at once made apparent in various ways. The Tycoon's Government had laid a secret embargo on raw silk sent to market at Yokohama as part and parcel of the general imperial design of closing that port, or, in the alternative, of a gigantic scheme of Government monopoly of the whole foreign trade, such being the only form of commerce for which the Japanese officials had any real sympathy. The stoppage had lasted three months. After Choshu's defeat the restrictions were at once officially withdrawn, though considerable efforts were still required to give full effect to the withdrawal. Once more, also, "the Tycoon resolved to abandon the policy of equivocation and duplicity," and to inform the Mikado frankly of the impossibility of closing the port or of refusing to maintain the treaties.

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The moment seemed opportune for raising the question of the ratification of the treaties by the Mikado, in respect to which Sir Rutherford Alcock made certain plain statements in a letter addressed to the Tycoon in person. "There exists," he said, "a want of accord on the subject of foreign relations between the Mikado and Tycoon.... The Mikado, by requiring the abrogation of treaties, has reduced the Tycoon to the alternative of either disobeying his legitimate sovereign or bringing on his country all the calamities of war.... The only solution of the difficulty that promises either peace or security is the ratification of the treaties by the Mikado." The four foreign representatives simultaneously pressed the same consideration on the Government, eliciting from the Japanese Ministers the admission, "We perfectly agree with you, it should now take place."

It now became the business of the British Minister to show to his Government that the proceedings at Shimonoséki fulfilled in every point the instructions he had received from the Foreign Office. This he did in a despatch dated September 28, 1864, and so convincingly that Earl Russell wrote in reply—

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Your despatch of the 28th of September is a successful vindication of the policy you have pursued.... My despatches of the 26th of July were written with a view to discourage the interruption of a progressive trade by acts of hostility, and to forbid recourse to force while the treaty was generally observed. Those despatches, you will understand, remain in full force.

But the documents you have sent me, which arrived by the last mail, show that the silk trade was almost wholly interrupted by the Tycoon, who seemed to be preparing to abet or to abandon the project of driving out foreigners according to the boldness or the timidity of our demeanour.

In this position there could be no better course than to punish and disarm the Daimio Prince Nagato.

That course had these three separate advantages:—

1. It gave the best promise of concurrence of the four Powers, as France, Holland, and the United States had all been sufferers from the Prince of Choshu's violations of treaty, while we were most exposed to risk and loss by any Japanese attack on Yokohama.
2. It involved proceeding only against a rebellious vassal, and not against the Mikado or the Tycoon.
3. If the operation should prove successful, the four Powers were under no obligation to undertake further hostilities unless fresh provocation should be received.

Her Majesty's Government have received with great satisfaction the account of the naval operations of the four squadrons, and their result, contained in your despatch of September 28. Those operations were conducted in the most gallant manner; the loss was not considerable; the four Powers acted in harmony together; no defenceless city suffered during the hostilities; and the terms granted to the offending Daimio were moderate towards him, and sufficient for us.

I have only to add, that I am commanded to express to you her Majesty's full approbation of your conduct.

So far so good. But the slow mail service of those days, and the entire absence of the telegraph, admitted of wonderful interpolations in correspondence with such far-off countries as Japan. Events marched quicker than the course of post could follow them, and despatches were sometimes written which the writer would have given a good deal to recall. Such was the case here. We have said that soon after Sir Rutherford Alcock's return to Japan he addressed some weighty despatches to the Foreign Office on the situation, undoubtedly leading up to the ultimate employment of force in vindication of the foreign treaties. This was in full accord with the spirit of Earl Russell's instructions dated December 17, 1863. These were—

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1. To require from the Tycoon and the Daimios the execution of the engagements of the treaty.
2. To consult the admiral and any military officer who may be sent to Japan as to the means of strengthening and holding our position in Yokohama.
3. To endeavour to procure from Hongkong the services of a regiment of infantry.
4. The admiral to be authorised to land marines and destroy the batteries which have been erected for the evident purpose of interrupting the passage of our merchandise, &c.; but he must take care that no unarmed and peaceable town should be bombarded.

But when the Foreign Secretary received the Minister's despatches of May, following the terms of these instructions to their only logical conclusion, he became alarmed at the prospect of active measures, and by despatch of August 8 he recalled the Minister under the pretext of the need of a personal consultation on the state of affairs. This was followed up by some temporising despatches, saying the Inland Sea was of no consequence; that the Tycoon was professing an intention to do all that was necessary; and that the Tycoon and Mikado, seeing the British forces strong though passive, would gradually drop all hostile policy. How were these vacillating utterances to be reconciled with the position so decidedly taken up eight months before?

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A disturbing influence had intervened, causing Lord Russell to see Japan at an oblique angle. Certain other brave words of the Foreign Secretary in that year, 1864, in connection with the Danish Duchies, had also had their current turned awry and lost the name of action. Japan was but an echo. Of course, after the definite energetic policy of the Queen's representative in Japan had proved a brilliant success, had involved no complications, had, in fact, been the means of temporarily uniting four of the treaty Powers, Lord Russell was ready enough to make the *amende* to Sir Rutherford Alcock, though to have cancelled his order of recall would have been too frank an admission of error to expect from any statesman. In this manner was the career of Sir Rutherford Alcock in Japan brought to an abrupt, but highly honourable, conclusion. He received his letter of recall while in the act of completing the final convention with the Tycoon respecting the affair of the Prince of Choshu. The announcement was heard in Japan almost with consternation. The Tycoon's Ministers were particularly grieved about it, and they sent a strongly-worded letter to Earl Russell to be laid before the Queen, dwelling on the important services the envoy had rendered to their country, and begging that he might be sent back to them as soon as the urgent affairs that required his presence in England had been settled. The mercantile communities of the treaty ports were no less warm in their commendation of the services rendered to them and to general commerce by the decided measures adopted by the Minister, and in their regret at his departure. "The principal triumph of your success," they said in a farewell address, "lies in the fact that you have accomplished all this not only without causing a collision between her Majesty's Government and that of the Tycoon, but by actually strengthening the Government from which you obtained the concessions, as well as by acting in such a way as to secure the cordial co-operation of the foreign Ministers resident at this port."

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Admiral Kuper took so serious a view of the loss of a representative of such unrivalled experience and virility, that he took it on himself to address to the Minister privately a weighty appeal, on public and patriotic grounds, to postpone his departure until at least he had time to refer again to the Foreign Office, which on subsequent information must certainly take a different view of the action of their Minister. That the admiral correctly appreciated the attitude of the Foreign Office is sufficiently shown by Lord Russell's despatches already quoted, and by that dated January 31, 1865, which concludes, "I shall wish you to return at once to Yokohama, to perform in Japan such additional meritorious services as may be expected from your tried ability and long experience." But Sir Rutherford Alcock did not consider that the episode would have left him the prestige necessary for further useful service in Japan, and he declined to return to that country.

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Sir Rutherford remained at his post long enough to secure the fulfilment of the primary objects of the Allied expedition against Choshu: the reopening of trade, which had been practically closed both at Yokohama and Nagasaki, and a number of most important improvements in the conditions of foreign residence in Yokohama. These comprised a parade-ground and racecourse, hospitals, slaughter-houses, filling in of swamp, a clear and convenient site for consular buildings, a good carriage-road seven miles in circuit, away from the town, and various other extensions of the comforts of foreign residents.

The ratification of the treaties, too, by the Mikado was virtually arranged. The very day before Sir Rutherford Alcock embarked for England he was enabled to report to his Government that the law interdicting intercourse and putting all foreigners under the ban of outlawry had been modified, and its hostile provisions repealed. This was considered tantamount to the Mikado's acknowledgment of the Tycoon's treaties, and thus the vice of illegality which had attached to

them from their origin was at last removed. A year later the Mikado distinctly and in so many words approved of the treaties. This, therefore, may fairly be considered Sir Rutherford Alcock's last service to his country in Japan. It was not, however, till 1868, after the attack on Sir H. Parkes while on his way to the palace of the Mikado, that an edict was published, over the imperial sign manual, decreeing that the lives of foreigners in Japan were thenceforth to be deemed as sacred as the lives of the subjects of the empire.

But it would not have been Japan without an assassination to mark the close of the Minister's eventful career. Two officers of the British garrison, Major Baldwin and Lieutenant Bird, on an excursion on horseback to the romantic district of Kamakura, and near the celebrated bronze statue of Buddha, were stealthily attacked in broad day by a couple of two-sworded men, and mercilessly cut down. One of them lived late into the night, spoke, and drank tea, when the assassins, or accomplices in the crime, paid another visit to the dying man and, as in the case of Richardson, despatched him with ghastly ferocity. The Tycoon might truthfully say, "An enemy hath done this"; but the position of the Government had been so much strengthened by the collapse of Choshu that the Tycoon's officers were no longer afraid of pursuing the criminals and bringing them to justice, especially as they happened to be *ronin*, or masterless men. "Twelve similar onslaughts," wrote Sir Rutherford, "have been made on foreigners, and in no one instance has justice had its due." For "even in the only case where men were executed, the Government did not venture in exposing their heads to declare their crime, or admit that it was for an attack upon foreigners." The present case was to prove an exception to the hitherto unbroken rule. Within a month certain accomplices in the crime were brought to punishment in Yokohama, and there one of the principals, who was executed in presence of British officers, died boasting of his crime and claiming the highest patriotic sanction for it.

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Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock took their departure from Yokohama on December 24, 1864.

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VII. THE BIRTH OF NEW JAPAN.

Four years of civil strife—Cessation of efforts to eject foreigners—The adoption of foreign appliances—Educational missions—Unanimity of Japanese in cultivating foreign intercourse—The merits of those who promoted the movement—Sir R. Alcock's services in the cause of Japanese progress—His services to Japanese art.

"Is this the commencement of a civil war?" wrote the British Minister during his first year of residence in Japan. When he left the civil war was well advanced. Feverish energy was being displayed by every party in the State. There was a race for foreign ships and armaments among the Daimios; the Tycoon was involved in a struggle for existence; the legitimate sovereign was asserting his authority, and the feudatories were rallying to his support. Neither the immediate nor the remote issues were clear, but the sword was out of the scabbard, and would not be sheathed again until a new order of things should be established.

The civil strife, which ended within four years in the abolition of feudalism and the assumption by the Mikado by divine right of all administrative functions, may be called revolution, restoration, or merely evolution, according to the point of view from which we regard it. The hand of the foreigner had loosened the stone from the mountain-side, but it rolled down by its own laws. The introduction of foreigners into the country brought down vengeance on the Tycoon as the responsible agent. To abase him and transfer the sceptre to another house was perhaps as far as the views of the hostile princes in the first instance extended. The consummation of the movement in the unification of the State, though its natural fruit, grew and ripened with a rapidity which bewildered the lookers-on. From the moment when the goal was descried a profound unanimity of sentiment urged the leaders towards it, the territorial magnates being themselves the first to propose the abolition of the privileges, titles, and responsibilities of their order, which stood in the way of nationality in the larger sense. But wide and manifold as were the issues raised in the course of the brief but fierce struggle, it concerns us chiefly to remember that the avowed impulse which gave the first impetus to the whole was the passionate purpose of expelling the foreigner. This was the rallying cry that brought the entire nation into line. The presence of the foreigner on the soil sacred to the gods was an insult and a deep humiliation. The manifestoes of the Daimios, their invective against the Tycoon, the distress of the Mikado and his constant imploring appeals for help to purge the land of its defilement, testify to the sincerity and universality of the feeling. In that sentiment there was no difference between Tycoon and Mikado, the Daimios attached to the one and those attached to the other: they were only divided as to the time and the means, the risks and the consequences.

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From the first the foreigners had evidence of the tenacious character of the Japanese: their persistency in face of difficulties and discouragements, and, above all, their readiness, not only to risk, but deliberately to sacrifice, their lives in the pursuit of an object. Such a spirit would render any people formidable,—most formidable when united in a common purpose; and their genius for combination is one of their most typical characteristics. What these qualities have already led to the world has partly seen; what they will hereafter lead to is perhaps as much hidden from our generation as the phenomena of the present were from the preceding one. But from the earliest days of the new intercourse it was hardly possible to misconstrue the seriousness of the Japanese people, though their refinement of taste, especially in art, their pleasant vices, and their addiction to light and frivolous recreation, often masked their more solid

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qualities. One word may possibly reconcile the seeming contradiction. They are an intensely vital people, living every part of their lives earnestly, which, however, is no synonym for solemnly. The gravest and the gayest have their appointed place in the social system, whose parts appear to be co-ordinated as if the whole were a direct inspiration of nature itself, elastic, accommodating, ever renewing itself, and yet so highly organised that there is no unemployed surplus, no waste material, nothing that does not find an effective place in the great cosmic product. That many practical men have misjudged the Japanese is beyond doubt. Indeed it is the so-called practical men who are the most apt to misjudge human phenomena, seeing that their system leaves out of account all they do not understand, which is usually a good deal. It was long thought that the Japanese were mere copyists and imitators, and disparaging epithets have been applied to them under that misapprehension. But, rightly considered, their very imitation was the clearest proof of their depth. They had been overcome by the foreigner, therefore they would help themselves to his weapons—all his weapons, educational, scientific, ethical, and not merely the machinery of war. This was not imitation, but adaptation and assimilation. It was no more imitation than what is seen every day among Americans, for instance, who so successfully "exploit" the ideas of Europe, and improve on them. It gradually dawned upon the intelligent few who watched the process from the beginning that the adaptation of European customs and costume was nothing but a strict application of the laws of evolution. The Japanese began spontaneously to appropriate ideas from the dress of Europeans; modifications, scarce perceptible, were adopted at first by servants. Certain malefactors advertised for by the Yedo police as early as 1862 were described as wearing "riding trousers and coats of tight foreign fashion." Each article of attire was adopted on its merits, for convenience and for no other reason, one of the first items being buttons. Strange combinations were sometimes seen, such as a billycock hat, or policeman's cast-off coat with a few buttons left on, surmounting a pair of bare legs shod with wooden clogs. Such bizarre combinations were not uncommon during the time of transition. The growing habits of travel necessitated a revolution in the coiffure. The ancient custom of shaving part of the head and training the truncated queue required a staff of skilled barbers to accompany every travelling party. The expense and inconvenience were intolerable, and so the old head-dressing had to go the way of obsolete things.

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The Japanese deliberately resolved to learn every secret thing that any foreign nation possessed. To do this they had to be conciliatory, so as to gain access to schools, laboratories, arsenals, factories of every kind. Japanese swarmed in the workshops of Europe and America; they took military, naval, mercantile, and industrial service wherever they could get it.^[10] In such pursuits an outlandish costume would have been a severe handicap, not merely marking them as strangers, but hampering them for the mechanical work they might be engaged in. To be the comrades of the foreign workmen they must dress like them, and minimise all personal peculiarities. It is often said by those who regret the change that the native dress was so becoming, and that the Japanese looked ever so much nicer in their own than in foreign garb—which may be true, though irrelevant. To look nice was not what they were aiming at. They had to join the family of nations, to become men of the world, to comply with all civilised observances, and as much as in them lay to avoid attracting notice to their nationality. Such a programme necessitated adoption of the common costume of the Western nations, and if we do not accuse German, French, English, and Americans of being imitators, who for similar reasons adopt a uniform society habit, why should the Japanese be imitators when doing the very same thing? Let the world not deceive itself,—there is something more serious than copying in the development of the Japanese nationality. Borrowers they have undoubtedly been, and that on a grand scale. Religion, philosophy, language, literature, art, and artistic manufacture they took bodily from China, apparently through Korea. But who shall say they have not improved upon their teachers? That is a kind of borrowing which may yet carry Japan very far. We should not forget that even a Shakespeare may be an incorrigible borrower.

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From the first appearance of Commodore Perry's "black ships" in 1853 one idea took complete possession of the Japanese ruling classes, and inspired all their manifestoes. How far the common people were in sympathy with their rulers there was no evidence available to show. The idea was that their nation was weak, and in its seclusion had been outstripped by the nations of the West, and that they must make every exertion to arm themselves in order to be able to cope with and to expel the barbarians. All their temporising with the enemy had this end in view, and they followed it up with such zeal, intelligence, and national harmony, as to excite both wonder and admiration. In the building up of their nation, and giving it a status among the military and industrial Powers, the Japanese freely and extensively employed foreigners in all capacities, dispensing with their services when done with as naturally as a builder dispenses with his temporary scaffolding. They used foreigners from the outset, but have never allowed foreigners to use them. They have thus remained the masters in their own house, and therein has lain their strength, present and prospective. Teaching they have recompensed with coin; and though confidences have been received with courtesy, their own plans and purposes have been veiled from the most honoured of their tutors. Their attitude has remained what it was in the days of the Dutch monopoly, when instruction in Western lore, including naval and military science, was freely imparted to them, while the uses to which it was applied were studiously hidden from the teachers. Though the Dutch, for example, taught the Japanese mathematics and triangulation so successfully that the pupils were able to make accurate surveys and construct maps of the country and charts of its sea-coasts, yet the Dutch were never permitted to see the finished result.

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In looking back on the work of those foreign Governments and their agents who by their

interference shook this new nation into life, it is obvious that they did not, any of them, know what they were doing. There was a divinity shaping their ends which they, with their conventional concessions to the modern spirit, had no idea of. If we are to pass judgment at all on those men, it must not be by the ulterior consequences which they did not and could not foresee, but on the merits of the problem which immediately presented itself to them. The demand for free intercourse with Japan being shared by all the nations of Christendom was bound to be satisfied one day: it was but a question of a favourable opportunity. Commodore Perry and the United States Government made their opportunity. Townsend Harris had his opportunity made for him, and with great adroitness, and not too much scruple, he took advantage of it to force the half-open door. Lord Elgin, in his turn, did a smart thing in sandwiching in a full treaty with Japan between his earlier and later negotiations with China. Each in his degree contributed to the general result without any apparent sense of responsibility for unsettling an ancient polity of which they were ignorant, and to which they were blind. Lord Elgin was indeed visited by the qualms of conscience which were as natural to him as they were honourable, but the particular consequences of which he had a passing dread were not those which followed. In any case, his act was momentary: its results remained to be dealt with by those who came after. The heat and burden of the day fell upon those who had to "stub the Thurnaby waste" which the cavaliers had gaily cantered round,—to reduce theories and compliments to everyday practice. Here was not only a labour but a responsibility, not of the attenuated abstract order, but one which was apt to knock violently at their door every morning and every night. For whatever might be the remote effects, the immediate issues were always urgent, and what a conscientious man had to do was to shape a daily course among unknown rocks and whirlpools such as would eventually lead to a successful ocean voyage. It is surely a test of good pilotage in such emergencies that no step need be retraced; that to whatever extent temporary exigencies may hasten or retard, they should never deflect the general movement from its true direction; that the years achievement should be homogeneous with the day's doings. It is a test which would eliminate the time-server from political life, but it was in all important particulars well responded to in the short career of Sir Rutherford Alcock in Japan. [99] [100]

It would be idle to conjecture the probable course of events had a different spirit prevailed among the first diplomatic representatives in Japan. Had they been a weak and yielding body, or had they been connected with the bureaux of their respective Governments by electric wire; still more, had each step taken by them formed a bone of contention between opposing factions in their legislatures, all alike ignorant of the situation, the proceedings of the Ministers would not only have been deprived of all initiative, but would have been liable to paralysis at every critical moment. Under such conditions foreign policy in Japan would have been like driftwood in a whirlpool; the forces of reaction must have gained courage; the position of foreigners would have been rendered untenable; and what might have happened in the country itself it would, as we have said, be quite idle to imagine. In those days no Power would have interfered to maintain order or to defend treaties had England held aloof. There is no need to carry hypothesis further than this in order to appreciate the good fortune not only of Great Britain herself, but of Japan and the world, in having as pioneer representative a man so alert, so capable, so clear, and with such unshakable nerve as Sir Rutherford Alcock; for it is the man on the spot in distant countries who shapes the policy of his Government, if it is to have a policy at all, and this historic service the first Minister sent to Japan did effectually render to his country. Amid difficulties unprecedented, emergencies incessant, and an elemental strife ever raging, the terms of which were inscrutable, two immutable principles guided the Minister to a clear issue. The first was duty, at all costs and hazards; the second, the integrity of the treaties. Whatever might be argued about the policy or the ethics of making them, once made, retreat from their engagements was impossible and compromise futile. Matters had to be pushed to an issue. The whole term of Sir Rutherford Alcock's service in Japan was filled up with a warfare against the temptation to temporise in the hope that things would be better,—a temptation to which, as we have seen, her Majesty's Government for a time succumbed. In perplexing situations the best solvent is simplicity, and the Minister found his safety in directness of aim and inflexibility of purpose. Standing on that rock, the mystifications with which he was surrounded lost their power to disturb him. "Fortunately," he wrote to Earl Russell, "whether the Tycoon was playing a comedy or not, the course plainly indicated is the same, the assertion of a fixed determination not to be driven out, and to maintain the rights secured under treaties, by force, if all other means fail." [101]

To the man who perceived and successfully carried out this simple rule of action his countrymen owe no common debt.

As it is proverbially the busiest people who have the most leisure, the British Minister found time in the midst of his harassing labours to employ his æsthetic gifts for the benefit of the public. It fell to his lot, as the reader may remember, while consul in Shanghai, to contribute samples of the art, industry, and natural products of China to the Great Exhibition of 1851, neither the native Government nor the foreign mercantile community being sufficiently interested to assist in the work. A similar service was asked of him in Japan for the Exhibition of 1862, and it was performed under similar conditions, neither the native Government nor the foreign residents taking any part in it. The task had a special fascination for Sir Rutherford, for Japanese art was a new and rich field for the student as for the dilettante. The Japanese had originally borrowed their whole art, with their literature and religion, from China, but they had improved or at least transformed it so much as to make it their own, though it is contended that in ceramics they had never succeeded in overtaking the Chinese. For five hundred years they had worked on the Chinese idea; but at last in the eleventh century A.D. native schools sprang up, and thenceforth Japanese artists followed their own inspiration, which was that of nature, producing, in the [102]

fulness of time, the exquisite results with which the world is now so familiar. The introduction of this Japanese work to the connoisseurs of Europe through the London Exhibition of 1862 was effected through the personal exertions of Sir Rutherford Alcock, who added immensely to the obligations under which he laid his countrymen by the publication in 1878 of a short but comprehensive work on 'Art and Art Industries of Japan.' Like the collecting of objects for the Exhibition, the writing of this book was evidently a labour of love. It reviews with a sympathy which almost rises to enthusiasm not only the finished product, but the stages of the evolution of Japanese art, having its origin in a loving fellowship with nature and in a special affinity with what may be called its humorous side. The genius of Japan has taken a different form from that of the West, where "the great works of the sculptor and the painter are seen by but few," whereas the art work of Japan, "which is always in sight, tends to cultivate the taste of the million by bringing constantly before their eyes objects of taste, not less effective because they are unconsciously felt and enjoyed." It is art pressed into the service of the life of the people "which can give a priceless value to the commonest and least costly material by the mere impress of genius and taste, ... which is the most precious, tested by any true estimate of value and utility." The volume is well worth perusal by those who are interested in art, not only for its philosophical yet simple analysis of the subject generally, but for the instructive way in which universal principles are adapted to the popularised art of Japan. To read this book, one would imagine the writer had devoted the whole of the three years and a half he spent in Japan to the cultivation of the industrial fine arts. [103]

The Japanese language, too, attracted the interest of the busy Minister, who during his stay in Yedo brought out a grammar and phrase-book in Japanese and English. They have, as a matter of course, been superseded by the more recondite studies of later students; but as a first step towards familiarising the language to visitors and strangers these introductory works cannot be denied their meed of merit. [104]

VIII. THE DIPLOMATIC BODY—TSUSHIMA.

Four Western Powers represented in Tokio—Russia only in Hakodate by consul—And naval officers—Cordial Anglo-French relations—Temptations to intrigue—Secret communications to Japanese—Representatives of the Powers arousing suspicions of each other's designs—Letters cited—The Tsushima incident—Admiral Sir James Hope obtains its evacuation by Russians.

During the first few years there were four representatives of the Western Powers resident in or near the Tycoon's capital: they were the Ministers of Great Britain, the United States, France, and Holland. Russia had accredited no Minister, but intrusted her interests to the very capable hands of M. Goskavitch, consul at Hakodate, the treaty port in the northern island of the Japanese group. What was no doubt deemed of at least equal importance, she maintained a powerful squadron on the western coast of Japan, whose actual strength was magnified to the view by their incessant activity, which had the character of a continuous demonstration on the coast both of China and Japan; and the principle of direct action by naval officers without the medium of diplomacy, at the ports of Nagasaki and Hakodate, was so different from that of any other Power, that the Daimios declared to the Tycoon that any of the foreigners could be safely insulted except the Russians. Their manœuvres in force round Hongkong, meaningless to the ordinary professional or political eye, played probably a corroborative part in the impressions they were making on the rulers of the neighbouring countries. Prussia had not yet come effectually on the scene when the decisive operations against the two great Daimios, which really determined the future course of events, were undertaken. [105]

The relations of the resident foreign Ministers among themselves were marked by substantial harmony, in some instances rising to great cordiality. The foreign diplomatic body thus presented a united front to the forces, open or covert, that were opposed to them. Such differences of opinion as arose in the course of business either were not of a nature, or were not allowed, to interfere with the pursuit of the national interests of each, which were inextricably bound up in the common interests of all. United, the influence of the Powers was practically irresistible; divided, they would have fallen an easy prey to the devices of what, for want of another term, must be spoken of as the common enemy, Japan. It is not pleasant to think of Japan in this way, since she was on her defence in a position forced upon her; yet overruling circumstances had, in fact, placed the parties in temporary antagonism—the world against Japan.

The key to the success of European diplomacy of the earlier period was without doubt the Anglo-French alliance, which had culminated in the coercion of imperial China, and was spending its ebbing strength in suppressing the great Taiping insurrection against that empire. Being possessed of mobile forces within call, the two Powers were always in a position to act when circumstances called for action, and they had become accustomed to co-operation. Hence the potency of their united counsels.

The Minister of France as well as the admiral on the station had the instructions of the Imperial Government to support England in her Far Eastern policy,—“for,” said the calculating Emperor Napoleon III., “though our interests in that part of the world are trivial, we may find our account in the friendship of England in quarters where our interests are vital.” That the Ministers of the two countries, therefore, should be on terms of official intimacy and mutual confidence was only natural, and it was a tower of strength to them both. But we gather from the despatches that [106]

personal respect and attachment went hand in hand with the official *liaison*; and whether it was Sir Rutherford Alcock or Colonel Neale on the one side, or M. Duchesne de Bellecourt or Leon Roche on the other, their expressions towards their colleagues were always of the warmest. So completely confidential were their relations, that when something was insinuated by third parties which, if credited, would have necessitated explanations between the two, it was simply dismissed as unworthy of consideration. There were not wanting those who would have regarded with equanimity a little more coldness between the Allied colleagues.

For, notwithstanding their good fraternal relations, it cannot be said that the foreign officials in Japan were uniformly successful in resisting the besetting sin of diplomacy, the common temptation to intrigue. In certain cases it was resorted to as the natural means of advancing the solid interests of a particular country; in other cases, where no national interest could be served by it, it would appear that intrigue was its own allurements, followed for the mere pleasure of the game. The political situation in Japan was sufficiently complicated to afford occasion for both [107] these motives of action. The unstable Government of the country, oppressed by conflicting obligations and consciously struggling for existence, offered an ideal theatre for volunteer experimentation by those on whom no ulterior responsibility rested.

Be that as it may, however, secret communications did pass between certain foreign officials and the Japanese Government of a kind which betrayed the design of undermining the interests of other Powers and frustrating their policy, presumably for the benefit of those whose zeal in the cause of international honour impelled them to adopt the *rôle* of international informers. It need hardly be said that Great Britain was a principal object of these occult practices; neither need it be denied that she suffered from their effects in the estimation of the Japanese Government, which was naturally credulous of any disparagement of the Powers it dreaded so much. In the incandescent condition of the intercourse of those earlier years, had any of the foreign agents spoken well of his neighbours he would have obtained no hearing for his praise; but given vilification for its motive, the representation would find its way straight to the Japanese heart, since nothing could be too vile to be believed of the intentions of any of the foreign nations. The spy system was congenial to the Japanese, woven into their whole administration; while as regards foreigners, they had had ample experience centuries before of the lengths Christian nations would go in traducing each other for the sake of gaining a little favour of the rulers of Japan. It was entirely in keeping with their medieval experiences that these dastardly barbarians should now be ready to stab each other in the back. Whatever reception, therefore, on other [108] grounds, might be accorded to gratuitous information conveyed through prejudiced channels, no surprise was occasioned by it, and as little doubt of its truth, so long as its burden was evil. This much has to be borne in mind as a tribute to the intelligence of the writers of letters such as the following, addressed to the Gorogiu, or Bureau of Foreign Affairs, and conveyed to them with ostentatious secrecy. In 1860 one Government agent wrote—

Last year towards the middle of the second month the English created great difficulties in China in consequence of the war they waged by sea and land. They had violated the treaties in a shameful manner, and as this excited the indignation of the Chinese they attacked the English on the river, and captured three men-of-war. Feeling herself humbled by this defeat, England swore revenge. She uttered the most unjust menaces against China, and at the very moment the Chinese commenced their conferences upon this subject four or five months ago the English suddenly ordered forty-seven men-of-war from London. These vessels are at present at Chusan, and await the signal for action. Within two or three months the men-of-war will leave for the north. The merchant vessel Dayspring brought us all this news on the 12th instant.

On speaking about this important news to Mr —, the British Consul residing here, he gave me the following information in a strictly private manner.

"At last," said Mr —, "the war with China is decided upon. We have for a long time been searching for a good harbour where we shall be able to put the sick and wounded. We have chosen Tsushima, where we intend to send the sick and wounded, and as soon as the war has commenced we have resolved to take possession of that island."

Mr — communicated this to me as a great secret, and I now give you this information in a strictly private manner.

You will perceive that this is a question of the utmost importance, and you must take it into serious consideration without delay, and with the utmost attention. [109]

Four years ago the English, who had for a long time coveted an excellent little island called Perim, took possession of it, informing the Turkish Government that they only wished to place their invalids on that island, and this false pretext was matter for serious discussion. The Turks were perfectly aware of the deceitful conduct of the English. They did not ignore that fourteen or fifteen years before, while fighting with the Chinese, the English had stolen Hongkong under the same pretences.... But while they were deliberating the English sent their invalids to Perim, and immediately built forts and stole this island in the most disgraceful manner.

As the English are wonderful impostors, it is your duty not only to take care of Tsushima, but also of the smallest island in your empire: this must be done with the utmost watchfulness.

I inform you of this danger in the most private and secret manner.

And a year or two later, when the intercourse between the British Minister and the Tycoon was charged with contentious, almost with explosive, matter, missives were passed in from philanthropic onlookers of a tenor which excited no surprise, but a good deal of genuine exultation, in the minds of the Japanese Ministers. It was well known some time before that it had

been sought to prevent a settlement of outstanding difficulties between the two countries by the assurance volunteered to the Tycoon's Government that Great Britain was quite unable to make war on Japan, and the following letter is only one of a series of such international amenities which shunned the light of day:—

Japan was opened by us, ... and after we had settled down here the other Powers made their appearance. The intentions of ... in opening this country to foreign intercourse was to increase the welfare and prosperity of its inhabitants. While we were doing our utmost for this nation some English men-of-war suddenly appeared here to demand indemnities for a murder which, although unjustifiable, was not a *casus belli*. As long as the ambitious, warlike, and quarrelsome Englishmen are here, the object we have in view cannot be obtained. They must, therefore, be driven out of this country. You cannot consent to their demands. Do not fear the English; there are other nations in Japan, and if you require assistance you may rest assured we shall give you moral and material support.

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But in vain was the snare set by these fowlers in the sight of the bird. The notion of setting a thief to catch a thief was not uncongenial to Japanese habits of thought, but a generous offer of armed assistance against a foreign Power savoured too much of the wooden horse even for such inexperienced internationalists as the New Japan. Having expressed their appreciation—had it been the Chinese Government it would have taken the form of praise for their loyal obedience—the Government intimated that they would exhaust their own resources before putting these friendly foreign Powers to the trouble of intervening on their behalf. The Japanese have always been wary about accepting help unasked for. The United States frigate Niagara, which brought back the envoys in 1860, brought also a staff of artillery officers whose services were tendered to the Tycoon, but declined. And it was said the American officers were rather astonished by the proofs afforded them in Yedo of the efficiency of armament and proficiency of the gunners which Japan was already able to show.

One of the vigilant observers of political portents about that time became convinced that the French had designs upon Tsushima, a belief which was no doubt in some way also communicated to the Japanese Government; but by that time—1863—it was too late for any Power to flirt with that "excellent little island," for since the first warning given the Japanese in 1860, above cited, the island had been made the subject of definitive arrangements. The incident itself, though of brief duration and leaving no visible trail behind it, nevertheless deserves to be remembered as a landmark of history.

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When Count Mouravieff was in Yedo in 1859, he took the trouble to warn the Tycoon's Government that the English harboured aggressive designs against the island of Tsushima, which is a long double or "twin" island, possessing wonderful harbours, and situated midway between the main island of Japan and the southern coast of Korea. On March 13, 1861, the Russians landed from the corvette Possadnik in Tsushima, and saying their ship wanted repairs, began to build houses on shore. Captain Birileff had forced the Prince of Tsushima to receive him at his capital, which created an intense feeling of indignation, especially in the ranks of the nobles, who each saw himself exposed to similar intrusions. The Daimio repeatedly requested the Russians to leave, but was always told the ship required further repairs. In consequence of reports from his own officers and the Japanese Government, Vice-Admiral Sir James Hope looked in at Tsushima himself in the month of August, and observing what was going on there, he addressed a letter to Captain Birileff, of which the substance was as follows: The prolonged stay of his Imperial Majesty's corvette Possadnik, the erection of buildings, &c., having created alarm in Yedo, the admiral had the intention to communicate on the subject as early as possible with Commodore Likatchoff. Would Captain Birileff meantime facilitate this correspondence by replying to the questions—(1) Should the Japanese Government appeal to the treaty, which conveys no right either to create establishments ashore, to survey the Japanese coast without Government sanction, or even to enter a non-treaty port except in case of necessity, would Captain Birileff's orders admit of his leaving Tsushima immediately on the request of the Japanese authorities? (2) Was it Captain Birileff's intention to leave Tsushima in October as previously stated to Commander Ward, leaving the buildings to whomsoever wanted them?... (3) Had the captain orders to create a permanent establishment there?

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The reply of Captain Birileff was to the effect that the officers of his Imperial Majesty were accountable only to their own chiefs; ... that he was quite astonished to hear of the alarms in Yedo, seeing that only two months before the Prince of Bungo had been sent to Tsushima expressly from Yedo to grant permission to the corvette to remain there; that the same prince gave him the opportunity of visiting the Prince of Tsushima, who was instructed to supply workmen and all that might be necessary for the construction of the buildings in question; that if the Japanese Government were annoyed by the surveying operations, they should address their complaint to the Russian diplomatic agent; that he had no orders for the occupation of the island, and the nature of the buildings which the admiral had done him the honour to visit would not show any such intention; and finally, that when he spoke of leaving in October it had referred only to himself personally. So far Captain Birileff.

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It was no "Prince of Bungo," but a Governor of Foreign Affairs named Bungo, who had been despatched in haste from the capital to endeavour by any means to induce the Russians to leave Tsushima, and was, for his want of success, disgraced.

Sir James Hope forthwith proceeded in search of Commodore Likatchoff to Olga Bay, whence he addressed to him a letter dated September 5, pointing out the irregularity of the proceedings at Tsushima, the bad effect they were having on the relations of foreigners generally in Yedo, and

that he could not recognise any establishment on Japanese territory not sanctioned by treaty— which resolutions he would make known to the authorities concerned.

To this the Russian commodore courteously replied from Hakodate, September 23, excusing himself from entering on any international questions, and pointing out that in their hydrographical labours the Russians were only following the excellent example set them by the British surveying officers whom they met on their respective missions, and that no complaint had ever been made by the Japanese Government. As for the "absurd rumours" alluded to, the Possadnik had already received orders for another destination, before receipt of the admiral's letters, and nothing consequently need be said to calm the doubts and alarms, "si même elles auraient véritablement raison d'exister."

Admiral Hope acknowledged this letter, "with much satisfaction," from Chefoo, October 22, and remarked that, so far as the surveying operations of the ships in his squadron were concerned, they were carried out with the full consent of the Japanese Government, at whose special request Japanese officers and interpreters were accommodated on board during the whole of the cruise. He added that it was not so much the surveying operations of the Possadnik as the preparation for a permanent settlement on shore that disquieted the Japanese Government; and, moreover, that the Japanese Ministers had distinctly stated that the matter had been the subject of remonstrance to the commodore, through M. Goskavitch, the consul at Hakodate, and to Captain Birleff by an officer specially deputed for the purpose (Bungo). [114]

The question extended itself to St Petersburg, where Prince Gortchakoff had remarked to Lord Napier, then British ambassador, on the tone of Admiral Hope's letter to Commodore Likatchoff, which, he said, but for the conciliatory disposition of the latter, might have led to serious misunderstanding. Lord Napier, in reply, observed that "Admiral Hope was a man of a frank, downright, energetic character, who used the language natural to him without any intention of giving offence."

As the Russians had abandoned the island, Prince Gortchakoff called on Lord Napier to declare that the English would never take possession of Tsushima, whereupon the ambassador reminded his Excellency that the English had "offered to sign a treaty binding ourselves and the other Powers having engagements with Japan to make no acquisitions in those seas." "I think," concludes the ambassador in his letter to the Foreign Office, "that Admiral Hope will do well to assure himself that the buildings have really been evacuated." This precaution had already been taken, and the admiral reported on November 10 that the Russians had evacuated on September 29. [115]

There the incident ended, but not its historical significance.

IX. TRADE AND TRADERS.

Commerce increases in spite of adverse political situations—And of efforts of Japanese government to repress it—The *personnel* of the mercantile community—British predominance—Relations of merchants to Ministers—Interests and duties not always identical—Sumptuary laws—Discharges of firearms forbidden—Seizure of Mr Moss—Wounding of a Japanese policeman—Trial and sentence of Mr Moss—His liberation in Hongkong—Sues the Minister and obtains damages—Legal supremacy at Hongkong—Defects of the consular jurisdiction—The recreation of shooting.

These fierce struggles, the sudden arousing to intensity of dormant passions, the dislocation of the whole structure of Japanese polity, represented to the foreign nations merely the risks and sacrifices incidental to the expansion of their commerce. In order to compel the Government to permit the people to exchange the products of their soil for the merchandise of the strangers within their gates, the labour, anxiety, and expense which we have only faintly indicated were voluntarily incurred by the Western treaty Powers, and by them in turn forced on the reluctant rulers of Japan. An *a priori* judgment of the probable effect of the sanguinary conditions into which official intercourse had been thrown would probably have concluded that peaceful commerce could not under such circumstances exist. The restrictions resulting from an ill-regulated currency, and from the direct interference of the Government, might have been deemed sufficient of themselves to check the development of trade. When to these inimical influences were superadded the further facts that the foreign traders went in peril of their lives, that the communities of Nagasaki and Yokohama were at different times in such danger that provisional arrangements were made for conveying them, bag and baggage, on board ship, a condition of things less favourable to international traffic could scarcely be conceived. Yet these difficulties, and a score of others which could be enumerated, served only to bring into clear recognition the inherent vitality of commerce, which, like running water, finds its way through or round almost any obstacle. There were, on the other hand, circumstances favourable to trade. In Japan, as has been already hinted, the traders of the country had neither part nor lot in the strife that raged above and around them, and for the most part they could pursue their peaceful avocations without fear or hindrance. So the quality of commerce was not strained; but, shedding its benefits on buyer and seller alike, it grew from small beginnings till it attained to a volume of world-wide importance, accumulating momentum as it progressed. [116]

The total amount of foreign trade was a little over one million sterling per annum for the first three years of the open ports. In the fourth year, 1863, the development of Japanese produce,

especially the more precious commodities, silk and the eggs of the silkworm, began to tell on the gross values, and the exports for that year amounted to two and a half millions sterling, the imports of foreign goods being £811,000. The year 1864, notwithstanding its crowded events of anti-commercial character, witnessed a notable advance in the value of foreign trade, which in that year doubled itself. The same thing occurred again in 1865, when the figures reached a total of eight millions sterling, being double the returns for 1864.

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Thus the foreign trade of Japan had fairly established itself as "a going concern," advancing in war and peace, but with great fluctuations and many vicissitudes to those engaged in it. From the purely commercial standpoint the result justified the anticipations of the Powers who opened Japan to the world. The event proved that when the materials of trade exist there trade is sure to follow on the removal of obstructions. And the materials of trade are not wanting wherever there is a population that wears clothes and builds houses.^[11]

It is obvious to remark that had it been in the power of the Japanese Government to place an effective interdict on foreign commerce at its sources within their own jurisdiction, and beyond the reach of treaty obligations, it would have been the surest means of causing the withdrawal of foreigners from the country. That the Government had the will to do so was shown by their repeated partial attempts at preventing produce from reaching the open ports, and even inducing a temporary exodus therefrom of the native population. Why their measures of repression were not more thorough may be conjectured to have been connected with the circumstance that the advantages of the foreign trade soon began to be felt in quarters with which it was not convenient for the Tycoon to inter-meddle.

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As in China, so in Japan, the relations of the merchants to their official representatives exercised a certain influence on events. The trade was carried on at first by a very small number of people. In 1861 there were not 200 foreign residents in all the ports of Japan, the British nationality predominating in Yokohama, the Dutch at Nagasaki. The British residents in the former port seem to have numbered about fifty. It was a small body to carry the burden of inaugurating commercial intercourse with an empire of thirty millions of people. Nor was it individually a community of any particular weight, being mostly composed of young men, not themselves principals, but, in the beginning at least, a considerable number of them occupying the position of delegates of mercantile houses in China. It was their representative character which lent importance to the foreign merchants in Japan. They represented, first of all, the establishments of which they were subordinates or offshoots; they represented their respective nations; and they, in a larger sense, represented the commercial creed of Christendom. The present sketch would be wanting in symmetry if no account were taken of the relationship of these handfuls of traders to their own national authorities, both being engaged in the struggle for the development and security of commerce under the trying conditions of the time and country. But of course any such inquiry practically limits itself to those of British nationality, for two reasons: British trade and British diplomacy were pre-eminently representative of all others by the preponderance of the interests involved; in addition to which, the strong individuality and matured experience of the first British envoy were such that his colleagues tacitly assigned to him the leading *rôle*, so that his was the personality which exerted the dominant influence in shaping events from the opening of the ports.

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The tendency to divergence of view between the merchants and their official representatives has already been remarked upon in connection with affairs in China: it was most pronounced in times of difficulty such as were chronic for more than twenty years in Canton, where it was so acute at one time that English Chambers of Commerce made formal complaint to the Foreign Office that its representative in China—Sir John Davis—refused to see the merchants in Canton, who desired to present their views to him in time of danger. The antagonism was natural: it is generically the same that one hears constantly in this country in the form of complaints and criticisms of Government, Government servants, and generally of all in authority—with, however, this difference, that in the many-sided life of a large society there are buffers between the critics and the criticised. They do not meet face to face unless it be in such circumstances as on the floor of "the House" with "a substantial piece of furniture" between; whereas in nascent communities composed of a few scores of individuals, where there is no tempering medium, where the parties are never out of each other's sight, differences are apt to become accentuated like village scandals. Nothing escapes censure; the smallest indiscretions have a magnifying lens constantly applied to them, and a sinister colour is given to innocent trifles. Interests are not diversified, shaded off, or balanced as in adult nations, but are narrow, concentrated, and highly sensitive. Between Minister and merchants there was of course a general identity of interest. They had a common test to apply to all their proceedings and aspirations, the furtherance of commerce. The official would, perhaps, add the qualifying adjective "legitimate," in the interpretation of which differences of opinion might arise; and he would naturally give a wider scope to the commercial idea than those actually engaged in trade could or ought to do.

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The Minister represents the interests of Great Britain as a whole; the merchants represent trade generally, but each of them his own interests particularly, and these various interests cannot always coincide. An Englishman would naturally give a preference to the manufactures of his own country, but as a merchant he has to study the requirements of the country in which he trades, and if he cannot supply them at all, or so well, by articles manufactured in his own country, he is obliged to seek them elsewhere. Officials are apt to look askance on this as not fostering the trade of Great Britain; and while recognising the necessity, the fact does not warm their sympathy for the merchants of their own country. There are times also when, from the

international point of view, the general interests of the country may override the special interests of the small British community in Japan. If policy requires intimate relations between the Governments, the tendency must inevitably be for the British Minister to minimise the just causes of complaint of his countrymen in order to avoid irritation. But the sufferers can hardly be expected to appreciate sacrifices so forced on them; and so from one cause and another there will never be wanting grounds of dissatisfaction, and possibly estrangement.

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But the ultimate object being definitely agreed upon between the two parties, there would still remain room for variance in the means, questions of tactics, of the nearer or the further view, of the present generation and the next, and so on *ad infinitum*. Where there was a third party influencing and opposing legitimate commerce by direct or indirect means, as the Government of China or Japan, whose machinations called for strong measures of resistance, the occasions of impatience and dissatisfaction would be frequent, and friction between the representative and his constituents would naturally result. But perhaps the most antagonistic of all to harmony was the fact already pointed out, that in extra-territorialised countries like China and Japan the representatives of the treaty Powers were necessarily intrusted with exceptional authority over the persons of their nationals—for they had to assume the functions denied to the native Governments, of giving the law to the settlers and punishing evil-doers. What an invidious and onerous position this entailed on British officials will presently be shown. Yet it was a temporary necessity, for which nobody was blamable.

In treating of the period of the consulship in Shanghai, a certain distance or aloofness between Consul Alcock and the community of his nationals was remarked upon, due to difference of age, taste, culture, or temperament. This characteristic was rather accentuated than otherwise by the local circumstances of Japan. The Minister was ten years older, while the community was about as much younger than in Shanghai, so that the disparity of age was increased. The mere conditions of life also placed a material gulf between the diplomatic representatives in Yedo and the lay residents of Yokohama. The capital city being closed to all but the diplomatic body, visitors not only required a pass from one of the Ministers, but, in the absence of available accommodation, strangers had to rely on the hospitality of the foreign Legations. The curiosity to see Yedo, which in the early days so attracted tourists and travellers, threw a heavy and most unfair burden of entertainment on the Ministers, the principal victim of these birds of passage being of course the representative of Great Britain. So long, therefore, as the Legations remained in Yedo the barrier was effectual against personal intercourse between the Ministers and the permanent residents in Yokohama, even had mutual affinity been stronger than it was. Like most things, this local separation between the communities and their representative had its advantages and disadvantages. While on the one hand it was not conducive to intimacy, on the other the risk of personal friction was eliminated by it. Nor was direct intercourse at all necessary in the conduct of business, seeing the regular official medium of communication was the local consuls, who had nothing of the Olympian about them, and were felt by the residents to be men of like passions with themselves, with easy manners, the spirit of good fellowship, and imbued with the characteristic sporting proclivities of Englishmen at home and abroad, always an effective bond of sympathy.

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The relations of Sir Rutherford Alcock with the mercantile community had not been very happily inaugurated, for he clearly felt officially aggrieved by their settling in Yokohama, instead of waiting till accommodation could be found for them in Kanagawa; so much so, indeed, that he seemed almost to deplore the absence of means of coercing them into obedience to his will.

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While the sore as to the location of the settlement was still somewhat raw, the Minister found yet another grievance against the merchants in the fabulous demands for Japanese coins which a few of them had put forward, by way of burlesquing the system of distribution by the native authorities. The severity with which this schoolboyish escapade was pilloried, and the community of Yokohama held up to the opprobrium of the world, was felt by them as going beyond what the merits of the case warranted, and the incident did not tend to mollify acerbities on either side.

A year later evidence of a certain widening of the breach became more conspicuous in the course of a rather exceptional lawsuit, in which a merchant was heavily mulcted for an offence of which the general opinion was that he was not guilty. A certain Mr Moss was arrested, cruelly maltreated, and hidden from his official protector, the consul, by a posse of Japanese police, for having shot game in the vicinity of Kanagawa. When faced by these armed men, Mr Moss cocked his gun and threatened any one who should approach to lay hands on him. The party was numerous enough to surround and wrest the gun from him, which somehow went off, wounding one of the men badly in the arm. The Minister ordered the consul to prosecute Mr Moss for murder, in the Queen's name, the consul himself being judge, sitting with two assessors. The accused was sentenced to pay a fine of 1000 dollars (£225) and to be deported from Japan. The assessors dissented, on the ground that the Japanese evidence was falsified to order, and that the prisoner was in their opinion innocent of the charge on which he was tried. In consequence of this dissent the judgment had to be referred to the Minister, who added to the consul's sentence three months' imprisonment in Hongkong, whither the culprit was conveyed in a British ship of war. After a week's incarceration in the Hongkong jail the warrant for imprisonment was found defective, and Mr Moss was released. He was then advised to bring an action against Sir Rutherford Alcock in the Supreme Court at Hongkong, which occupied twelve months, and ended in a jury awarding damages against the Minister for false imprisonment, that being the only part of the sentence which could be brought within the jurisdiction of the Hongkong court. As regards the original sentence of fine and deportation, the Foreign Office, by advice of their law officers,

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had long before quashed the conviction and ordered the fine to be remitted.

A parallel case had occurred in Canton in 1846. Sir John Davis instructed the consul there to levy a fine on a British subject for an alleged offence. Whether just or not, it was illegal, and on appeal to the Supreme Court in Hongkong, of which colony Sir John Davis himself was governor, the judgment of the consul was reversed, and the fine of 200 dollars refunded. Even Sir Frederick Bruce, with all his circumspection, did not escape falling into the same error with regard to the division of legal authority between himself and the Supreme Court. "From a careful perusal of ... her Majesty's Order in Council," he writes, "the chief superintendent of trade [himself] in cases arising under this section is the Supreme Court in China: it is for him to prescribe to the consul the course he is to pursue, and the Supreme Court at Hongkong cannot interfere in such matters." Her Majesty's Government, however, replied: "You fall into an error by confounding two distinct questions.... You are mistaken in treating the question which you have referred to them for decision as depending upon the 4th and following articles of the Order in Council," and so on. So that had it fallen to his lot to give a decision involving a penalty, he would have been sued not before himself, but before the Supreme Court at Hongkong, and would have sustained the same reverse as Sir Rutherford Alcock had done. [125]

These bald facts of the case supplied a striking illustration of the vices of the consular court system, which was in vogue in China for twenty years until the establishment of the Supreme Court for China and Japan in 1865. Consuls were called upon to exercise judicial functions, and Ministers those of Courts of Appeal, without the slightest preparatory training, and as often as not without natural aptitude. In criminal cases they were at once prosecutors and judges, it might even be executioners as well. The state of conflict in which they lived with the native authorities, of whom they were accustomed to demand in vain the punishment of malefactors, placed British officers under continual temptation to prove how promptly they could bring to justice their own nationals accused of offences against the natives. This idea of giving object-lessons to Chinese and Japanese pervades the consular and diplomatic records. English officials seem to have been oppressed with the reflection of what the natives would think of the failure of justice in any particular case, and they were ever apprehensive of political dangers or embarrassments as contingent on misunderstood lenity to "white men"—natural and proper feelings on the part of mere political agents, but quite foreign to the administration of justice according to the rules and maxims of civilised nations. It seems not unlikely that the obvious lessons of the Moss case itself as to the incompatibility of judicial and administrative functions, and the unfair responsibility which their combination threw upon the consular and diplomatic officers, hastened the realisation of the scheme of an independent judiciary which was so strongly advocated by Sir Rutherford Alcock in 'The Capital of the Tycoon.' [126]

These various incidents, and sundry vexatious restrictions imposed on them from time to time for their own security, no doubt disposed the residents to look askance at many acts of the Minister, the reasons for which failed to impress them. But though the surface of the relations between the Minister and the merchants was thus perturbed, and regrettable, in the common interest, as the lukewarmness of personal sympathy may have been, the residents never failed in their respect for the high and sterling qualities of the Minister, and the courageous manner in which he fought for his country's interests. It only needed an emergency to give definite expression to this feeling, and no testimony could be stronger, more genuine, or less conventional than the farewell addresses in which the merchants of Yokohama and Nagasaki summed up the brilliant record of a man of whom they never ceased to feel proud. Instead of detracting from the value of such spontaneous testimony, the minor differences only lent emphasis to it, and set the seal of deep conviction on what in an ordinary case might have passed as the language of mere compliment. [127]

As shooting has been alluded to as an occasion of trouble, a word or two on the subject of this amusement may have an interest for certain readers. To the Japanese the pursuit of game seemed to be as strange a form of sport as the other vagaries of the foreigner. Firearms were not in use with them, cold steel being the regulation weapon of offence. There was a tradition that the discharge of firearms within twenty-five miles of the Tycoon's palace was prohibited by law,—what law or how promulgated was never clearly made out, though the motive was intelligible enough. For whatever reason, such game as there was in the country had evidently not been disturbed; the pheasants were not wilder than the English stall-fed variety. Small shooting-parties were in the habit of going out for a day, or half a day, from Yokohama and Kanagawa with dogs and native beaters among the coppices where the birds lay. The country itself was so charming to walk or ride over, the peasant-folk were so polite and merry, that heavy bags were not needed to attract sportsmen. Still, a good shot with industry and a shrewd acquaintance with the habits of the game could often get several brace of the splendid green pheasant of the country (*Phasianus versicolor*) in an afternoon; while at rarer intervals the finger would tremble on the trigger as one of those magnificent birds called locally the "copper" pheasant (Soemerring's), with tail feathers as long as a peacock's, would rise from the furrows and sail grandly into the impenetrable thicket. Objections had been taken by the Japanese officials to this form of amusement, because it was not the policy of the rulers to familiarise the people with the sight of firearms, still less to facilitate their acquiring them. In accordance with representations from the authorities, the British consul had requested his nationals in 1859 to desist for a time until some arrangement was come to. This they did, but in the following season resumed the sport, in which there were no keener participants than the British consular officers. A contemporary writer in September 1860 thus refers to the return of the shooting season: "There being nothing to do, we are all looking forward anxiously to the 1st October, on which day the first onslaught on the feathered race takes place. The weather is now hot, but we are all in very [128]

good health.... We live in a beautiful country, among a civil, amicable, kind-hearted, and intelligent people. We can roam over the country without let or hindrance." It is curious to note by the way how tenacious the Englishman is of the punctilio of his game laws, carrying his observance of them into countries where he and his laws are alike strangers, and where in many cases the principles are not applicable to the local conditions.

A new element in the sport appeared with the advent of cold weather, in the form of flocks of wildfowl, chiefly geese, which spread themselves over the low-lying grounds, mostly at some miles distant from the settlements. They were "geese," indeed, quite unsophisticated, having no fear of man before their eyes—inherited instinct apparently at fault. "Their tameness was shocking" at first, but they wonderfully soon learned to be wary with a foreigner and a gun. The morning's bag of one early riser, riding six miles and back to a nine o'clock breakfast, late in November, dwindled rapidly from 12 to 6, 4, 2. The birds were shot within 200 yards of the *tokaido*, and in full view of many curious spectators, armed and unarmed. Men were hired on the spot to carry the game along the six miles of highroad and through the long street of Kanagawa, the whole proceeding, in short, enjoying the utmost possible publicity.

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The unfortunate Mr Moss, however, a few days later, toiled a whole day and bagged one, with the consequences we have seen. Whether it was law or not, the evidence supplied by the birds themselves of prescriptive immunity from gunpowder attack was overwhelming. Hitherto the heavy winged wildfowl had felt safe so long as they kept out of sword-range of the human biped, but the new experience of a detonating missile fatal at fifty yards broke up in a week the habits of generations, and forced them to promptly readjust themselves to their environment.

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CHAPTER XX.

SIR RUTHERFORD ALCOCK IN PEKING, 1865-1869.

I. THE BRITISH LEGATION.

Contrast between Peking and Yedo—Finds old comrade Wade—The Manchu statesmen, Kung and Wênsiang—Material progress pressed upon them—Their failure to appreciate foreign advice.

Sir Rutherford Alcock had spent only a few months in England when he was appointed to succeed Sir Frederick Bruce as Minister to China, he himself being succeeded in Japan by Sir Harry Parkes. Sir Rutherford reached his post in Peking at the close of 1865. The change of scene from Japan back to China was even more striking than that from China to Japan had been in 1859. The excitement of shooting the rapids was succeeded by the weariness of meandering among mud-shoals—the same medium to work in, only under different conditions. Fundamentally the international problem was identical in Japan and China—the conflict between aggression and resistance. Rational dread of, and natural repulsion to, foreigners, inspired alike the policies of both countries. Where they differed was in the manner of meeting the invasion. Japan braced herself nervously to the effort, and, distinguishing between what was feasible and what was not, organised a counter-invasion unsuspected by foreign nations, whom she subdued by their own strength. China, on the other hand, opposed a fatalistic and unreasoning resistance, making no intelligent counter-stroke and showing no true anticipation of the issues of the struggle. The energy of ambitious youth on the one side; on the other mere inertia, irresponsive to the stimulus of pride, shame, patriotism, or even material interest. Bearing this contrast in mind, we may partly understand the prosaic *rôle* which foreign representatives were doomed in China to play from the time the capital was forced open by Anglo-French arms in 1860.

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The position of the new British Minister was different from that which he had occupied in Japan, where, being first in the field, he had to make precedents, whereas in China he had to follow the course which had been marked out during the previous four years. In judging of the wisdom of that course, it is fair to apply the same retrospective criterion that we proposed in the case of Japan—namely, to consider the situation so far as it was known and could be realised at the time. Notwithstanding all that had gone before, China in general, and Peking in particular, remained as great mysteries to foreigners as Japan itself. The pioneer diplomatists had to create their diplomacy out of their own consciousness, working upon an idea which they imported, and not on the objective facts, which were mere chaos to them.

Sir Rutherford Alcock had the happiness to find the Peking Legation in charge of his old vice-consul, Thomas Wade, from whom he had been officially separated for ten years. Mr Wade was Chinese secretary and secretary of Legation, offices which were some years later separated, to the infinite detriment of both. For the secretary of Legation, drawn from the ranks of the diplomatic service, had neither knowledge of nor interest in Chinese affairs, nor ought to do but wait idly for the contingency which might make him *chargé d'affaires*, reckoning every month spent in the country as a penance entitling him to swift promotion to a more congenial sphere. And the Chinese secretaryship, by itself, offered no attraction to an ambitious man. But in 1865 the combination of offices was most important, especially in the hands of a man of so much

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distinction as Mr Wade. As the custodian of the Bruce tradition, if indeed he had not a large share in its evolution, he bridged the gulf between the outgoing and the incoming Minister, much as the Permanent Under-Secretary does at the Foreign Office.

As Mr (afterwards Sir Thomas) Wade, in the capacity of secretary, *chargé d'affaires*, and Minister Plenipotentiary, represented Great Britain at the Chinese Court for the best part of a quarter of a century, a term equal to that of the other six Ministers put together, a brief reference to his personality seems necessary to a just comprehension of the course of affairs during his long residence in Peking.

Mr Wade began life as a soldier. He had been in the "Black Watch," but, being the only officer who could not speak Gaelic, found it congenial to exchange into the 98th Regiment, with which he served in China during the first war. He was adjutant of the regiment, which was commanded by Colonel Campbell, afterwards Lord Clyde. When peace was made in 1842, he resigned his commission and betook himself to the study of Chinese and of Chinese subjects. After qualifying as interpreter he became Chinese secretary to the Superintendency of Trade, which until 1858 was domiciled in Hongkong. Transferred to the consular service, he was for some years interpreter and vice-consul at Shanghai, where it fell to his lot to command the local volunteers in the attack on the Chinese Imperial camps in 1854. He was the first executive head of the Maritime Customs, established in the same year, his services being lent by his chief to start the new institution. Attached to Lord Elgin in his two missions to China, he was appointed secretary of Legation and Chinese secretary under Sir Frederick Bruce when the Legation was installed in Peking. [133]

Wheresoever Mr Wade's lot was cast he was beloved for his Irish geniality, open-mindedness, and sincerity. He was the soul of honour, and was possessed by the spirit of chivalry much beyond the common measure. His best friends would never wish to forget his endearing infirmities of temper, associated as they were with the generous *amende* which never failed to follow an over-hasty word. A well-read man, with a memory like Macaulay's, a brilliant *raconteur* and inimitable mimic, he was the delight of every society. The services which he was enabled, by many years of arduous labour, to render to succeeding generations of students of Chinese are incalculable, and if his work begins now to be superseded by that of others, this is but the common fate of pioneers in every department of research.

Sir Thomas Wade's character may thus be fitly and fairly summed up in the hackneyed epithet, "a scholar and a gentleman,"—but not therefore a statesman. His mind was cast in another and a finer mould than befits the political arena; and, unnatural as the inference may seem, it is open to question whether his extensive knowledge of China was the best qualification for dealing at first hand with current affairs, even in that country. Profound researches into Chinese literature and philosophy tend to overshadow and induce a distaste for the jarring questions of the day. Seen through the luminous haze of its classic history, China presents to the contemplative mind an object of reverence unlike any other existing State, for the thread of its continuity since the time before Abraham is unbroken. Grandeur than hewn stone or graven bronze, the monuments of China are written books, and a living race, the heirs of all her ages, to be conversed with and interrogated. The burden of such vast homogeneous antiquity may well oppress the mere man of politics: he needs a certain alloy of Philistinism and a limitation of view to enable him to concentrate his attention on the exigencies of the passing hour. [134]



PRINCE KUNG.

Relations which might be called intimate had been established between the two Manchu statesmen, Prince Kung and Wênsiang, and the foreign representatives. When these high personages were forced to assume responsibility for international relations, they were not only unversed in foreign affairs but untrained to any kind of business. The work of the six Boards was carried on by expert secretaries, and the presidency of one of them would have been no qualification for the new duty thrust upon the emperor's Ministers of transacting business with foreign officials standing on an equality with themselves. Their older colleague, Hangki, had gained a little foreign knowledge by observation and hearsay while filling the lucrative office of *hoppo* at Canton; but the two younger men mistrusted him, perhaps with reason, possibly from the suspicion naturally aroused by his possession of superior knowledge. Prince Kung and Wênsiang recognised that they had everything to learn, and they were apt and eager scholars. Considering all the circumstances, it is indeed marvellous how they adjusted themselves by innate tact to the novel position, and how quickly they assimilated new knowledge. Many illuminating discussions were carried on between them and the foreign representatives, who on their part were no less desirous of imparting than the Chinese were of acquiring information respecting the outer world. In these interesting symposia Mr Wade naturally played the prominent part. On the enchanted ground of Chinese history and literature, also, the interlocutors made endless excursions together; and Chinese philosophy being directed to conduct rather than speculation, it was possible to deduce from the teaching of the sages authority for the adoption of almost any useful measure. Between the modern innovator, therefore, though in foreign garb, and the ancient moralists there was no such intellectual disagreement as sympathetic explanations could not resolve.

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It might have been justifiable to conclude that the Chinese were being influenced for good by the well-meant counsels so copiously addressed to them, were it not that the tutorial being so entirely incompatible with the diplomatic function, no useful result could be expected from their strained combination. It was as if one were to teach a novice the moves in a game which the two were at the same time playing for serious stakes.

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These interminable interviews and voluminous memoranda were wholly unproductive, owing, no doubt, to the fact that the ideas of the parties ran on parallel lines destined never to come to any point of fertile contact. The burden of the cry of the Western people was "progress," a word without equivalent in the language, and expressing an idea which had no place in the conception of the Chinese. Incessant repetition with varying illustrations were to the Chinese as flowers of rhetoric wasted on a deaf man, and that simply because the basis of the Chinese political thought lay at the opposite pole from that of the European. On one occasion a distinguished American promoter was expatiating to the governor of Formosa on the advantages of railway communication, his most telling example being his own experience in being rushed along after an early breakfast from his house in Albany to New York, where he spent the day transacting important business and got wheeled back again to Albany for dinner. The governor stopped him, and asked what in the name of sanity possessed him to lead such a wearing life, as the last thing he (the governor) would dream of doing would be to live a hundred miles from his work. Though the earliest public advocate of railroads in China, the governor regarded their utility from a far

different point of view.



From a photo by J. Thomson, Grosvenor Street, W.

WÉNSIANG.

From a photo by J. Thomson, Grosvenor Street, W.

So eager were the foreigners for progress, which in their mind included the regeneration of the Chinese empire and the development of its full capacity for self-defence, that they were wont to rejoice over the slightest indications of a beginning being made. Thus the mission of a man of no standing as a secretary of the Tsungli-Yamên, who was sent to Europe in 1866 to take observations, was hailed as the beginning of the new era, and commended so warmly by the foreign Ministers to their Governments that the emissary was received like the Queen of Sheba by King Solomon, and shown—at least in Great Britain—everything that was admirable from the Western point of view. He was as far, however, from appreciating the triumph of science as was Cetewayo, the Zulu, whose admiration of England focussed itself on the elephant "Jumbo" at the Zoological Gardens, or the Scotswoman who, after being shown over the British Museum, had carried away from it one impression, and that of the "graund mat" at the door. The Chinese Government's appreciation of Western progress was by no means increased by the mission of Pin, which rather indeed produced a contrary effect. China soon began to put forth fresh claims to go her own way, her own way being directly opposed to the kind of progress which was being pressed upon her.

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The Chinese in following the doctrines of the sages felt they were under the guidance of Heaven, so that innovations appeared to them tainted with impiety. So deeply did the worship of the past pervade their field of thought, that when high officials ventured to introduce something new, they usually endeavoured to disarm opposition by gilding their proposals with well-selected texts from the classics.

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II. FOREIGN LIFE IN PEKING.

Social influence of the Alcock family—Sir Rutherford's relations with his staff—No social relations with natives —Manchu courtesy to English ladies—Community of foreigners sociable yet non-cohesive—Description of city —Foreign residency—Objects of interest—The streets—Mules—Camels—Mongol market—Fur sales—Absence of regulations—Street anecdotes—Summer residences.

By the end of 1865 the foreign life in Peking, official, social, and private, had already settled into the grooves prescribed by local conditions, within which it has, more or less, run ever since.



MANCHU (TARTAR) WOMEN.

Nevertheless, the advent of Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock, with their daughter, now Lady Pelly, introduced an element into the social atmosphere of Peking which has afforded the happiest reminiscences to those who came under its influence. We have seen that Sir Rutherford Alcock, by force of character, conviction, and sense of duty, naturally assumed the lead among his peers wherever he happened to be placed. A German resident in Peking at the time we are speaking of says, "I remember very well that fine English gentleman, who was conscious of representing the greatest country of the world, and did it well." The official personality of the British Minister could not be more truly depicted than in these simple words; but this natural pre-eminence extended far beyond the official sphere, and made itself felt for the general good in the common relations of life. His dealings with subordinates were marked by thoroughgoing loyalty; his rule was to give his confidence without reserve to those who merited it, to support and defend them in the discharge of their duty. He was accessible, always ready to listen to the opinions even of his juniors, and though exacting as regards work, he never spared himself, but set an example of industry to those who served under him. He possessed that rare faculty of appreciation which enables a man to command services which no money could buy. The survivors of his staff to this day speak of him in affectionate terms as the best of chiefs. In business he was strictly, perhaps even rigidly, formal, and his manner was intolerant of laxity in others. When the official crust was put off like a suit of armour, the genial depths of his nature were reached, but the number of those who enjoyed this experience seems never to have been large. Select, but few, were the friends of his bosom. [139]

The foreign residents in Peking did not number many, and, with the exception of the Legations, were rather widely scattered over a city of vast distances. The original community consisted of about sixty persons, distributed over the four Legations, the customs' staff, and missionary establishments. It was a community of young men "about twenty-four years of age," eminently social, no member being a stranger to the rest, and all living in friendly intercourse. The Legations may almost be said to have sat with open doors, so easy were their interchanges of informal visits. During the time of Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock their hospitalities rendered the British Legation the chief centre of social interest, while the unaffected kindness which inspired these courtesies endeared its inmates to all their fellow-residents. That, indeed, was the golden age of the British Legation, and, it may be added, of the general social life of the Chinese capital, a period when life-long friendships were formed. The time had not yet come for international rivalries to mar the cordiality of personal intercourse. Indeed in the convivialities of Peking national distinctions were absolutely lost, and so to a great extent were the distinctions of rank. On the racecourse, which was early instituted, as in the billiard-room, picnic excursions, and the like, all were free and all were equal. [140]



MANCHU WOMEN.

When we speak of the "social" life of Peking, it must be understood as referring exclusively to that of the foreign residents among themselves, for between them and the natives there was no such intimacy. But in those early days the high Chinese officials seemed to have been more genial than those of a later epoch. In the winter of 1860-61, for example, Hangki, formerly *hoppo* of Canton, was in the habit of receiving Mr Adkins familiarly at his private residence,—a practice which was afterwards gradually discontinued. The arrival of the two ladies at the British Legation was the signal for a display of courtesy by the Manchu Ministers, who from time to time sent them seasonable presents of plants, flowers, and other things, thus establishing agreeable personal relations with the Minister. That the advent of ladies to the Legations should have evoked the natural politeness of the high officials need not be a matter for wonder if it be remembered that the Chinese contempt for women is not shared by the Manchus. It is well known that their women are free from most of the trammels which contract the lives of their Chinese sisters. Their unbound feet symbolise liberty of locomotion generally, and they show themselves unveiled and unabashed in public thoroughfares. They have the coquetries common to the sex, among which may be reckoned a passion for floral decoration of the head, and the universal practice of painting the face and lips. This is done in a thoroughgoing manner, and as if the paint were "laid on with a trowel," leaving a sharply defined margin on cheek and neck between the pink and white and the sallow ground on which the colour is overlaid, giving it the appearance of a mask which might be easily removed. Even young children are subjected to the cosmetic treatment; and the very aged do not discard the artificial flowers in the remnant of their hair. As the fairest Chinese have no such natural colour as is thus imitated, it is rather difficult to divine whence they derived the notion of an ideal human skin.

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It is not to be wondered at that the first European girls who appeared in Peking should have excited some curiosity. One young lady, probably the first arrival, whose fresh and fair complexion suggested the acme of the cosmetic art, excited intense interest among the Mongol and Manchu ladies. On one occasion she was met in the street by a great princess, who was so struck by her appearance that she stopped her *cortège*, alighted from her cart, and stood before the English girl and gently rubbed her cheeks to find out, as she naively said, how the colour was put on!

The foreign residents at Peking, happy as their circumstances were, lacked some of the principal elements of a community properly so called. They had, in fact, little in common besides their æsthetic culture and their Christian civilisation, the literature, philosophy, and the social tenets of the West. They had no head, no centre, no neutral meeting-ground even except the racecourse and the open fields, and were thus always either hosts or guests to each other. The assumed identity of their high political interests gave an appearance of solidarity to the diplomatic section; but the fusion of the other elements in the society was far from complete, and, in short, outside of the region of recreation and conviviality the residents could not be said to be animated by any unifying purpose, nor to have any communal existence. Individual isolation prevented the aggregate from attaining collective force.

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CHINESE WOMEN.

These sterilising conditions were aggravated by another feature of the situation which had an important bearing on social life. Peking was one of the most inaccessible capitals in the world. The great tourist-stream passed it by. It stirred no human emotion unless it were languid aversion or inarticulate curiosity. The dilettante element which has ventilated Japan so well and kept her in constant touch with cosmopolitan life-currents has been absent in Northern China. Peking with its particular concerns has been thus permitted to lie secluded from the world, neither generating fruitful ideas nor inviting or profiting by their importation from without; nor, in short, making itself intelligible or interesting to mankind other than as an archaic curiosity. China, with its immense wealth and resources, weighed less in the consideration of the nations than the petty kingdom of Greece or the deadly swamps of Africa. Considerations of that kind help to explain the bewilderment with which the action of these neglected forces has been received during the past few years, and the disarray of the organs of European opinion when suddenly called on to deal with the phenomenon of Peking as a daily "headline."

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Of the city itself it may be noted that it is magnificently laid out within high and massive walls, the gates and corners surmounted by bastions and imposing towers pierced with three tiers of gun-ports. The main streets are straight and extravagantly wide. Spaciousness is the dominant expression of the whole—the back-yard is a feature of the meanest one-storeyed hovels. It has not occurred to the Pekingese to economise earth-space by vertical architecture ground-ward or sky-ward. Viewed from an elevation, the city has the appearance of a vast park: the tree-foliage seen in perspective seems to cover the whole area, only picked out by yellow and green roofs of imperial and other conspicuous buildings. The palace, a city in itself of 10,000 inhabitants, occupies an immense *enclave* symmetrically placed in the centre of the whole.

From such a coign of vantage as the high wall affords, Peking presents at once an impressive and a pleasing spectacle. It gives the distance necessary to lend enchantment to the view. The soothing hum of a great population; the sweetness of an atmosphere untainted, if it be summer, or spiced by the aromatic herbs which grow promiscuously between the interstices of the bricks, if it be autumn,—enfolds the scene in that kind of soft drapery which memory throws over common things long past. One lingers, loth to renew a closer acquaintance with the crowd below, which no longer hums but utters wild discordant cries,—with the horrors of the streets, which are of the earth, earthy. The area contained between the rectilinear arteries of the city is dismally laid out on the plan of the rabbit-warren. These wide streets are alternately deep mire and deep dust at the best, but at the worst, receptacles of indescribable abominations. The witty and wise Bishop Favier, when describing these to a friend in France, was asked, How could a population living in such insanitary conditions resist a visitation of cholera. "Cholera!" exclaimed the Father; "it could never enter. It would be asphyxiated at the gate!"^[12]

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The dust is acrid to nose and eyes, from the dessicated refuse of generations, for the streets are watered by long scoops from standing pools of sewage which overflow in the summer rains and obliterate the roadway, so that animals harnessed between shafts not unfrequently meet with a cruel death by drowning in these foetid thoroughfares.



CHINESE STREET SCENE DURING RAINY SEASON.

Such hints as these will be sufficient to suggest to the least imaginative that peculiar unattractiveness of the Peking streets which has been a determining factor in the habits of the foreign residents. Life would be intolerable to Western folks if it were not removed from the sights, noises, and odours of the streets; and fortunately the ruling local principle of spaciousness lends itself to the solution without running counter to any native practice or prejudice. The Legations, the customs, and the missionaries are in their various degrees established in "compounds" large enough to accommodate the members of their staffs in separate buildings with ample elbow-room, as in an Indian cantonment, interspaced with trees and sometimes gardens, the whole surrounded by a high wall and capable of defence. These seductive oases in a wilderness of garbage, in a city of great distances, naturally conduce to stay-at-home habits and to segregation, which it requires some energy to overcome.

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Nor is Peking life wanting in more mundane compensations. The city itself contains many "objects of interest," which in the earlier years of foreign intercourse were open to the curious. The well-known "Lama temple," reputed to contain 2000 inmates, which has for many years been dangerous to enter, was in those days a much-frequented resort, where the stranger was welcome to go over the establishment and listen to the Buddhist litanies: a certain bass voice, or perhaps a succession of bass voices, in the choir, indeed, attained celebrity among foreigners. In the refectory of that monastery one was obliged, out of respect, to eat, or feign to eat, the unmitigated fat of the sheep's tail, fished from out the broth, not with a hook, as was the custom in the Jewish Church, but by the deft fingers of the chief lama. Now, on the contrary, the foreigner who enters the gate is hustled, robbed, and stoned. This great change in the attitude of the lamas has never been satisfactorily explained, but it is presumed that the manners and customs of some of the visitors to the temple may have had something to do with it. There have been visitors who, with the keen acquisitiveness of the world-tourist, have slipped small "josses" into their pockets out of what, perhaps, appeared to them the superfluous number of molten images ranged round the shelves of the great Buddha's sanctuary.

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The Temple of Heaven, too, that grand altar to the Living God, standing in an immense park enclosed by a lofty wall, was then, and for many years remained, open to all comers. This was perhaps due less to any intentional liberality of the authorities than to the negligence of the gatekeepers and the Board of Works. For a long time access was gained over a broken part of the outer wall left unrepaired. At one period English residents played cricket within the vast enclosure; at another Billingsgate and brickbats were the ordinary salutations which greeted the would-be visitor—the change being probably due to the slow awakening of the officials. So with many other places within and without the city, for in some cases where direct request was made for extension of the accommodation, the effect of drawing official attention to the subject was to restrict the privileges which had actually been enjoyed.

Notwithstanding the occasional rudeness of which Dr Rennie has given us so faithful a picture, the most unartistic of men could hardly fail to take pleasure in the daily traffic of the streets, provided only his nerves, visual and olfactory, were not too delicate. The true lord of the roads is apt from his commonplaceness to be overlooked by those who owe him most—that universal conveyancer, the sagacious, tireless mule. He does not belong to the "five great families"—the fox, weasel, hedgehog, snake, and rat—which the Chinese hold in mystic awe because they have learned the secret of immortality; but if utility to man were a criterion of merit, they would surely fall down and worship this indispensable hybrid. Hot or cold, wet or dry, the mule never fails to respond to the severest call upon his strength and courage.

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With the approach of winter an antediluvian rival is introduced upon the scene, in the shape of the well-known two-humped camel, which is then shaggy, dignified, and in really grand form. Intolerant of heat, but impervious to cold, the camels, after passing the summer on the grasslands of the Mongolian plateau, are brought down in droves to the great fair held on a large open space outside the Northern Wall. The coming of the camels with their bronzed and heavily booted riders is like a whiff of the free air of the desert. The Pekingese use this patient but surly beast of

burden chiefly for carrying coal from the mines in the Western Hills to the city; but immense numbers are employed in transporting tea from the navigable limit of the Peiho to Siberia and Russia, not entering Peking city at all.

A roomy encampment between the British and Russian Legations is allotted to the Mongols, and serves as a market-place where the products of the desert are exchanged for the utensils and gewgaws of civilisation. The staple of the Mongol trade is frozen meat—mutton, venison, furred and feathered game; and without refrigerator or other appliance the carcasses remain fresh in their skins till the end of the three winter months. These simple-minded herdsmen, chaffering with shrewd Chinese hucksters, or sitting, where they seem to have been born, between the high humps of their slow-moving beasts, form picturesque groups in the imperial city, the more interesting that their appearance is pathetically suggestive of an order which is passing away. The Grand Khan, dispensing favours to his loyal tributaries, has come ominously near to being a mere tradition. These very sheepskin-coated camel-drivers are the only buffer remaining between the receding empire and the advancing tide of foreign encroachment from the north. [148]

Other evidences of that imperial grandeur which lent some justification to the title "Middle Kingdom" were still occasionally to be met with. Though Siam, and even Burma, had fallen indefinitely into arrears, dust-begrimed embassies from Korea or Nepaul, with their trains of pack-mules bearing tribute and merchandise (duty free for the benefit of the officials), might still be seen defiling through the massive gates of the city, preserving to our day a living picture of the Asiatic mission of the antique type. For what were they but interesting survivals, shadows of departed greatness?

Peking is not a commercial city, but essentially an imperial camp. Trade proper is confined to an outer or Chinese city, which is but a walled-in suburb sparsely built over. Through traffic, for obvious fiscal reasons, shuns the capital; but there is sufficient local commerce, of which gold and silver smelting forms a not unimportant part, to support many bankers and merchants who are domiciled in the outer city. It has been remarked that Chinese trade may be seen at its best in the settlement of Maimaichên, which faces Kiachta on the Russo-Chinese frontier, or in the Straits Settlements or Rangoon, where nothing hinders the merchants from accumulating and displaying their wealth. Even Peking, however, affords some glimpses of the far-reaching enterprise of the Chinese traders. [149]

What a suggestive display, for instance, is the fur-market, also of necessity a "winter exhibition"! Acres and acres of ground are covered with skins of every conceivable species of quadruped, spread out from dawn till near noon. Here are daily laid out for sale under the blue sky (and what a light to make purchases in!) the commonest and the most precious furs from Manchuria, the Amur, and even Kamtschatka, the total value of which must be enormous. Let us learn from the history of the Hudson's Bay Company what organisation of energy, what confidence, what variety of enterprise and skill, are required to bring these costly commodities from such vast distances to this great sale-room, and we shall not make light of the vitality of the Chinese.

The amenities of the street traffic, though not of special importance, call for mention as illustrating certain phases of foreign contact with the Chinese. If we may take Japan for comparison, in nothing is the contrast between the two systems more apparent than in municipal administration. The antithesis may be expressed in one word,—in Japan, excessive regulation; in China, absence of regulation. Whether there be any rule of the road in China is of little interest, seeing that, like other rules, it might be disregarded and there would be no one to enforce it. The traffic adjusts itself with little friction. China employs no police,—things arrange themselves by their own interaction, as the pebbles do on the sea-shore; and for most of the purposes of life the people are their own law-makers and their own executive. The Chinese system of government is to govern as little as possible—to let the country rule itself. So when a strange element demanded accommodation in the busy streets and congested gateways of Peking, without rules or supervision, it had to find its level among the rest by friction and concussion. It would have been an interesting process to watch in its initial stages. Amid a good deal of clamour and language of a racy description applied to man and beast and their respective ancestors, there is rarely a serious road quarrel among the Chinese. One excellent custom of polite society tends to restrict the area of disputes on the highway, leaving collisions to be fought out by grooms, carters, chair-bearers, or boatmen, as the case may be, while the masters maintain an imperturbable reserve. [150]

Mr Colborne Baber, who had a way of his own of solving the minor problems of Chinese intercourse, was once in a cart, sitting well back and unobserved, in a narrow street that admitted neither of turning nor of passing another vehicle, when a cart was met about half way. The drivers began to vociferate, each calling on the other to give way. The opposition carter claimed the precedence on the ground that his vehicle carried women, and it looked as if he would gain his point when Baber himself, becoming impatient, thrust out his head and called out that in his cart there was a foreign devil, and without further discussion the rival jehu backed out. [151]

Those who ride do not recognise each other on the road, even though they be friends; for if they did so, etiquette would require both to stop and dismount and go through formal salutations on foot. Foreigners, ignoring this rule, and their servants not unwilling to profit by the prestige of their masters in accosting bystanders from the saddle, are sometimes grievously misdirected when not lectured on their bad manners. The natives on their part are seldom averse from

presuming on the foreigner's ignorance of what is due to him. Between the one and the other, or as a result of the mere chapter of accidents, collisions were inevitable in the streets. How were they to be dealt with in the absence of constituted authority? If aggression towards a foreigner on the part of a great man's servants were submitted to, there would be no end to it, they being 500 to 1. On the other hand, insolence promptly resented and vigorously punished never failed to elicit the approval not only of the spectators, but even of the great man himself, who perhaps had secret grievances of his own against his lackeys, which he was not sorry to see partially paid off by proxy. In all cases the sympathy of the Chinese goes with the side that successfully asserts itself. Of this hundreds of examples could be given—perhaps not one on the converse side.

A writer in the 'Whitehall Review' some years ago, among interesting reminiscences of the 'Sixties, relates some incidents to show the primitive means by which equilibrium was established between natives and foreigners in the Peking streets. *Place aux dames*. The experience of the first foreign female who had been seen is thus amusingly told. Mr Bruce's housekeeper, an old family retainer who had followed the fortunes of her master all over the world, [152]

saw no particular reasons for not acting in Peking as she had done in Cairo or Constantinople, and the first morning after her arrival sallied forth, basket on arm, to do her marketing for the day. When I add that she knew not a word of Chinese, that none of the natives spoke English, that she was about five feet high and ten feet round the crinoline, and was the first female European ever seen by the Pekingese, her enterprise will be judged to have been braver than she knew. However, nothing daunted, she entered a butcher's shop, closely pressed upon by an inquisitive and delighted crowd. Before she could even look at a joint or chop she was hemmed in, and one waggish native, bolder than the rest, gave her a substantial dig in the crinoline, shouting in Chinese, "Let's see if she's solid." But the laugh was not for long on his side. Seizing a chopper from the block, Mrs A. made a mighty blow at his head, which he happily evaded. In less than a second the shop was clear, the terrified natives tumbling over each other in their haste to get away. A European who came upon the scene at the moment beheld the startling sight of some 500 Chinese rushing up the principal street pursued by an infuriated old woman armed with a chopper. With some difficulty she was persuaded to abandon the chase and resume her basket, which she had dropped in her excitement. But it is on record that for a good two years thereafter Mrs A. was allowed to shop in peace, and became a "Black Douglas" to troublesome Chinese children in the vicinity of the Legation.

In later years she talked in what she called "broken China."

Another "adjustment to environment" is thus described:—

A curious little industry sprang up in the environs of the city, consequent on the horsey proclivities of the Europeans. This was getting run over, which was generally accomplished by rushing in front of the horses and throwing the hands up. One of two things always happened. Either the horse shied and the rider came off, to the huge delight of the Chinese mob, or the gesticulating party was knocked down. In this latter event, cautioned as we all were to give no offence, if possible, to the natives, a dollar was generally handed as salve to the artful victim, whose screams and yells that he had been killed never failed to draw a large and sympathising crowd of friends, who regarded the "foreign devil" with most unfriendly looks. In one village at last it became intolerable, and we decided if any further attempt was made we would run down the culprits intentionally. As usual, on our next visit three or four young *gamins* essayed the usual dodge. Being fully prepared for it, nobody was unseated, and we turned our horses back at full gallop, three or four Chinese being hurled into the hedge by our horses. We did not stop to offer dollars, but were never afterwards stopped. [153]

Following the same train of reflection, he gives examples of the drastic manner in which the Russians asserted their prerogatives on the road, which we do not quote, as they were probably exceptional cases.

The never-failing courtesy of the Manchus rises superior to such unpleasant encounters. An example of this was related to the writer by a member of the British Legation. In riding through a narrow place, narrowed probably by the cesspool occupying more than its fair share of the street, he met the *cortège* of a grandee at a spot where it seemed impossible to pass, and it looked as if the solitary horseman must turn back. As he thought of doing so he observed the occupant of the sedan call a halt and direct his bearers to make room for the stranger. Observing closely the features of him who showed so much consideration for a foreigner, the Englishman was pleased, some time afterwards, to recognise in him Prince Ch'ing, who succeeded Prince Kung as President of the Tsungli-Yamên in 1884. [154]

The lives of the foreign residents were by no means confined within the four walls of the city. The environs without fences or trespass notices make charming excursion-grounds for riding-parties. For longer expeditions there are the never-failing attractions of the Ming Tombs, the Great Wall, the passes into Mongolia, and various other distant points. The city is beautifully situated in the centre of a mountain crescent, whose nearest point is thirteen miles distant. The first object of quest when the Legations had been established was a sanatorium or summer retreat—for the thermometer reaches 100 Fahr. in June—and the Western Hills were explored. Some of the most beautiful spots there are occupied by Buddhist temples or monasteries, whose builders have shown as nice a taste in the selection of their sites as their brethren the monks of the West have always done. These religious houses, laid out with a view to the accommodation of pilgrims and strangers, are regularly used by Chinese grandees as health-resorts or shelters from political storms. The Russian mission, while it was alone in Peking, had set the example twenty years before of resorting to the hill temples in the dog-days. Arrangements with the priests for the occupation of certain portions of one of the temples were soon made by Mr Parkes, who was on a visit to the capital, and ever since 1861 official Peking, with one notable exception, has on the

approach of summer migrated bodily from the oppressive atmosphere of the great city to the exhilarating air of the Western Hills. The social life of the city was reproduced at the temples, but in a less conventional form, every one residing there being considered on a holiday. The country round offered many temptations to excursions, and amateurs of geology, botany, and natural history were never at a loss for something to interest them in their rambles among the hills. Residence so far from town brought the foreigners into friendly contact also with their rustic neighbours, whose innate good qualities, moderation, contentment, and kindness were displayed in a very favourable light.

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But the sojourn at the hills also brought the foreigner into occasional contact with Chinese of high rank, who welcomed such opportunities of showing civility to the strangers. At other times disagreeable collisions with the retainers of a great personage were experienced. So popular were the temples of the Western Hills as a summer resort that they were always full, and consequently disputes about accommodation were liable to occur, especially when some grasping priest would let the same premises to two different occupants, leaving them, or rather their servants, to fight for the possession.

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III. THE FOREIGN CUSTOMS UNDER THE PEKING CONVENTION.

Centralised in Peking—Encouraged by British Ministers—Assumed imperial form after the treaties of 1858—Extension to all the ports—Original international basis becomes purely Chinese—Shows capacity for larger functions than collection of duties—Becomes a diplomatic auxiliary—British Government leans upon it—The Chinese faithfully served by it—Interpreter of the intentions of the foreign Governments—Inspector-General gains influence over British Minister—Pleases Board of Trade—And maintains confidential relations with British Government—While remaining faithful to China—Services rendered by the Customs to all commercial nations.

It was a source of unmixed satisfaction to Sir Rutherford Alcock, on assuming office in Peking, to find the maritime customs, the bantling of Shanghai, firmly established in the capital and gathering strength and influence. As its functions pertained exclusively to trade, Sir Frederick Bruce had been originally of opinion that the inspector-general should be located in the commercial centre, Shanghai, and he took exception to the institution being domiciled in Peking, where trade was expressly excluded by treaty. Sir Frederick, however, soon saw reason to modify his views. When it began to appear to him that the customs might prove a convenient auxiliary to the diplomacy of the treaty Powers, he cultivated the institution and encouraged it to occult activity in the political sphere. Sir Frederick Bruce's interests in the fortunes of the customs, however, could never be so ardent as that of its parent, Sir Rutherford Alcock, and its monthly nurse, Mr Wade. The presence of these two in the British Legation afforded a fresh guarantee of the prosperity of the customs, which they were both well satisfied to see in the competent hands of Mr Hart. For as the institution was a creation without precedent, the form of its development must be largely influenced by the personal qualities of its head. Whatever character it might have assumed under its original inspector-general, Lay, it could hardly have been the same service that has grown and spread under the directing hand of Sir Robert Hart. It is impossible to dissociate the Chinese customs as it stands from the vigorous self-sustained intellect that has moulded and still controls it, for it is assuredly not such a going concern as can be made over to any new head without the risk of changes more or less organic.

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The story of the first decade of the maritime customs was told clearly, briefly, and modestly in a monograph which Mr Hart prepared for Mr Bruce in 1864, published as a Blue Book of thirteen pages (No. 1, 1865). Up to the date of the Tientsin treaty of 1858 the operations of the foreign collectorate were confined to the single port of Shanghai, the inspectors holding the appointment from the governor-general at Nanking, who was Imperial Commissioner for Foreign Trade. The new treaty gave the foreign Powers an interest in the Chinese customs which they did not possess before, because the war indemnities were to be paid by instalments out of the collections of duty, so that during the time when these payments were being made the maintenance of the machinery for collecting the duties was a matter of international concern. The new treaty also provided for a uniform system of duty collection for all the trading-ports; and then the institution assumed an imperial and dropped its provincial character, the inspector-general receiving his commission from the Central Government.

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Considering that the mission of the foreign customs was to subvert time-honoured native systems, it was received with surprising graciousness at most of the trading centres. The first port to which the new system was extended was Canton, the leader in welcoming its advent there being the *hoppo*, the one functionary in the empire whose privileges seemed to be most directly threatened by the new-comer. By one of those anomalies which are so common and yet so inexplicable in Chinese affairs, arrangements for opening the office in Canton were carried on without interruption during the hostilities of 1859. Patience, tact, and resolution were nevertheless required to overcome the innumerable difficulties of detail incidental to substituting rigorous inspection and remorseless collection for the chaos of unaccountability which had previously reigned unchallenged. A very few years, however, served to reduce all obstruction, and to bring trader and official, foreigner and Chinese, into working harmony.

For the first time in history a true account was rendered to the Imperial Government, accompanied by a substantial revenue on which it could depend. Naturally the agency, though

foreign, which yielded such tangible fruit, commended itself to the statesmen of the capital, who frankly recognised, as did the provincial authorities themselves, that the result obtained was wholly beyond the competence of any native organisation. Though, therefore, the customs service was essentially of a provisional, stop-gap character, it had on that very account a surer guarantee of permanence than could have been derived from any paper covenant by which the Chinese Government could have been bound, for that would have provoked disputation and evasion. The spasmodic attempt to formalise the service on a basis of international obligation which was made in 1898 was perhaps the first thing that really imperilled its constitution. In its origin, indeed, the foreign customs had been international, the three treaty Powers being each represented on the inspectorate; but with the expansion in 1858 this character was abandoned, and the customs became a purely Chinese concern operated by foreign employees, the staff being selected from among all nations indiscriminately, according to personal merit.

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Almost from the time of the transference of the inspectorate to the capital the customs showed capacities of wider range than are comprised within the routine of a custom-house. Profoundly impressed as were the imperial statesmen with the value of the new revenue-producer, they soon began to perceive that the institution might be put to other and greater uses. Plurality of function in itself was no stumbling-block to them, for it is the system on which Chinese administration is carried on. In the very first year they had intrusted the inspector-general and his deputy with the organisation of a navy, with the evident approval of the British Minister. That functionary, indeed, seemed as little disposed as the Chinese themselves to see incongruity in the various forms of customs activity, especially when he regarded its extra official services as rendered to himself; and he really stood much in need of services of that kind.

Her Majesty's first representative in Peking, helpless and despairing, was, in fact, fain to throw himself on the support of the first inspector-general, Mr Lay, and then of his successor, Mr Hart, as having knowledge and influence with the Chinese Government which was not possessed by the British Legation. It did not apparently occur to Mr Bruce that such knowledge was strictly limited, and that the influence could be of very little use to him, and might be too dearly purchased. Having no other resource, however, he was perhaps not unwilling to shut his eyes to the false position in which he was placing himself in leaning upon the paid servants of the Chinese Government to assist him in carrying out a policy which was totally repugnant to that Government. The fidelity of both Mr Lay and Mr Hart to the master whom they served being beyond question, the diplomatic prestige conferred on them by the British Minister, as well as the knowledge and influence derived from the other side, must, in all matters of controversy, be thrown into the Chinese scale.

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As this interesting truth dawned upon the minds of the Tsungli-Yamên, they saw in their English employee a providential instrument for drawing the sting from the threatening language which was sometimes applied to them by the foreign representatives. Of these, the only one who had as yet any serious matter to discuss with the Chinese was the representative of Great Britain. It was assumed on the British side that nothing proposed by that Power was contrary to the interests of China: so far, indeed, did this theory inspire their action, that the welfare of the Chinese seemed at times to overshadow that of their own empire in the minds of the British representatives. No doubt there was an ideal point of view from which the interests of China and her Western neighbours might seem ultimately to blend, but Chinese statesmen were in nowise able to take in such a large perspective. They continued to regard the foreign invasion, with all its pretences of goodwill, as an unmitigated calamity to be opposed wherever possible. No man can pronounce a certain judgment as to whether, with their imperfect knowledge, they were more right or more wrong in following their obstructive instincts. Reforms, progress, and the opening up of the country to foreigners, were being persistently pressed upon them; they fully expected these concessions to be demanded of them when the time came—and it was already drawing near—when the treaties should be revised. Admitting, moreover, that some one, or more, of the Powers might have been considerate enough to forego, or indefinitely postpone, advantages for themselves rather than imperil the wellbeing of the Chinese State, there were already six instead of the original three treaty Powers to be reckoned with; nor was there any limit to the further increase of their numbers. Supposing, then, that, relying on the benignant intentions of the English, they should, in the revision of their treaty, admit such innovations as inland steam navigation, inland residence, railways, and so forth, would not these successes stimulate the other Powers, when their turn for revision came,—France in 1870, Germany in 1871, and others later,—to advance still farther the outposts of the foreign invasion, each, in a spirit of generous emulation, striving to surpass the achievements of his predecessor; and all with the complacent consciousness that they were doing good to China? These endless contingencies were more than Chinese statesmen could cope with, and the apprehension of them had no other effect than to consolidate their resistance in small as well as in great things. They were learning to mistrust the efficacy of their ancient imperial policy of dividing and ruling, and with good reason had lost confidence in their capacity to distinguish in embryo between what was trivial and what was laden with deep consequences.

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Resistance, therefore, tempered by the fear of force, seemed their only refuge. Some of the dangers ahead, of which they had glimpses, might have been obviated by a bolder policy; but being unable to formulate such a policy for themselves, and unwilling to accept it cut and dried from others, there was nothing left them but indiscriminate resistance. Under such conditions no harmony was possible between the Chinese and Western Governments; and not knowing how far they might with safety evade the pressure put upon them, the Chinese had recourse to the Inspector-General of Customs, as Louis XI. had recourse to his astrologer whenever he felt

himself in a difficult crisis.

The Tsungli-Yamên, accustomed to act on hand-to-mouth views of policy, would do anything to relieve the pressure of the moment, but nothing to prevent a recurrence of it. Indisposed to follow up the sequences of cause and effect, they would in emergencies become impatient of ratiocination and attempt to reach the foregone conclusion by a shorter cut. Common gossip in China thus fairly summarised their attitude in certain crises of this kind. If discussion with the British Legation ran high, the Yamên would send for the inspector-general and ask simply, "Does this mean war?" The answer being "No," the question ceased to trouble the Yamên, and the foreign Minister would be allowed to rage at his pleasure. Their Excellencies would even help him out with the opprobrious terms he was searching for, and then listen placidly to the remainder of the tirade. Great Britain having not only the preponderating interest, but being still the leading Power in the Far East, it was obviously a great advantage for the Chinese that it should be that Power which came particularly under the influence of the inspector-general. To tie the hands of the British Government for a whole generation was, indeed, an achievement worthy of a master of policy; but it was by no means the only service which might be rendered to China even by an Inspector-General of Customs.

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The same agency was destined in later days to unravel many tangled skeins in China's international relations. It brought Gordon to her rescue in 1880; by sheer innate ability in the use of the most unpromising means, it brought about peace with France in 1885; and, though with less success, it procured the attempted intervention of Great Britain with Japan in 1894.

How far these great potentialities were foreseen in the earlier years of the Customs service is doubtful. Even in their parental complacency Sir Rutherford Alcock and Mr Wade may well have failed to realise, as an uninterested outsider might have done, the nature of the power that was being nursed in their infant Hercules. Certain it is that they reckoned it as a factor on their own side. It is clear that Sir Rutherford Alcock, so far from regarding the inspector-general as an opponent, commended him to the Foreign Office as a valuable auxiliary. Mr Wade clung to the same belief for a good many years longer.

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The first to perceive the tendency of the new relationship which events were bringing about was, no doubt, the inspector-general himself. China, he saw, could be best served by a virtual control of the British Legation. The nascent power was, however, too precious to be trusted to personal accidents, and the inspector-general wisely availed himself of circumstances as they arose to widen his basis of influence by establishing such relations with the Home Government as might save him from being wholly dependent on the life or the caprice of the representative for the time being at Peking. Such to an ordinary man might have appeared a hopeless ambition, considering the circumstance of distance and other adverse conditions. Yet by gradual steps this too was accomplished. A well-directed stroke or a happy accident established the inspector-general in high favour with the Board of Trade when under the presidency of Mr John Bright. He had summed up the results of the treaty revision^[13] negotiations in 1868 in a congratulatory letter to the British Minister which has been many times published. As a masterly exposition of the State of China in its relation to foreign Powers it was warmly indorsed by Sir Rutherford Alcock, and is well worth perusal even at this day. The Board of Trade was much impressed by a presentment of the Chinese case so much in sympathy with the views often expressed by Mr Cobden and Mr Bright, and which are traditional in the Board of Trade. Their policy was noninterference in the affairs of China, based largely on their disparagement of the value of British interests in that country. In commenting on this closely reasoned State Paper, the Board of Trade specially selected for illustration of its merit the following passage: "Of course, force will wrest anything from China: but wherever there is action there is reaction; and as sure as natural laws continue to act, so sure it is that appeals to force in one age will give to the men of a later day a heritage of vengeance,—the Europeans of some future day may wish that their forefathers had not sown the seeds of hatred in the bayonet-ploughed soil of Cathay."

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Nor was this the only result of the happy success of the new customs diplomacy, for, as the connecting link between commerce and politics, the Board of Trade was a potent agency in determining the political action of the Government, more especially when there was a strong man at the head of it and a weak one at the Foreign Office.

The rising power in China did not seek fresh conquests, but was adroit in seizing on such as came in its way, and circumstances having brought it in direct touch with the Foreign Office, that department was drawn into close relation with the Chinese customs.

The result of all this, briefly stated, was the partial effacement of the Legation and the gradual promotion of Sir Robert Hart to the first place in the confidence of the British Government. As the Foreign Office had, since the suppression of the Taiping rebellion and the death of Lord Palmerston, been most reluctant either to busy itself or to inform itself respecting affairs in China, and was, moreover, anxious to minimise the cost of the Legation in Peking, it was rather predisposed to accept volunteer assistance in the management of British interests in China. The Legation was then, as now, without any intelligence department, the cost of which was saved under the vague belief that all needful information might be obtained from the customs. Thus relegated to a secondary place, the Legation was more and more neglected by Her Majesty's Government, until at last representatives were selected at random and sent out without instructions, in blind reliance on the good offices of the Inspector-General of Customs.

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Before this final stage had been reached, however, such an opportunity occurred, through the

death of Sir Harry Parkes, of legitimising the irregular connection, as a death sometimes provides in certain relations of domestic life, and Sir Robert Hart was himself appointed British Minister. This step was recognised as so far appropriate to the circumstances that it conjoined responsibility with power, which had been too long divorced from each other. But just as the new Minister was about to assume his duties a hitch occurred with the Tsungli-Yamèn, whose views as to the succession to the post of head of the customs not coinciding with Sir Robert Hart's, he thereupon resigned the office of British Minister and resumed his Chinese service. The incident made no difference in the confidence which Sir Robert Hart inspired in the Foreign Office, which had, in fact, drifted into a position of dependence on the inspector-general. This close relationship continued until the Japanese war in 1894, when the British Government, the victim of many illusions, found itself in a condition of bewilderment, like King Lear on the heath, quite unfurnished with the means of coping with the superior intelligence of the other European Powers. [167]

Throughout all these years the attitude of the inspector-general towards his Chinese employers was absolutely above suspicion. He served them loyally throughout, and if the British Government imagined he was using his highly paid position under the Chinese Government in any way to promote other than Chinese interests, that was a gratuitous assumption on their part for which they alone were responsible, and for which, as for all false strategy, the inevitable penalty must be paid.

Among the important international services rendered by the foreign customs, the effective lighting of the coast deserves the first place. Next to that may be reckoned the compilation of accurate statistics of foreign trade with China, more complete perhaps than exists in any other country. The reports of the commissioners of customs at the various ports are also replete with varied and useful information concerning the commerce, industry, and agriculture, with other conditions of the life of the Chinese. Special subjects assigned to individual men are treated as exhaustively as if investigated by a Royal Commission. These valuable papers constitute a modern Chinese Repository to which there is but one drawback—its inaccessibility. [168]

IV. EMIGRATION.

Extensive emigration of Chinese labourers in consequence of gold discoveries—Great abuses—Attempt to diminish same by international action—Tripartite treaty concluded in Peking—Not ratified by France and England—Who send out amended treaty, but negotiations never resumed by Chinese—Opposition of British colonies and the United States to Chinese emigration.

The first public question with which Sir Rutherford Alcock was called upon to deal was that of the emigration or exportation of Chinese coolies. Among the consequences of the gold discoveries of the middle of the century was a demand for human labour, which China of all countries was best able to supply. Voluntary emigration to California and Australia (the "Old" and the "New Gold Mountain") was considerable; but it did not meet the requirements of those enterprises in tropical and subtropical countries which, if not originated, were at least stirred into activity by the impulse radiating from the gold mines. The contractor was called into requisition, and Chinese were carried off in shiploads to Cuba, Peru, Chili, "where they were sold into virtual slavery" under agreements over which there was no legal supervision. Terrible abuses characterised the traffic; mutiny and massacre on the high seas were among the natural consequences. "Another coolie tragedy" was as common a newspaper heading in the 'Fifties as "another missionary outrage" in the subsequent decades of the nineteenth century.

Hongkong being the most convenient shipping port, it was natural that thence should emanate the first efforts to suppress the abuses of the traffic. The "Chinese Passengers Act" passed by the Colonial Legislature in 1855 was a well-considered step in that direction, and the establishment of responsible emigration agencies was another. Such efforts, however, could only be partially successful; for while they cleared the colony from participation in a nefarious trade, they made no impression on the trade itself. Indeed, by throwing it into the least reputable channels, the fate of the victims may even have been rendered less endurable by the restrictive measures conceived for their benefit. The Portuguese settlement of Macao remained open, and there the coolie traffic flourished exceedingly, to the pecuniary advantage of that colony and of the maternal Government, which levies an annual tribute from its Far Eastern offspring. The trade was also carried on in a more or less clandestine and irregular manner at Canton, Swatow, and other Chinese ports, under non-British flags. [169]

For years the colonial press was filled with the horrors of the traffic. Such paragraphs as the following were continually appearing in the Hongkong newspapers:—

At Macao the coolie trade is still rampant, with all its abominations. The inquiries instituted, or said to have been instituted, by Governor Amaral, have ended in smoke. Day after day some additional iniquity comes to light in connection with this horrible traffic. Coolies kidnapped, imprisoned in barracoons, flogged to make them consent to sign the iniquitous contract that binds them to a life of slavery, marched with a strong guard to testify at the Government offices to their signature as given voluntarily and freely, half-starved, exposed to blindness and disease on board ship in transit to the place of their exile, tossed overboard, or left on some barren isle to die, if loss of sight or sickness renders them useless to their masters. Such are the grand features of the Macao coolie trade, supported by the governor in his official acts, and the semi-official paper he edits. Such are the horrors of a slave-trade worse than that of [170]

the poor African negro, which all nations ought to unite to put an end to.

Foreigners could of course have had no success whatever in such man-hunting schemes without the interested co-operation of the natives. How this was obtained may be gathered from such reports as that of Mr W. M. Cooper, acting consul at Swatow, one of the principal entrepôts.

Nowhere [he says] is population more dense than in the plains of the Han. There is a constant tendency, where the struggle for existence is so keen, and no drain exists as that caused by recruiting for an army, towards the formation of a scum of bad characters, whom their idleness or ill-deeds drive to prey on the more industrious. These, frequently discarded by their families, are seen by the official and the village elder on their way to the coolie-house with a sense of relief and satisfaction; and not seldom is the coolie-broker aided in his object of obtaining men by persons of this class, and frequently by the relations of the men themselves. Thus the trade is allowed to take root with the concurrence of the heads of the people, who not only rid themselves by means of it of a nuisance and a burden, but make money by the transaction; and a connection is formed which the broker, in his thirst for dollars, becoming gradually hardened and more ruthless, is not slow to avail himself of in carrying out, with greater boldness, evil designs on his victim.

But if the atrocities incident to the capture and embarkation cried aloud for a remedy, the brutalities of the middle passage were no less heinous; and though the light could not easily penetrate the scenes enacted in the distant mines and plantations which were the ultimate destination of the coolies, enough was known to show that their lot in Spanish-American and other countries and colonies was far from enviable. [171]

To efface this blot on civilisation was the first object which engaged the attention of Sir Rutherford Alcock in Peking. The Chinese Government itself had remained for many years callous to the cruelties perpetrated on its subjects; but this was in keeping with its tolerant habit, its blindness to things disagreeable, and its constitutional aversion to overt action of any kind. The Peking authorities seem, however, to have been at last aroused by the interest in the question evinced by foreign Governments, and in 1866 the Chinese Ministers were induced to join the foreign Powers in devising means to ameliorate the condition of the emigrants. The suggestions of Prince Kung were practical and well directed towards a solution of the problem.

The problem, however, was by no means simple; for to be effective, regulations must be of universal obligation, and receive the sanction of all the interested Powers. There was no desire in any quarter to arrest the stream of honest and free emigration; on the contrary, it was welcomed as an outlet for destitute Chinese. To impose restrictions on Hongkong while the neighbouring colony was lawless and free; to place obstacles in the way of emigration to Demerara and Trinidad, where the coolies were happy and contented, thereby driving them in greater numbers to territories where they were enslaved,—was obviously no gain to humanity. The question, however, was as urgent as it was difficult.

Yet there were circumstances in the situation favourable to a satisfactory issue. Chief among these was the fact that France and England were still working loyally together in matters of cosmopolitan concern. Sir Rutherford Alcock found his French colleagues in Peking as amenable as he had found those in Yedo. The consequence was that, as the result of the winter's labours, a tripartite convention for the regulation of coolie emigration was signed in March 1866 by the British and French Ministers and Prince Kung. The convention was approved by the Ministers of Russia, the United States, and Prussia, though they were not parties to it. But the French Government took exception to certain of its provisions, and deferred ratification until these should be modified. The British Colonial Office and Emigration Board fell in with the views of the French Government. The settlement of the question was thereupon shifted from Peking to Paris and London, when voluminous correspondence ensued between the two Foreign Offices, extending through the years 1866, 1867, and into 1868. The co-operation between the two Governments was hearty and complete; and the amount of patient labour devoted to the task, especially by the French Foreign Office, which had not the auxiliary machinery at its disposal which existed in the Government departments in England, was in the highest degree creditable to both. It may suffice to say that after eighteen months of earnest work a "Projet de Règlement International d'Emigration" was completed in twenty-three articles with subsidiary forms, and was despatched to Peking at the end of 1867, the discussions having resulted in the retention of almost the entire text of the original convention—a fact which reflected no small credit on the Ministers in Peking who had drawn it up. [172]

But when the time came for resuming negotiations in the Chinese capital, the Government there had relapsed into its habitual apathy respecting the welfare of its people. Possibly, also, the zeal of the resident Ministers of France and England may have cooled during the interval which had elapsed since their previous efforts. Their attention was becoming engrossed with other subjects. Effective co-operation between the three parties was evidently no longer feasible. The attempt to regulate emigration by a comprehensive international agreement was tacitly abandoned, and the evils of the coolie trade were left to be dealt with sporadically. [173]

Free emigration from Hongkong—that is to say, of emigrants who paid their own passage—proceeded all the while on an extensive scale. But the laws of the colony did not permit contract emigration except to British colonies, and under elaborate supervision both at embarkation and after arrival at the field of labour. Although coolie ships could not be despatched from Hongkong, a certain amount of indirect participation in the traffic was maintained for some years by residents in the colony who supplied fittings for the coolie ships preparatory to their proceeding to the port of embarkation. Colonial legislation, however, gradually put an end to this, and

successive ordinances so narrowed the field of the contractors' operations that the trade, both direct and indirect, was practically extinguished so far as Hongkong was concerned. A declaration by the Chief Justice in 1873 summed up the various prohibitory laws by enacting that the coolie trade would be treated as a slave trade, aiding or abetting which would be felony. In the year following, the Portuguese Government, yielding to the friendly pressure that had been for a long time put upon them, passed a law prohibiting the coolie trade at Macao.

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While the emigrants were so anxiously protected at the outset of their voyage, the immigration of Chinese into the United States and the Australian colonies was exciting interest of a different kind in those countries. Legislation was continuously directed against the influx of Chinese, and not legislation only, but barbarous ill-treatment and outrages on a par with those perpetrated against foreigners in China. Mr Secretary Seward on his round-the-world tour in 1871 expressed himself highly favourable to Chinese labour in the United States, and his views afforded great encouragement to emigration to California for some years after. The treaty concluded at Washington in 1868 by Mr Burlingame accorded full privileges to Chinese in the United States. But a sharp reaction occurred in the views of American statesmen, and in 1880 the Chinese Government, by treaty made in Peking, consented to a modification of the Washington treaty of 1868, which would allow the United States to limit or suspend, though not absolutely to prohibit, Chinese immigration. This step towards prohibition was completed in another convention signed at Washington in 1894. Why the Chinese Government should have gratuitously consented to attach a stigma to their country and people is one of those inexplicable matters which abound in the history of China's foreign relations.

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V. KOREA.

Comes into the sphere of international relations in 1866—Illegal propagandism followed by persecutions—France adopts the cause of the missions—Calls upon China as suzerain to punish Koreans—Which failing, French Minister proclaims annexation of Korea—Naval expedition repulsed—American naval expedition repulsed in 1871.

It was in the year 1866 that foreign aggression first complicated the relations between China and her tributaries. The kingdom of Korea had with more consistency and more success than either China or Japan secluded itself absolutely from foreign intrusion. Nevertheless, the ubiquitous Jesuit had found his way there, under desperate subterfuges; for if the foreigner in general was proscribed, the foreign religionist was anathema to the rulers of Korea. The laws of the country were draconic in their severity against all priests or pretenders to supernatural authority; but the zeal of the Catholic propaganda defied the laws, though not always with impunity.

"Persecutions," in fact, occasionally broke out, and "massacres" was a not inappropriate description of the repressive measures adopted by the Government in vindication of what it considered the law of the State. The French Government, or at least its representative in Peking, resolved to espouse the cause of the persecuted missionaries in 1866, and to make reprisals on the King of Korea. But that country being a vassal state, the demand was first made formally on the suzerain, that he should cause the Korean persecutors to be punished and the missionaries avenged. This was not only prejudging the particular case, but was yet another instance of foreigners forcing a formula on China, and making her answerable to a tribunal of whose jurisdiction she had no cognisance. The relations of China to the surrounding States which acknowledged her suzerainty were vague and various, imperfectly understood by Western States, as was sufficiently proved in the Burma Convention concluded between Great Britain and China in 1886. But the French *chargé d'affaires* recognised no debatable ground such as even in the international comity of the West differentiates one dependent State from another, and one suzerain Power from another. In the British system alone the diversity in the relations of the members to the head is sufficient to exclude the application of any general rule. While the touchstone of war would no doubt reduce all to one level, yet in the matter of administrative responsibility what single rule could embrace, for example, India, Malta, the self-governing colonies, the Transvaal, and the African Protectorates? M. de Bellonet, however, was not embarrassed by any dubitations about the clean-cut rule to be enforced on China and Korea. He simply demanded that the suzerain should punish the vassal, failing which, he would take the affair into his own hands. Logical, no doubt, and not unreasonable, assuming the quarrel to be just. But the French *chargé* went a step further in adjudging the actual dissolution of the family compact and sequestration of the inferior kingdom. On Prince Kung's declining responsibility for the Korean persecutions, M. de Bellonet, without further ado, annexed Korea to the empire of France, dethroned the king, and posted placards about the streets of Peking promulgating the fact. To Prince Kung he addressed a weighty despatch, in which he said, "The same day on which the King of Korea laid his hands on my unhappy countrymen was the last of his reign. He himself declared its end, which I, in my turn, solemnly declare to-day."^[14]

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This was carrying the question beyond the scope of international law.

Taking an analogy from common life, a father may neglect to correct a mischievous son, and thus leave his neighbours free to take the law into their own hands, but their right to chastise or prosecute does not include that of annulling the parental relationship, and of making a bondman of the offender. Force, of course, may effect such a rupture in the connection between nations, but in this case the force had not yet been applied. Admiral Roze proceeded with a squadron to the mouth of the Han, the waterway to the Korean capital, bombarded forts, and left his name to

an island which faces the port of Chemulpo. The incident was then at an end.

But not the effects of it. It was to Chinese and Koreans a flash of the Röntgen rays that revealed the innermost hearts of the foreigners with a vividness not to be forgotten; it was the whole missionary question, from the Eastern point of view, in a nutshell. To violate the laws and teach the natives to do so, and then appeal to foreign Governments to back them in this insidious form of rebellion—that was the function of the missionaries. The foreign Government thereupon lays claim to the territory, and so the conspiracy is crowned. In the face of such an unveiling of motives the chance of the Chinese statesmen being led by the friendly counsel poured constantly into their ears by the foreign Ministers in Peking must have been small indeed. [178]

About the same time a small American vessel called the General Sherman, with a cargo of notions and some passengers, including one English missionary, made her way through the archipelago which fringes the coast into the inner waters of Korea. She was never again heard of, and the fate of crew and passengers was for long a matter of report and surmise. At last, in 1868, a United States ship of war, the Shenandoah, was sent to the Korean coast to get information about the General Sherman. Nothing whatever was learned. Then Mr George F. Seward, consul-general in Shanghai, advocated a mission to Korea with a sufficient force to ensure respect. His persevering recommendations prevailed with the Government at Washington, and a squadron was equipped in 1871 to proceed to Korea and attempt to open the country, the admiral being furnished with copies of the Japan treaties of 1854 and 1858 as models. The Americans at once came into collision with the Korean troops, bombarded their forts, and defeated with considerable loss a military force marshalled to resist them. But no negotiations were possible. The Korean Government remained impervious to remonstrance and uncompromising in its refusal of intercourse. The following characteristic letter, addressed by the Korean authorities to Admiral Rogers, tersely expresses their attitude of resolute isolation:—

In the year 1868 a man of your nation, whose name was Febiger, came here and communicated and went away; why cannot you do the same? In 1866 a people called the French came here, and we refer you to them for what happened. This people has lived 4000 years in the enjoyment of its own civilisation, and we want no other. We trouble no other nation—why do you trouble us? Our country is in the extreme east, and yours in the extreme west; for what purpose do you come so many thousand miles across the sea? Is it to inquire about the ship destroyed [the General Sherman]? Her men committed piracy and murder, and they were punished with death. Do you want our land? That cannot be. Do you want intercourse with us? That cannot be either. [179]

The American ships withdrew, as the French had done, leaving the peninsula once more to its fate.

Previously to this a piratical expedition was attempted by a German in a North-German steamer, instigated and piloted by a French priest. Its purpose was to desecrate the tombs of the kings, with a view to carrying off the golden treasures with which they were believed to be buried.

The three fiascos left no outward trace in the current of affairs in China, and diplomatic intercourse proceeded in the capital as if the Korean peninsula did not exist. Let it not be supposed, however, that the statesmen of Peking failed to take these exhibitions to heart, although they maintained the strictest reserve on the subject. Christian proselytism and foreign domination were once more discovered in active alliance, justifying all the suspicions of the Asiatic nations. [180]

CHAPTER XXI.

THE REVISION OF THE TREATY.

I. PREPARATION.

Struggle for the observance of the treaty—Hope in the prospective revision—Information gathered by British Minister—Chinese apprehensive of force being used—Imperial Government consult provincial officials—Interesting memorials in reply—Especially from Li Hung-chang—His liberal views respecting foreigners—And wise advice to the throne.

The conflict between foreign aggressions and Chinese resistance had proceeded without intermission on either side for seven years. In the struggle the Chinese had gained many successes, but the fruits of them had not been secured beyond the risk of reprisal. Both sides were ill at ease. The foreigners on their part had been buoyed up under their grievances by the hope of a readjustment of international relations, which had been provided for in the treaties of Tientsin and Peking.

The decennial period was at hand when revision of the treaty of Tientsin might be claimed. To that important juncture all eyes looked forward. The foreigners hoped for freer intercourse; the Chinese wished to restrict what already existed. Great preparations were made for the revision [181]

campaign. On the part of the foreigners opinions were invited from all the trading-ports as to the points where modification could be advantageously claimed, and memorials from the Chambers of Commerce both in China and in Great Britain, from individuals, professional men, and from missionaries, poured in upon the British Minister during the years 1867 and 1868, extending even into 1869.

Sir R. Alcock had even taken every possible pains to acquaint himself with the local circumstances of the various treaty ports by personal inspection and personal communication—a practice which public opinion urged in vain upon his successors, who had much greater need of such local observations. Following up this tour of his own, he delegated to a subordinate the task of studying the conditions under which trade was carried on in the interior, in the districts most likely to be affected by any probable changes in the treaty. Under this roving commission Consul Swinhoe made an extensive tour through the canal district of the Yangtze delta, and finished up with an expedition to Szechuan in 1869, on which he was accompanied by delegates of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce.

The importance attached by foreigners to the occasion naturally stirred the Chinese Government also to make special exertions to meet the coming contest. From the measures to which they resorted it is evident that they were apprehensive lest force should be applied by the foreigners to gain their ends; for the idea of free negotiation and of voluntary agreement had not yet been assimilated by the Chinese. To them the foreigner represented force and nothing else. They had never really comprehended the reasons for the withdrawal of the Allies when in possession of Peking, and though the immediate danger of war was removed, the shadow of it never ceased to haunt the dreams of Chinese statesmen.

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Mistrusting their own resources, the Central Government appealed to the provinces for confidential advice; and as these communications throw light on the inner—though not the innermost—thoughts of the Chinese, which it is difficult otherwise to gauge, some of them are worth perusing in the actual words of the writers.

The secret circular addressed by the Tsungli-Yamên to the high officials throughout the empire in 1867 opened abruptly with the proposition, "The barbarian question is one of old standing"; it then proceeded to review the difficulties and the dangers of "our present conjuncture," arising mainly from the improvement of communications and armaments combined with the earth-hunger of the various European nations. The foreigner at one time stood in awe of the Central Power, but that was before railways and steamships had been invented; and while the numbers who came to China were as yet insignificant, and were conveniently restricted to one spot, where they could be managed, now they occupy so many positions as to form a strategic cordon round the empire. Moreover, they are united in interest, and cannot suddenly be either isolated or weakened. How, then, can we confront them with our isolation and weakness? It is to be feared that we have no one who, taking a comprehensive view of the whole situation, can create disunion among our enemies through their own rivalries and insatiable avarice. Yet it is just here that the germ of an effective policy should be sought. If, however, circumstances render such a scheme at present impracticable, its execution may be deferred. We must be patient under suffering, diligently strengthening ourselves, and abide in hope. We bear in mind the calamities of 1860, and how to save the State the emperor was entreated to conclude a treaty. It was evident that the treaty, hastily concluded, would remain a fruitful source of future difficulty; nevertheless, good faith required that it should be fulfilled, and even the very fulfilment of it be turned into a means of limitation and restraint. The time for revision being now at hand, you are requested to give your suggestions as to the means of avoiding a rupture with foreigners, and in case of a rupture, what will ensure safety. The principal points likely to be brought forward at the revision conferences are here submitted for your consideration. To simply declare the whole impracticable is easy; the difficulty will be to devise a plan for safely avoiding concession. Deal with the matter, therefore, in a practical way, and not by an empty thesis; and let your memorial reach us not later than December. The points are—(1) The audience question. (2) The question of an embassy to foreign countries, which had been repeatedly urged by the various foreign Ministers in Peking. The arguments in favour of such a measure are, that "to know your adversary as he knows you" is a maxim of practical wisdom, and that it would be of great advantage to have the means of appealing from an unreasonable foreign Minister in Peking to his own Government. (3) Telegraphs and railways. (4) Residence of merchants in the interior. (5) Salt trade and coal-mining. (6) Extension of missions.

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Such was the substance of the Tsungli-Yamên's circular to the governors-general and governors of provinces. The memorials in reply were distinguished by some plain speaking. Amid a good deal that was vaporous and fantastic, such as would characterise any general council, there were propositions of sound statecraft, maxims which it would have been good for the Central Government to lay to heart, and side-lights on their traditional conceptions of national policy well deserving to be studied by the Powers which have relations with the Chinese. One clause in the memorial of Tsêng Kwo-fan, for example, went to the root of the administrative difficulties which caused then, and still cause, the major portion of the angry friction between Chinese and foreign officials. He reminded the emperor, in fact, that he had a court of appeal in the provinces; so that though he might, under pressure, be forced to concede points to the foreign nations in Peking, yet it was the memorialist himself and his peers in the provinces who would have the last word to say. The elliptic and allusive style usually assumed in Chinese documents may allow this hint to be interpreted either as a veiled defiance of, or as an assurance of support to, the throne—perhaps both subtly compounded. But the practical inference remains, that, as experience has

often proved, the provinces revise the decisions of the capital, and the execution rests with them.



LI HUNG-CHANG AT THE AGE OF FIFTY.
From a photo by J. Thomson, Grosvenor Street, W.

The memorial, however, which is most interesting to foreigners, because the plainest to their comprehension, is that of Li Hung-chang, at that period Governor-General of the Hu-kwang; and as it affords a key to that statesman's subsequent career and the unique position he has occupied in regard to the foreign relations of the empire, it seems well worthy of reproduction. Omitting the preamble, and certain classic references without which a Chinese State Paper would be no more complete than a speech in Parliament or a leader in the 'Times' fifty years ago would have been without a Latin quotation, the substance of the memorial runs as follows:— [185]

The humble opinion of the writer is, that in conducting business with foreigners the point of the greatest importance is to avoid exciting their contempt; that contempt once excited, they will thwart us at every turn, and even in affairs that are really practicable they will contrive a thousand schemes and devices to throw obstacles in the way of their practicability. But if they feel respect for China, all matters can be mutually arranged; and even difficult questions can be settled by compromise or agreement.

Foreigners, however, are not the only persons who are influenced by this feeling; it animates alike the minds of the whole human race.

It is often said that foreigners are crafty and malign and full of unexpected ruses: but is it not the fact that Chinese are the same; or rather that the outrageous craft and malignity of the Chinese exceeds even that of foreigners? The truth is, that at present foreigners are powerful and the Chinese feeble. And whence arises the power of the former? It certainly is not innate in them, but depends upon the fact that "the requisites of Government are sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler" (Confucian Analects). And how is the weakness of China to be accounted for? This also is not innate, but is a result of the truth of the above axiom not being sufficiently recognised. The present condition of foreign countries resembles that of China before the union, or is perhaps even still more formidable.

In the course of time foreigners came to China, opened numerous marts, and conveyed their merchandise everywhere. They traded at as many as five ports, and all with no other object but that of making the wealth of China contribute to their own. A little consideration shows that those who ventured to come to this country must have placed their reliance upon something to have rendered them so fearless; and there is not the slightest reason why that which they confided in should not also become a source of confidence to China. [186]

Many persons have offered their views upon the several questions now under consideration, and it is useless to take the trouble to recapitulate them. But all such appliances as telegraphs, railways, locomotives, and steamships—the things on which foreigners rely—can without exception be learned by the Chinese. It is often alleged that these inventions are attended with harm: how is it, then, that in foreign countries every district has its trains and steamers, every locality its telegraphs and railways? Natives of China, too, have travelled abroad and can bear testimony that these things, so far from being harmful, are advantageous.

Imperial audience is distinctly stipulated for in the treaty of 1860, and it is next to impossible

to withdraw it; especially as his sainted Majesty Kanghsi admitted Japanese to his presence, and there will be no difficulty in ascertaining the ceremony then employed. And again, during the negotiations with the Russians on the boundary and trade questions, which took place about the same period, they were treated as an equal Power. It is but right, indeed, to consider such Powers as upon a footing of equality with ourselves.

The idea of the writer is to wait until the majority of the emperor, and then to receive all the representatives in a side-hall as was done by his sacred Majesty Kanghsi. It will, however, first be necessary to arrange distinctly whether such interviews are to take place once or twice a-year. Otherwise an impropriety will be caused by their constantly demanding audiences every few days on frivolous questions.

Such a course presents no difficulties from our point of view, and from theirs it is a *sine quâ non*. Moreover, they would see how the imperial magnanimity extends to every region. Their request may with great propriety be granted.

As to the appointment of an envoy, in the fourth year of Tungchih, Pin Ch'un and others were sent on a visit to the several foreign countries, and the Tsungli-Yamên has lately written to state that Chih kang and others have now proceeded thither. Thus the mission has been continuous, and it would be well to adhere to this system. [187]

The question of separate missions at the Courts of the several Powers, however, still remains for deliberation. In discussing these questions persons are apprehensive, either that the emperor's commission will be disgraced, or that there will be an extravagant expenditure of the imperial funds. But such persons are not acquainted with the whole bearing of the subject.

Memorialist is of opinion that this question is eminently susceptible of a satisfactory solution. After selecting reliable and trustworthy men to reside at foreign Courts, it will be necessary to appoint subordinates and interpreters, who can be exchanged every three or every five years. Interpreters, indeed, should be selected from each country to which an envoy proceeds—a system which would give us the double advantage of facilitating public business, and of affording us an opportunity to display our amicable desires. Far from being detrimental, the project is attended with great advantages.

The matter of missionary extension is beset with greater difficulties than the rest, especially as it is not a State question with foreign Governments.^[15] At the present moment innumerable churches are being erected in every province, district, and department for the explanation of their canon and the preaching of their faith; and the common people are one-half of them deceived, and the other half led to join them for evil purposes. Instructions should be issued to the superintendents of northern and southern trade, as well as to the generals, viceroys, governors, customs superintendents, and taotais, to become intimate with the foreign officials with whom they are in communication. Then, when anything is to be arranged, there would be no harm in telling them distinctly that when the common people misbehave the local functionaries must adjudicate; and that when it happens that the people refuse to become proselytes, the officials can on no account insist upon their doing so against their will—for such a course would but raise riots and disturbances, to the detriment of international amity. At the approaching revision of the treaty all possible arguments must be used with regard to this point, and on no account must any further clause be added.

With reference to the remaining points—viz., coal mines, importation of salt, erection of inland warehouses, inland steam navigation, and the like—these, although comparatively unimportant matters, nevertheless entail serious consequences. If their introduction is harmless, there is no necessity to waste words and ink in the raising of disputes and complications; but if, on the other hand, there are among them concessions which we are unwilling to make, it will be very proper to "explain the circumstances to them and argue the rights of the case," and they will hardly wish to press embarrassments upon us. [188]

Should they, however, take advantage of their strength to impose upon our weakness by dividing our territory and sharing among them the fat of the land, in such a pressing crisis the greatest firmness would be necessary. But there need be no great apprehension of such a contingency, for the simple reason that, with the exception of Russia, foreign countries are all too distant from China, and the acquisition of its territory would be nothing but an embarrassment to them.

The fact is, that the prosperity of foreign countries is inseparably connected with the welfare of the Chinese people; and instead of draining that people to the last drop, would they not rather prefer to use, without exhausting—to take, and still leave a residue?

The present occasion of treaty revision with the English is a most important juncture. The English treaty once disposed of, there will be no difficulty with the other Powers. The danger to be apprehended is that during the revision of next year they will employ coercion to extort concession. This, however, may be known previously; and should it be the case, it will of course be necessary to select experienced troops and able officers to confront them. Should nothing of the sort occur, negotiations should be entered upon.

In short, supposing we are to cherish a feeling of revenge and devise schemes to subvert foreign Powers, it will be necessary to wait until—with large armies and abundant supplies, with no rebel or Mohammedan outbreaks in the provinces, and no difficulties in the capital—we can cope with them without hesitation. We shall be a match then for all adversaries; but otherwise we cannot engage in a rash and random conflict. Even when it is supposed that we are ready for the struggle, it will still be necessary to exercise extreme and continual caution, and to wait until our spirit is high, and our aspect, therefore, formidable. Then should there be no war, the question would be disposed of; but in the event of our taking the field, it would not be unvictoriously. [189]

Memorialist, however, has had several years' experience in conducting business with foreigners, and is thoroughly familiar with their character. He has found that, no matter what they are engaged in, they act honourably without deceit or falsehood. But although it is

possible to acquire a general knowledge of their mode of action in the conduct of their own affairs, yet there is no means of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the details and motives of their conduct. Their bearing, however, in military matters affords clear evidence of their straightforwardness. There is the instance of the Englishman Gordon, late commander-in-chief at Soochow, who, having organised 3000 troops of the Ever-Victorious Army, took the field against the rebels. Subsequently, at the capture of Soochow, the memorialist himself observed that officer personally leading in advance of his troops with a courage and *sang-froid* worthy of all praise. He subsequently became the recipient of the imperial commendation and reward.

The writer has also, in conjunction with Tsêng Kwo-fan, acting viceroy of the two Kiang, been associated with foreigners in organising foreign-drilled infantry and cavalry, and in making arrangements for the building of steam-vessels. He is thoroughly convinced that they are actuated by upright and amicable principles, and entertain no feelings of animosity towards China. With the knowledge of these facts before us, it is possible to draw our conclusions upon other matters.

It is from these considerations, therefore, that the writer suggests the policy to be pursued in intercourse with foreigners. There seems to be no necessity to dispose of the several questions hastily and on the instant, nor do the resident foreign Ministers at Peking apparently intend to insist upon an immediate settlement.

It would be well if H.I.M. on attaining his majority were himself to adopt the policy suggested, and in that case no difficult questions would arise.

6th year, 11th month, 6th day.

As perhaps the best essay yet extant in translating the Chinese imperial tradition into the language of the modern world, this paper of Li Hung-chang's is full of instruction for foreign diplomatists. Read in the light of the subsequent thirty years, we see that it sets forth the principles which have inspired the whole public life of the most prominent man in China. His recognition of the honourable character of foreigners, as he knew them, represented a notable advance on the like testimony of Commissioner Lin in 1841, inasmuch as Lin deduced from it the ease by which their good faith could be abused, while Li made it a ground of confidence in co-operation with them. His recommendation to his contemporaries, to cultivate intimacy with foreign officials in order to obviate misunderstandings in the execution of the treaties, was only preaching that which he has consistently practised throughout his official life. He was the first high official who braved public opinion by sitting with open doors. This conciliatory temper and open mind has made Li Hung-chang the lubricator in many jarring conflicts; and it kept him, contrary to constitutional usage, for twenty-five years at the diplomatic outpost of the capital. [190]

His delicate handling of the suggestion of the Central Government, to resist by hostile means the proposals of foreigners, is also characteristic of the man who had seen war and hated it. While bowing to the imperial will, he proposed postponement of its execution. In a similar case many years afterwards a memorial of Li's was quoted as an incitement to war with Japan, whereas it was an extinguisher, in diplomatic form, put upon the bellicose proposal of another.

Not the least interesting part of Li's memorial is the ground on which he advocates reform—the proved superiority of foreign nations. His argument takes the identical form, and is expressed in the very words, used by the Daimios of Japan; and the circumstances of the two countries in their foreign relations were in the main so similar, that it cannot but be instructive to observe how they comported themselves respectively under the stress of the foreign irruption. Both had been overawed by foreign forces, and both sought revenge by using the strength of their opponents for their own regeneration. The difficulty, as we see it, in the carrying out of the scheme of regeneration was of the same nature in both countries—the want of unity and centralisation. Japan was divided up into feudal principalities; China into provinces and prefectures as independent as self-governing British colonies. The councils of the Daimios bore a rough analogy to the consultations with the governors and governors-general of China. The enemy was the same, and the means of overcoming him are as clearly laid down in Li Hung-chang's memorial as in the most perfervid of the Japanese manifestoes. How, then, did it come about that the same leaven should have fermented with such miraculous rapidity in the one country, while in the other it has been buried in a torpid mass? Obviously this is a matter which will repay the consideration of those who concern themselves with the state and prospects of China. [191]

II. THE BURLINGAME MISSION.

Mysterious inception—American Minister becomes Chinese envoy to Western countries—Objects of mission concealed—Its first adventure—Mr Burlingame concludes treaty at Washington—Persuades British Government to adopt new policy in China.

Three processes—separate, though not independent—were going on simultaneously during the year 1868: the revision of the British treaty in Peking; an epidemic of anti-foreign demonstrations in the provinces; and the progress of the Burlingame mission in Europe. One of them cannot be understood without the other; but taking the revision of the treaty as the object towards which the other two converged, it will be simpler to reserve the special consideration of the treaty question until we have given a short outline of the accessory episodes.

Of the eight questions submitted to the provincials, one was disposed of, and that in a surprisingly precipitate manner, a month before even the memorials of the various authorities

were sent in. An embassy to Europe and America was appointed, equipped, and despatched in the month of November 1867, and with a foreigner at its head. A proceeding so contrary to Chinese tradition naturally excited curiosity as to its origin,—a curiosity which has been tantalised but not to this day satisfied, though the mission itself soon became ancient history. It is certain none of the representatives of foreign Powers then in the capital were consulted, or in any way taken into confidence with regard to the scheme—except, of course, the one who transferred himself from the service of his own country to that of China. "No one," wrote Sir Rutherford Alcock, "knew that the Chinese were on the eve of a revolution which would materially change the aspect of affairs." This by way of explaining an important memorandum he had just written on the state of China, which would have been of a different tenor had any hint of what was intended been given to him.

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As the embassy was the first that China had sent to a foreign country, and as it was commissioned under some urgent demand which evidently would brook no delay, its composition, character, and objects are all interesting to the student of Chinese politics. There were three envoys, two Chinese and one foreign. The latter was the Hon. Anson Burlingame, Minister of the United States to China, who of course was the spokesman of the mission. A better selection for the purpose could not have been made, had even a larger choice of men been open to the Chinese. Mr Burlingame had been an active politician in his time, and was a practised orator. If we add the epithet "sophisticated rhetorician," which was ten years later applied to a still more eminent personage, that is little more than to say he was a special pleader. And he was engaged on special pleader's duty. Whatever the genesis of the mission, therefore, it was a master stroke of the Chinese Government, eclipsing all their other contrivances to resist the expected demands of foreigners at the revision of the treaties. It was the first open attempt by the Chinese to apply the homœopathic principle to their international affairs in using the foreigner as an antidote to the foreigner.

The Burlingame mission left Peking with the ostensible approval of the foreign representatives. The support of the British Minister was given in the most practical way by the permission granted to the acting Chinese secretary, Mr J. McLeavy Brown, to accept the secretaryship of the mission—a favour the more marked in that Mr Brown happened to be the *locum tenens* of Mr Wade, who had just gone on leave, so that his departure left the British Legation destitute at a season of the year when it was impossible to call up substitutes from the ports, and at a time when the greatest burden of work was in prospect. And yet the true object of the mission was concealed from Sir Rutherford Alcock. "I do not know what Mr Burlingame's instructions may ultimately be," he wrote in January 1868, adding, "but it is very obvious what is the work which devolves upon him." Sir Rutherford's judgment of its purpose seems to have been based on his own inferences from the facts of the situation and his unquestioning faith in Mr Burlingame's loyalty to his professed principles.

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He had known Mr Burlingame for two years as the *doyen* of the diplomatic body, the most fervid champion of that "co-operative policy" whereby the treaty Powers agreed to act as a united body in pursuit of identical objects. He could not suppose that his late colleague had turned his back on those common objects without notice. Although, therefore, the suddenness and secrecy of the move might have suggested misgivings as to the mission being intended to promote the views of the diplomatic body in Peking, yet it is beyond question that Sir Rutherford Alcock heartily favoured the embassy. His confidence in it is further attested by a very long and elaborate memorandum which he addressed to Prince Kung, indicating the uses to which the embassy should be put in bringing about an understanding with the Powers, whereby Chinese interests would be safeguarded while the treaty rights of foreigners should be amply fulfilled. "I see in the mission a hope of improvement and a material change in the whole aspect of affairs.... Proves there are Ministers with power and influence in the councils of the emperor who believe the time has come for breaking with the past.... After a long night of weariness and futile efforts, daylight begins to appear.... I hail the appointment of a representative to the Western Powers as the beginning of a new era." Such was the Minister's valediction in his report to the Foreign Office. But he had been mightily deceived. The night had indeed been long, but it was not the true dawn which was welcomed with this joyful acclamation. How quickly the gloom settled down again on that scene of fruitless toil will presently be seen.

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The mission was introduced to the notice of the world by a humorous prelude, which may be quoted for the sake of the light it incidentally throws on the chronic state of China. On their way from Peking to Tientsin, seventy or eighty miles, the envoys halted at a large market-town, where a report met them of a phenomenon not very uncommon in those parts, especially in winter—a band of marauders who had been annoying the neighbourhood. The mission took refuge in an inn, resolved to stand a siege until aid should come. In this strait Mr Burlingame seems never to have thought of applying either to the local authorities of the town or to the Government he was serving, but despatched urgent messages to Peking, where there were escorts kept at the Russian and British Legations, and to Tientsin, where was the British gunboat *Dove*. His appeals were answered with alacrity from both sides. From Peking came a relief party of British and Russian soldiers in charge of members of the two Legations; from Tientsin a party of mounted bluejackets under Lieutenant Dunlop. They met at the half-way house where the mission lay, but nothing could be seen or heard of the besiegers. Mr Burlingame's party reached their port of embarkation without further adventure. Indeed the only serious matter that arose out of the imbroglio was a difference of opinion between one Vodkansky of the Cossack guard and Mulvaney, a sturdy Hibernian of the British escort, which the latter proposed to settle by the means in vogue among heroes before the days of Agamemnon. Tragic consequences were,

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however, averted by the soothing diplomacy of the representative of her Majesty's Legation, Mr Conolly, and the two Burlingame relief expeditions returned to their respective stations nothing the worse for a couple of days' outing in the bracing November air.

Mr Burlingame made his *début* in the United States, first by eloquent speeches in San Francisco, and next by what assumed the form of serious negotiations at Washington. An orator cannot reasonably be held accountable for every detail of his orations, but Mr Burlingame's mission may be most favourably summarised by a few carefully chosen words of his own:—

1st. It was the object of the mission to disabuse the foreign Powers of an impression they were supposed to entertain, that the Chinese Government had entered upon a retrograde policy.

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2nd. To deprecate a precipitate and unfriendly attempt on their part to enter upon a policy which might make all progress impossible from its menacing tone and "violent shock to the feelings, and even prejudices, of the people."

Translated into practice, these propositions meant that China wished to be let alone; and that, we may safely assume, represented the whole extent of Mr Burlingame's instructions. This claim was embodied in a convention which he made at Washington, comprising certain "additional articles" to the American treaty of 1858, the purport of which was that the United States undertook to apply no pressure to China, which, it may be presumed, that Power had never the intention of doing. The convention was for several reasons not welcomed at Peking, but it served the only purpose which perhaps it was ever expected to serve, that of giving the keynote to the representations which the envoy was afterwards to make to the various Powers in Europe.

The next Government to which Mr Burlingame addressed himself was that of Great Britain, over which he obtained a more important success than over that of the United States. In fact, he persuaded Lord Clarendon to discard all the information that ever reached the Foreign Office from its own responsible agents in China—men who were bound by every consideration of loyalty and public duty to report only what was true, and to accept instead thereof the protestations of an agent hired to make out a case; for it is superfluous to add that Mr Burlingame was far indeed from representing the true state of facts. He succeeded in so altering the course of the British Government that their agent in China was discredited, stultified, and rendered powerless to effect the objects for which he had been labouring. This was the first step of the Foreign Office in the new departure which had many evil results—that, namely, of taking their cue not from agents in their own pay, but from others over whom they could exercise no control, and who had alien interests to serve.

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From the Chinese point of view the Burlingame mission was a decided success.

III. CHINESE OUTRAGES—YANGCHOW AND FORMOSA.

Missions attacked at Yangchow—Redress refused by Chinese and enforced by consul—With naval assistance—Satisfactory issue—Continuous outrages in Formosa—Government affords no relief—Disturbances quelled by British forces—Lawlessness near Swatow—Communications with interior controlled by bandits—Order restored by Consul Alabaster with naval force—Peace and good feeling between Chinese and foreigners resulting from these various measures—Which were approved by Imperial Government—Disapproved by British Government in consequence of Mr Burlingame's representations—Consuls punished—Lord Clarendon, prompted by Mr Burlingame, sends fresh instructions to Minister and consuls.

The year 1868 was marked by serious anti-foreign outbreaks in widely distant provinces of the empire. At Yangchow, a wealthy city on the Grand Canal, twelve miles from the left bank of the Yangtze river, a favourite resort for retired officials, rich salt merchants, and gentry, the Inland missionaries under the orders of Mr Hudson Taylor established themselves. In no locality in China could they have been less welcome, for there they met their natural enemies in the greatest force. Before long an attack on them was organised at the instigation of the literati and gentry, and with the connivance of the local authorities. "The onslaught was sudden and severe, the mob set fire to the premises, the ladies and children of the mission had to be thrown out of the windows to save their lives." There was no mistake, therefore, as to the murderous intentions of the assailants. The nearest British consul was at Shanghai, the consulate at Chinkiang, twelve miles from the scene of the outrage, being in charge of an assistant, Mr Clement Allen. That young officer hastened instantly to the assistance of the missionaries, and made his protest against the culpable negligence, to say no more, of the Chinese officials, who on their part made a great to-do of hushing the matter up and repairing the injured house. Consul Medhurst promptly followed up the representations made by Mr Allen by personal appeal to the viceroy at Nanking, fifty miles distant. The mind of that high official had already been prejudiced by ingeniously falsified reports of the transaction supplied to him by the prefect of Yangchow, and in consequence he refused Mr Medhurst's request to depute an official to accompany him to that city for the purpose of investigating the facts. Thereupon Mr Medhurst, availing himself of the arrival of H.M.'s ship Rinaldo at Chinkiang, obtained from her commander a sufficient escort to accompany him to Yangchow; and then only did the viceroy, Tsêng Kwo-fan, appoint an officer, though of totally inadequate rank, to co-operate with the consul. The Chinese officer did not, however, keep his appointment, and Mr Medhurst proceeded without him, and placed in the hands of the prefect at Yangchow a written demand for redress, one of the items being the seizure and punishment of the gentry, whose names were submitted. The prefect at once declared his inability to deal with men of such influence, all being of higher rank than himself. As

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nothing, therefore, could be settled at Yangchow, the prefect agreed to accompany Mr Medhurst to Nanking to lay the whole matter before the viceroy. A deputy from the viceroy, however, met Mr Medhurst at Chinkiang and endeavoured to dissuade him from proceeding to Nanking, offering instead to accompany him back to Yangchow, according to the original programme. Mr Medhurst, in his turn, persuaded the deputy to return with him to Nanking on H.M.'s ship Rinaldo, which was to start from Chinkiang the following morning. But the deputy Chang did not keep that appointment, any more than he had kept his previous one. The prefect of Yangchow also found means of evading his promise to accompany the consul into the presence of the viceroy. After much pressure on the one side and evasion on the other, the viceroy offered to settle the matter by a charitable gratuity to the missionaries in lieu of damages, and showed his anxiety to get the affair patched up quickly by sending an official of rank to follow Mr Medhurst on board H.M.'s ship Rinaldo, where he spent two hours in attempting to persuade the consul to accept the terms offered. Matters were, in fact, in a fair way of settlement when, "just at this juncture," the commander of the Rinaldo fell sick and determined to proceed with his ship to Shanghai, the consul being thus left in a humiliating and helpless position, as Sir Rutherford Alcock describes it. The Chinese officials at once changed their tone, withdrew from negotiations, and nothing more could be done with them. The action of the naval officer in abandoning the consul was freely criticised at the time, and being in consequence asked by the Admiralty for an explanation, he stated, among other things, "that it never entered his head that the presence simply of a small man-of-war could have the effect of influencing the viceroy." He also stated that he had "been given to understand that the viceroy had expressed his willingness to comply with Mr Medhurst's requests, and would send a letter to that effect that night or the next morning." The gallant officer did not appear to perceive that the withdrawal of his ship before the viceroy's promise had been fulfilled completely changed the situation. [201]

Nothing was left for the consul, then, but to lay the whole case before H.M.'s Minister, and in doing so he made these observations: "I can call to mind, out of my experience of British relations with China, scarcely one instance in which the outrage complained of has been more unprovoked on the part of the sufferers, and in which the evidence of neglect and culpability on the part of the local authorities has been more marked and incontrovertible. Few cases can have occurred, moreover, in which the power to grant prompt and reasonable redress was more within the reach of the supreme provincial authority."

The Minister, in his turn, had no resource but to call upon the admiral on the station "to repair the mischief by sending such naval force to the mouth of the Grand Canal as shall enable him, if necessary, to apply effective pressure both on the local authorities and populace at Yangchow and on the viceroy at Nanking," to whom the consul was once more instructed to address himself. Of course the Minister had before this applied in the usual form to the Tsungli-Yamên, and with the usual result. They deprecated hasty conclusions until they themselves had full information from the local authorities; but they admitted without hesitation that, assuming the facts, full redress must be granted. [202]

The Minister's representations to the Central Government were renewed with greater emphasis on receipt of the news of the collapse of the consul's negotiations. Prince Kung then expressed his readiness to make the compensations demanded; but as regarded the punishment of the instigators of the outrage, he contented himself with tacitly indorsing the plea of the viceroy, "that the gentry indicated were men of high rank, and incapable of wilful disregard of treaty provisions, for which reason they need not be called to account." In reply the Minister stated that immunity to such offenders, more especially if highly placed, is wholly incompatible with the treaty rights of foreigners. A new inquiry, however, was instituted at Yangchow, and the Viceroy Tsêng, who had just been gazetted to another post, was warned not to leave Nanking until the affair was concluded. After an interval of two months, Consul Medhurst, escorted by a naval force despatched to his aid by Admiral Keppel, sent his cards once more to the Nanking viceroy. The old tactics were repeated, and negotiations threatened to be indefinitely protracted, but eventually promises were given for the full redress demanded. Promises, however, had been given before, and it was deemed not unreasonable in the circumstances to demand a material guarantee. There happened to be lying at anchor opposite the city a small steamer recently built for the viceroy, which he was induced to place under the orders of Captain Heneage, R.N., pending the execution of the arrangements. The end of the discussion was a complete and satisfactory settlement of the whole affair, which included the deprivation of the prefect and the magistrate of Yangchow. The after-effects have been no less satisfactory. For the last thirty years Yangchow has been the most peaceable missionary field in the whole empire. We have set forth this incident in some detail, because it was typical, isolated, and free from all obscurities. [203]

While these events were passing on the Yangtze, similar troubles, which had been threatening for some time, came to a head in the island of Formosa. Outbreaks of mob-violence against the property and person of both missionaries and merchants took place in different parts of the island. At Banca, in the Tamsui district, two English merchants, Messrs Kerr and Bird, were murderously assaulted by a ferocious armed mob, and Mr Holt, the acting vice-consul at Tamsui, reported in October 1868 that "remonstrance, expostulation, despatches, letters, messages, and visits having alike failed in securing common justice" from the mandarin, he might be "driven at any moment to strike his consular flag and close communication with the authorities. Our lives are threatened by people who have proved that the will to murder us is not wanting," and with whom the authorities either could not or would not interfere. Mr Holt held his ground until assistance reached him, and he made no secret of his intention to back his diplomacy by a show of force whenever he got the chance. "Short of destruction of life and property," he wrote, "I [204]

intend using any means in my power to enforce that justice that the people who are supposed to administer it deny me. On the arrival of the gunboat I will at once inform your Excellency of the measures concerted between the commander and myself." Vice-Admiral Keppel reported to the Admiralty in December that "the opportune arrival of H.M. gunboat Janus and the United States Aroostook was followed by a full compliance with the demands of her Majesty's consul."

Matters did not run quite so smoothly at the other end of the island, where missionaries as well as merchants were the object of attack. The campaign was carried on with vigour for some six months. Redress was not only unobtainable from the Chinese authorities, but even personal access to them was rendered impossible by the obstruction of the mob. Mr George Jamieson was obliged to forego a visit to the magistrate at Taiwan in April on the latter confessing that he could not protect him from violence. Mr Gibson, five months later, found his road to the mandarin ambuscaded by three parties of sixty or seventy men each, armed with jingalls, swords, and spears. Outrage succeeded outrage during the whole period. The state of affairs was of course a subject of serious remonstrance with the Central Government, of whom the Minister first demanded, as in the Yangchow case, a joint inquiry into the facts. For this purpose the consul, Mr Swinhoe, who had been absent on other duty, was ordered to his proper post. At the same time Vice-Admiral Keppel was requested to send an adequate naval force to support the consul's position and prevent further outbreaks. [205]

The Yamên went through the form of ordering to the spot a commissioner, who, however, left it again immediately, thus turning the orders of the Yamên into ridicule. This proceeding naturally encouraged the hostility of the local officials and of the mob who executed their behests. The situation became most threatening.

The squadron detached by Admiral Keppel for active operations at Takow and its neighbourhood consisted of three corvettes and five gunboats, to be reinforced if necessary by the flagship Rodney, carrying eighty-two guns. Before this imposing force arrived, however, the task they were intended to achieve had been already accomplished. "Driven to despair, and believing life and property to be in great danger, Mr Gibson, without waiting for instructions, called upon Lieutenant Gurdon of the gunboat Algerine to take possession of the Chinese fort, which resulted in a loss of life and a destruction of Government stores."

Mr Gibson's action was somewhat euphemistically described as "without waiting for instructions," seeing that he had positive instructions to maintain his ground until a naval force should arrive. Both the operation itself and certain details of its execution were adverted upon so severely, first by Sir Rutherford Alcock and then by the British Government, that, notwithstanding Commodore Jones's commendation of "the most brilliant exploit I have heard of in these seas," Lieutenant Gurdon fell under the displeasure of the Lords of the Admiralty, as the acting consul did under that of the Foreign Office. The object of the joint adventure, however, was attained, and the spirit of outrage among the Chinese completely subdued. This happened in December. [206]

There remained, however, yet another centre of turbulence which greatly impeded the operation of the treaty, at the port of Swatow. The villages which lie between that seaport and the district city of Chow-chow-fu, some 12 miles up the river Han, had banded themselves together to oppose foreign intercourse with the latter city. Not only were the business and property of foreign merchants interfered with, but a British man-of-war gig in the river was fired upon, and when the men landed to identify the offender they were overpowered by the whole population of the nearest village. This hostile attitude, resembling very much that of the Canton villages twenty years before, steadily increased until the native officials themselves were not safe in passing to and from the district city. Strong representations were made to the high authorities of the province at Canton. The viceroy had promised to send a military force to quell the riotous villages, but before he had proved the sincerity of his intention the Gordian knot was cut by British initiative in January 1869. The late Sir Challoner Alabaster, a man of uncommon resolution, was at that time acting consul at Swatow; and he, having secured the co-operation of Commodore Jones, led a force of marines and bluejackets against the offending villages. A stout resistance was offered at first, but when several of the villages had been taken and destroyed the whole eighteen made their submission. Thereafter the district enjoyed perfect peace and security. In the following March Sir Rutherford Alcock was able to telegraph to Lord Clarendon that "the accounts from all the ports showed that peace and order had been restored; that at Yangchow and Formosa entire security and an improved position had been obtained; that there was no more cause for anxiety at any point; that the best understanding existed with the foreign body at Peking; and that the relations with China had never been more satisfactory." [207]

The bearing of these occurrences on the revision of the treaty may not at first sight be quite clear, but it is interesting to note in what manner they were connected with that operation in the mind of Sir Rutherford Alcock. He calculated that the necessity of using force to vindicate foreign treaty rights, of which both he and his predecessor had constantly warned them, would bring home to the Peking authorities the alternative which they would always have to face in case of failure to carry out the treaties. How very differently these outrages and the enforced redress affected the situation in Peking will now be seen.

The action taken at Yangchow and in Formosa having been fully explained to the Tsungli-Yamên, Wênsiang and the other Ministers expressed their entire concurrence. But what satisfied the Government of China produced quite another impression on that of Great Britain. Lord Stanley, as Foreign Secretary, had written on November 20, 1868: "Mr Medhurst appears to have acted

with great prudence and firmness, and you will convey to him my approval of his proceedings.... I have to instruct you [Sir R. Alcock] to press the case in question upon the Chinese Government." Two months later Mr Medhurst was reprimanded by Lord Clarendon for his action, and the "full satisfaction for the outrage" was attributed exclusively to the "readiness with which the Central Government took measures that proved effectual." The change of Government which had in the interval taken place in England (December 9, 1868) was hardly sufficient to account for so diametrical a change of view in a matter of imperial concern. Another agency had effected the conversion of the British Government. Mr Burlingame had arrived fresh from fervid denunciations in the United States of the "tyrannic policy" and the "throat policy" of Great Britain as applied to China, and adroitly seizing on the repression of the Yangchow and Formosa outrages as flagrant examples, he succeeded in incensing Lord Clarendon against the various British officials concerned in these troubles, whom his lordship visited with punishment which scarcely stopped short of vindictiveness. Mr Medhurst, indeed, a man of long and distinguished service, had only a black mark set against his name; but Mr Gibson was publicly censured and degraded, and ordered to make an apology to the Chinese officials whose lawless aggressions he had lawlessly repelled. With some inconsistency, Lord Clarendon, about the same time, approved the conduct of Acting-Consul Holt at Tamsui, who succeeded in adjusting most serious misunderstandings with the Chinese through no other means than the visible force of the small gunboat Janus, for whose arrival he waited before preferring his demands.

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That the sudden change in the policy of the British Government was the work of Mr Burlingame was frankly avowed by Lord Clarendon himself, who based the fresh instructions to the Minister in China on the arrangements he had concluded with the Chinese representative. In his letter of condemnation, January 14, 1869, he, moreover, intimated that he could not wait before pronouncing judgment for Sir Rutherford Alcock's complete report on the Yangchow affair, because his "communication with Mr Burlingame ... rendered it necessary that he should not defer making his observations." That a British Secretary of State could have so demeaned his office would not have been believed save on his own confession. He of course carried the Admiralty with him, and the same influence which inspired the new instructions issued to the Minister and consuls inspired those issued to the commanding officers on the China station.

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Taken textually, the negotiations between Mr Burlingame and Lord Clarendon were of a platonic character. H.M.'s Government undertook to apply no pressure to China. It would have been a simple matter to refrain from applying pressure, and a tacit resolution to that effect with corresponding instruction to the Minister in Peking would have secured the object. To make it a subject of direct pledge to the Chinese Government seemed one of those gratuitous acts which all diplomatic experience condemns as fraught with future embarrassments. To save appearances, however, a nominal equivalent was taken. "Mr Burlingame was requested to bear in mind, and to make known to the Chinese Government, that we should henceforward have a right to expect on its part the faithful fulfilment of treaty engagements, the prompt redress of grievances referred to the Central Government, and friendly treatment of British subjects by the Chinese authorities"—as if all that had not been already stipulated for under the solemn sanction of the existing treaty.

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IV. REVISION NEGOTIATIONS AND CONCLUSION.

Lukewarmness of British Government—Sir R. Alcock's misgivings as to success—Mixed commission in Peking to consider details—Mr Hart's predominance—Treaty becomes a custom-house concern—Increase of duties being the Chinese aim—Sir Rutherford Alcock attributes failure to Mr Burlingame's misrepresentations—Merchants oppose the treaty—Ratification refused by British Government—Inferences from this fiasco—Chinese influenced by force alone.

Let us now revert to the cause and origin of the Burlingame mission—the revision of the treaty of Tientsin. The instruction for revision was given by Lord Stanley on August 16, 1867, in such general terms as the following:—

Her Majesty's Government neither wish, nor have they the right, to impose sacrifices on China, even though they may be convinced that the inconvenience of such sacrifices will be only temporary, whereas the benefit which will result from them will be lasting.... We must reconcile ourselves to waiting for the gradual development of that [better] system, and content ourselves with reserving for revision at a future period any new arrangement we may come to in 1868.... You will of course act openly with the representatives of other Powers, inviting and availing yourself of their co-operation.

A note of misgiving as to the policy of asking for the revision runs through the whole correspondence. After the preliminary labours of sifting the voluminous memorials from merchants and others, Sir Rutherford Alcock sums up their demands thus: "All their wants turn upon three or four cardinal defects, not of the treaties so much as in their execution." And he adds the significant reflection: "The question arises, if nothing is to be gained by demanding a revision, ... whether much would not be lost, and an opportunity thrown away, which might, by reserving the right, be turned to better account when the emperor's majority is declared. I believe the true policy of foreign Powers would be to wait; ... to this conclusion ... all the representatives of foreign Powers now in Peking are led." "The Chinese," he also says, "would go much faster and better if left alone."

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The question naturally suggested by these remarks—why a task involving enormous labour, of which only negative results were to be expected, was entered upon at all at such an inopportune moment—remains unanswered.

It would be insufferably tedious, and of no practical utility, to track the windings of a maze leading nowhere, for the revised treaty was never ratified. But the labours of two whole years could not but leave landmarks to guide succeeding travellers over the same ground. It could not be but that with so much beating of the bushes the game would be started, if not brought to bag. It was a reconnaissance in force which, for the first time, compelled the respective parties to the struggle to reveal their true character and intentions. Such a discovery was perhaps not too dearly bought by the time and trouble expended on it.

The first definite step in the process of revision was the nomination of a mixed commission of British and Chinese "to devise means of securing a more prompt redress of commercial grievances." The members were Mr Fraser, second secretary to the British Legation; Mr Hart, Inspector-General of Customs; and two secretaries of the Tsungli-Yamên—a heavy preponderance on the Chinese side of the question. To the same commission was added another British member, Mr Adkins. And here it is not impertinent to observe that the absence of both the Chinese secretary, Mr Wade, and the acting Chinese secretary, Mr Brown, left the Legation in a condition too crippled to engage on work which would have taxed its full strength. The members of the commission held many sittings, reporting proceedings from time to time to their respective principals, the Tsungli-Yamên and the British Minister.

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It needs no great effort of imagination to divine, in a body thus composed, whose would be the dominant voice. Mr Hart conducted the proceedings throughout. The discussion had not gone far when it was found hopeless to revise the provisions of the treaty in any sense compatible with progress or freer intercourse; and the dangerous questions which had caused the Government so much anxiety, and which had inspired both the Burlingame mission and the various secret memorials, being thus happily ruled outside the controversy, the Chinese Ministers seem to have given themselves no further concern about the revision. This distant attitude of theirs was severely commented on by a contemporary writer in 'Fraser's Magazine,' who said:—

After ten years of conciliatory blandishments on our part, the high Chinese authorities had so far disobeyed the spirit of the treaty that, although they had not actually prevented our Minister from corresponding and visiting with them, yet they had had the audacity to render all such intercourse absolutely nugatory, and had constrained him, after a long and successful diplomatic career, to descend to the extremely humiliating position of treating with them indirectly through the medium of Mr R. Hart.

As, however, the proceedings became focussed on a tariff revision destined to add to the duty receipts, a "collector of revenue wanting money," as Mr Hart described himself, was the most fitting negotiator, and the Chinese ministers were well pleased to leave him free to make his own bargain, so long as it yielded that result.

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To give colour to the Chinese demand for higher duties a bold formula was resorted to, and supported by equally bold reasoning. The expedient was a rearrangement of the method of collection of inland dues on foreign merchandise, which was then, as it continues to be, the great bone of contention between foreign traders and the Chinese authorities. The treaties conferred on merchants the right of compounding for all inland taxation of their merchandise by a single payment at the port of entry; but the practices of the Chinese officials had rendered the privilege a nullity. In the new negotiations Mr Hart, on the part of the Chinese, took the high ground of maintaining, with subtle dialectic, that the protection which foreigners claimed was not in fact given by the treaties. So strongly did the Chinese entrench themselves in this contention, that heavy artillery was required to dislodge them. "Could any negotiators be so dull or incompetent," wrote Sir R. Alcock in reply, "as to sign a treaty of commerce with an Eastern potentate, extorted at the point of the bayonet, and leave this unlimited power in his hands to turn against us the next moment, or whenever he pleased, and nullify all that had been stipulated, destroying the trade for which alone war had been made?" Defeated in argument, the Chinese next begged that what they could not claim as a right might yet be accorded to them as a favour, thus copying the tactics of the Japanese in an analogous case.

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As this proved to be the crux of the whole transaction, the rock on which the convention eventually split, it is useful to consider how the subject was treated in the negotiations. The treaties of Nanking, 1842, and of Tientsin, 1858, provided for the transit of British goods throughout the empire on payment of a fixed charge. But in securing exemption from arbitrary imposts in the interior, the treaty of Nanking signally failed; that of Tientsin had proved equally ineffective, and why? From inherent difficulties in the nature of things—obstacles absolutely insuperable so long as the country remained under the same organic conditions. Such were the propositions with which the British Minister entered upon the discussion of the subject; and as no proposal was made for changing the organic conditions of the empire, the prospect of obtaining a satisfactory fulfilment of those treaty provisions did not seem very encouraging.

But then a suggestion, apparently emanating from Consul Robertson at Canton, was made for simplifying the problem by doing away with the option which had been reserved in the treaties for foreign merchants, either to pay the commutation at the port of landing, or to allow their goods to run the gantlet of the Chinese customs stations. Instead of this, it was suggested that a single compulsory payment, amounting to half the import tariff, might be levied on the landing of the goods, which should thereafter be freed from all other imposts throughout the empire. It was

not unnatural that a "collector of revenue" should appropriate this conception, and introduce it into the revised treaty; but then the doubt immediately arose on the other side, whether the promised exemption would be any more of a reality than it had been under the existing *régime*. If the difficulties in the way of fulfilling the stipulation in the treaty of Tientsin and Nanking were really insuperable, would they now disappear merely because the Chinese Government received an increased import duty? In considering Mr Hart's proposal, "the question would be," according to Sir Rutherford Alcock, "Could we obtain a sufficient guarantee that such additional import due would effectually exempt British goods from all other dues, local, provincial, and what not?" And again, "Security for exemption from all but the fixed 2½ per cent was the one question on which depended the value of any revision."

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A necessary condition of any successful treaty was the assent of all the other Powers to its provisions, seeing that under their most-favoured-nation clauses any one of them by holding aloof could render the treaty inoperative. The various foreign representatives were therefore kept informed of the progress of negotiations. In this way their opinions were obtained from time to time as to the merits of the various proposals. On the subject of the compulsory payment of transit dues the opinions which the British Minister received from his colleagues were all unfavourable. They considered that some "additional guarantee would be necessary against failure, and as against security for additional losses which would be entailed upon the merchants." To give effect to the new proposals an edict was to be published acquainting all provincial officials with what had been agreed upon. But still the diplomatic body maintained "that nothing is really certain but the addition of 2½ per cent to the import duties. This will be rigorously exacted and paid; but whether the equivalent exemption from all other taxation will be obtained must be held doubtful, ... seeing that in the past the same provincial authorities have shown the most persistent disregard of treaty stipulations and proclamations." "Under such circumstances," Sir Rutherford adds, "it would seem reasonable that, during the first year at least, all amounts collected under the new arrangements ... should be carried to a separate account ... to meet claims for compensation." In the end, however, he saw reason to waive this proviso, to disregard the views of his colleagues, and to assent to the new impost, without any guarantee. Attempts to obtain concessions from the Chinese in the way of freer intercourse proved, as we have said, hopeless from the first. The renewal of the Chinese demand to establish a customs station in Hongkong—that "immense smuggling depot"—was refused on the British side; while the British request for recognition of Hongkong as a port of call for goods in transit to Canton was in like manner refused on the Chinese side, because it "would give the place a respectable name" as well as make it the "great emporium of the south." Hongkong, it is fair to remember, was, not unnaturally, odious in the eyes of the Chinese. The more prosperous the colony became, the more they hated it; and the more patriotic among them—as, for instance, the Minister Wênsiang—detested it the most.

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The ruling factor in eliminating all measures of progress from the negotiations and reducing the whole to a customs question was Mr Burlingame.

After the arrival of the mission to Washington [wrote Sir Rutherford on February 27, 1869] the hopes which the signature of the additional articles was calculated to excite undoubtedly exercise a very prejudicial effect on my efforts.... With Mr Burlingame's enthusiastic reception, and the prompt signature of the convention by which the United States Government pledged itself to leave China free to adopt or reject all such innovations and internal improvements, and even to use its influence with other Powers for the same end, they gained precisely the assurance they wanted.... From that moment further progress or successful negotiation became impossible.

He added in a subsequent despatch to Lord Clarendon:—

One result stands out more clearly than any other, and it is this: what we have gained by the last year's preliminary negotiations is not likely to be withdrawn. But if it was difficult to negotiate for large concessions before the assurance authoritatively given by your lordship to Mr Burlingame, ... it is now out of the question to hope for more than has already been conceded.... Strong in the assurances of two of the treaty Powers, ... it is quite certain that no further progress can be made at present. It simply remains for her Majesty's Government to determine whether they will carry out the revision on the basis proposed and already assented to by the Chinese Government, or defer the revision altogether to some later period.

The provisional report of the negotiations having been submitted by the Foreign Office to the other treaty Powers for their opinion, most of them contented themselves with amicable generalities, the only definite criticism elicited being that of the North German Confederation. Going straight to the core of the matter, in May 1869, Count Bernstorff wrote as follows, basing his remarks upon the opinion of the German merchants:—

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Although the advantages which are to be expected for trade in general from the abolition of the "lekin taxes" would not be too dearly bought by this extension of the transit duty to all commodities, yet, on the other hand, the treaty Powers certainly have the right of demanding the abolition of the taxes levied contrary to treaty, even without giving anything in return, and they might probably obtain this result by common action. And then, moreover, it appears, from existing circumstances in China, exceedingly questionable whether this tax, even if abolished by imperial edict in consequence of a treaty, would not, nevertheless, still be levied by the mandarins, although perhaps in another shape, since now indeed they have their assignments thereon.

Doubts on the part of the Foreign Office led to further correspondence backwards and forwards, closing with the following ambiguous despatch, dated 29th September, which was transmitted by

telegram, a very slow process in those days:—

If you should not have concluded an arrangement before this reaches you, her Majesty's Government think it would be better to protract negotiations rather than accept now a limited arrangement, which would be binding for so long a period as ten years, and which would not comprise a satisfactory arrangement respecting transit duties, and which might compromise the right of her Majesty's Government to take part in the negotiations of other Powers for a revision of their treaties.

Should you, however, have completed any arrangement, you may be assured that the best view will be taken of it here.

The supplementary convention was, in fact, signed in October, and Sir Rutherford Alcock took his leave immediately after, visiting the Yangtze, Shanghai, Hongkong, and India on his way to Europe. At these places he explained in general terms the bearing of the treaty, the Indian Government being specially concerned in the increase of the Chinese import duty on opium, to which the trade generally were absolutely indifferent. [219]

The supplementary convention was exhaustively reviewed by the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce in a memorial addressed to Lord Clarendon (December 31, 1869). To the practical view of the merchants the treaty consisted of three clauses: one making compulsory what had previously been optional—the payment of half the import duty in commutation of inland dues on foreign merchandise; one doubling the export duty on raw silk; and the third more than doubling the import duty on opium. Of these, the first alone was deemed important. The consideration offered by the Chinese Government for the compulsory payment—that they would frank imported goods through nine of the eighteen provinces of China—was not regarded as an equivalent; for the treaty of Tientsin contained the same undertaking without the geographical limitation, but it had not been fulfilled. The ground alleged for this non-observance of the existing treaty had been the existence of insurmountable obstacles in connection with provincial and imperial finance. These obstacles, the merchants observed, were "now assumed to have been suddenly overcome," an assumption which they considered illusory. The question of transit dues was not new to them: it had been threshed out on all sides during weary years; it was the recurrent topic of the day with them, as it was destined to continue to be for a generation longer; and the merchants could not therefore believe that the difficulties against which they had been hopelessly struggling were suddenly removed by magic. They were not shown how the revolution was to be effected. In short, "the conclusion," they said, "was irresistible, that to a very great extent the commutation of transit dues, which is made compulsory by the new treaty, will simply become an additional tax on trade without any return whatever; and that the provincial authorities will as heretofore tax goods in transit very much as they please, the treaty stipulation to the contrary notwithstanding,"—a conclusion supported by arguments which could not be refuted. [220]

Sir Thomas Wade some years later expressed the same views as the merchants had done. "I doubted," he said, "the good faith of officials when breach of faith could only be established by the evidence of those subject to their authority and entirely in their power.... I have since found reason to believe that the control of taxation in the provinces is a matter of no small trouble to the Central Government as at present constituted, if indeed it be possible at all." Nevertheless, he adds, "I have found occasion to regret that the convention has not been allowed at least a term of probation." A term of probation was the alternative suggested by the merchants also, but it seems never to have received any consideration from the Foreign Office.

The representation which the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce based upon their review of the treaty was adopted by influential commercial bodies in England, who in a "monstrous deputation," as Mr Hammond called it, urged on the Secretary for Foreign Affairs the non-ratification of the treaty. The British Government gave way, not, as they candidly admitted, convinced by the reasoning, but overawed by the electoral pressure of the merchants; and the supplementary convention was allowed to fall through. [221]

Thus ended the first attempt to negotiate a treaty with China as a perfectly free agent. The conclusion to be drawn not only from the negative result, but from the whole process of the negotiations—from the memorials from the provinces, and still more from the Privy Council, the six boards, and the censorates—is, as stated by Sir Rutherford Alcock in May 1869, "that the old spirit of arrogance of the days of Lin and Yeh is still in full vigour, and the assumption of superiority over the barbarian absolutely unmeasured. That the anti-foreign element amongst the official and educated classes has suffered no diminution whatever; that if some two or three leading men take a clearer view of the political situation, they are evidently without power to take action upon it; and so the vessel of State is allowed to drift whichever way the tide of prejudice and ignorance may set. There are still some documents," he added, "wanting to complete the series, especially the answer of Li Hung-chang and a second memorial of Tsêng Kwo-fan [p. 184 *seq.*], which it would be desirable to obtain as showing the policy advocated by two of the most prominent men in the empire at this moment."

One sentence of Sir Rutherford Alcock sums up the case China *v.* the West: "Pressure, indeed, there must always be here if anything is to be achieved for the advancement of foreign interests and commerce. In one way or other, however we may disguise it, our position in China has been created by force—naked, physical force; and any intelligent policy to improve or maintain that position must still look to force in some form, latent or expressed, for the results." Whether the Western nations, singly or collectively, are justified in using their force for such a purpose is a question which is not affected by this plain statement of the case. That the policy of the Western [222]

Powers has been largely influenced by sentimental consideration towards China is true; but their action has never been consistent with their professions, and their oscillation between coercion and submission has led to disastrous consequences.

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CHAPTER XXII.

MISSIONARY PROBLEM—TIENTSIN MASSACRE OF 1870.

Importance of missionary question long foreseen by Consul Alcock—Introduction of missionaries under two French treaties—Toleration of Christians under treaties of 1858—Forced upon China—Ardour of missionary spirit uncontrollable—Negligence of treaty-makers in providing no regulations for admission of the propaganda—Contrasted with the care bestowed on trade regulations—Religious toleration of the Chinese—Christian intolerance—Surreptitious article in French Convention of 1860—Giving large privileges to missionaries in the interior—Its abuse complained of by Chinese—Enforced restitution of old property—Bitter injustice—Disintegrating action of the propaganda—Abuses of extra-territoriality—Interference in local affairs—Detaching natives from their allegiance—Causes of strife—Chinese Government culpable in permitting abuses—Disputes about land and houses—Chinese official laxity compensated for by unofficial illegitimate methods—Attacks on missions fomented thereby—No remedy possible without the unanimous consent of the Powers—Each having different objects—Fruits of widespread hostility to missions appeared in 1868—Riot and outrage—Culminated in Tientsin massacre of 1870—Details of the occurrence—Treated cavalierly by Imperial Government—Culpability of officials—Pressure by foreign Ministers induces Chinese to execute sixteen criminals—Apologetic mission of Chunghou to France—Suspicious of his complicity unfounded—Causes of the hostility to foreigners—Government fear of reprisals by France—They begin to take the missionary question seriously—Issue an important circular—Badly received by the Powers.

No subject more seriously engaged the attention of Sir Rutherford Alcock during his whole term of service than that of the Christian propaganda. While it was yet in embryo, and long before the untoward consequences now so familiar had declared themselves, the evil to come formed the theme of many anxious despatches. For, with the exception of Mr T. T. Meadows, he was the only one of the early consuls who attempted to read the horoscope of China with a conscious participation in the responsibility for its welfare. Their warnings were, of course, wasted on the desert air, for statesmen whose hands are on the lever of events are like the signalmen on a busy railway, recking nothing of the origin or destination of the train, careful only that it pass their own "point" in safety. The thin end of the entering wedge destined to split China into fragments, unless anticipated (as in fact it has been) in its disruptive work by some ruder allied agency, was clearly discerned by Consul Alcock while at Shanghai. Under cover of the first French treaties in 1844 and 1846 missionaries effected a legal lodgment on the coast of China, from which they cast longing eyes on the vast interior of the country. Rivalry between the Christian sects brought fresh pressure to bear on the plenipotentiaries, and the "toleration clause" was introduced into all the treaties negotiated at Tientsin in 1858, and in the German treaty of 1861.

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Russia led the way, followed by the United States, Great Britain, and France. The "clause" was substantially the same in all, the toleration of Christianity being based on its moral character exclusively—"Hommes de bien qui ne cherchent pas d'avantages matériels" (Russian); "Teaching men to do good, and to do to others as they would have others do to them" (American); "Inculcates the practice of virtue, and teaches man to do as he would be done by" (English); "Ayant pour objet essentiel de porter les hommes à la vertu" (French).^[16] Yet this apparent unanimity concealed essential differences in aim and motive. Russia, France, and the United States, to leave England out of the account, each meant something specifically distinct from the other by the practically identical clause.

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What the Chinese would have said, had they been free to discuss the demand made upon them, we can hardly conjecture; but in the position in which they actually found themselves they would have subscribed to any form of words submitted to them, their sole anxiety then being to get rid of the barbarians on any terms. Had the preamble run, "Whereas the Christian religion as practised for 1800 years has not brought peace but a sword upon the earth, has set the father against the son, nation against nation, instigated crimes without number, sided with the oppressor and the unrighteous judge, and is daily prostituted for political ends," the Chinese

would have signed the toleration clause just the same. The phraseology was nothing to them, whence it follows that the responsibility for the consequences rests on the Powers who imposed the form as well as the substance of the obligations. These Powers placed themselves in a self-contradictory position both towards China and the Church, for the only ground on which they claimed protection for missionaries in the framing of the treaty is the one which they cannot so much as consider in the fulfilment of it. The ethical and religious side of the propaganda is to the executive official a negligible quantity, while he can take cognisance only of that aspect of Christianity which was studiously kept out of sight in the treaty—its political character, the temper of the missionaries and of the people among whom they work, and all that makes for good or bad relations between them.

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Amid mixed and perverted motives there is doubtless in all sections of the propaganda a residuum of pure zeal in a holy cause. The medieval solicitude for "saving the heathen" survives, and men and women, fired with the conviction that they are engaged in such a godlike enterprise, constitute an ever-living force with which statesmen have to lay their account. It can neither be reasoned with nor turned aside, and is the more intractable in that the logical effect of its inspiration is to place it above civil law, but under a divine law of its own interpreting, the interpretation varying indefinitely with the divisions of the force, each division, and sometimes each individual, selecting such portions of the code and bending them to such meaning as may support the objects and the methods of the sect. To introduce such a complex ferment into the Chinese body politic was a psychological experiment on a colossal scale, and also irrevocable. It was, therefore, an experiment which demanded the kind of precaution used in handling dangerous chemicals.

Yet absolutely no thought was bestowed on the subject; the explosive was imported with less ceremony than is bestowed on a bale of long cloth, and left to spread according to its own laws in the living tissue into which it was injected. So far at least as the English treaty was concerned, we have it on the authority of the actual negotiator that the Christian clause was an after-thought "shoved in" at the last moment. The same authority adds, "The treaty was left to carry out itself"—in other respects besides that of the missionary question. Sir Rutherford Alcock speaks of "the futility of grafting on to a treaty of commerce, forced upon the Chinese under circumstances which left them no power to refuse, a proselytising agency for the conversion of the nation to Christianity.... Whatever aims at these ends under the stipulation of a treaty of commerce and amity introduces a cause of distrust and an element of disturbance. This we have done, and are now reaping the fruit." But a rose-cutting would not be grafted with the insouciance with which this spiritual element was incongruously inserted in a commercial treaty. Commenting directly upon the toleration clause itself, Sir Rutherford wrote: "It is only necessary to read carefully the words of the article to be aware that in the whole range of the treaty, from the 1st to the 56th article, there is nothing stipulated for so difficult to secure as the fulfilment in its integrity of this one clause."

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The foreign Powers generally seemed to court the very "disturbance" apprehended by "leaving the treaty to carry out itself," washing their hands of their own careless work. We have seen what pains were taken to allow the treaty to operate smoothly in its main purpose by elaborating a scheme of trade regulations far more complete than the treaty itself. But as foreign trade had been carried on by the Chinese for centuries, and the merchants of the respective countries were thoroughly at home with each other, commerce was the least likely source of friction. Of the new dynamic element introduced into the treaties, it seems never to have occurred to the negotiators that any regulation was necessary at all. Missionaries were permitted to enter and settle in the interior, where everything was strange, for practical purposes beyond the orbit of their countries' laws, while protected against the jurisdiction of the Government under which they were to live. Men who could withstand the temptation offered by such a state of things are not born every day. Without rule of conduct save their individual judgment, with no previous understanding with the Chinese provincial officials as to relative rights and duties, they were left to find such accommodation to their surroundings as their several idiosyncrasies and the untried conditions of Chinese social life might determine. The missionary in the interior had thus all the qualities of a "foreign body" setting up irritation in the organism,—a state of things, however, which his absolute faith in the sanctity of his mission perhaps prevented him from comprehending.

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One trait in the national character was highly favourable to the reception of a foreign religion. The Chinese were of all nations the most tolerant of opinion. They had already accepted and assimilated two foreign religions—Buddhism and Mohammedanism; indeed they had also, two hundred years before, accepted and retained Christianity until it was expelled in convulsions provoked by the foreign missionaries themselves. Its second advent need not have caused convulsions had it come as the others had done, with clean hands, as a religion and nothing else. The tolerance of the Chinese has been referred to materialism and contemptuous apathy, which is by no means an exhaustive account of the matter. They were not, any more than Hindus, naked savages without language or literature: if anything, they were over-civilised. Proud they were, indeed, and conceited, and in its religious aspect they affected to regard Christianity as but a wave breaking on a rock. Their rock was a unique philosophy, scarcely to be called a system, which stands for religion, differing from other philosophic systems in eschewing speculation and attending to the ethics of common life,—the only philosophy that may be said ever to have transfused itself into the blood of a people.

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The culture of the Chinese, however, was merely an obstacle to the realisation of the Catholic ideal of saving the heathen, as the grandest natural scenery was regarded merely as a hindrance

to medieval travel. "Unhappy infidels, who spend their lives in smoke and their eternity in flames," was Father le Jeune's epigrammatic summary of the whole case in Quebec. So deep-rooted is the tradition of the reprobation of the heathen, that it generally requires many years' experience before a foreign missionary is led by contact with facts to see that Chinese ethics form the natural basis for the Christian superstructure. Some missionaries, indeed, go so far as to use the writings of Confucius as a text-book. Before reaching this ripe stage, however, the foreign missionary has it in his power to do more mischief than he can perhaps ever undo.

There was one treaty stipulation which has not been left to chance for its fulfilment—the additional article inserted in the French Convention of Peking in 1860. An astute missionary, acting as interpreter to Baron Gros, managed to interpolate in the Chinese text a clause of his own which had no place in the French—the ruling version—and was quite unknown to the French Envoy.^[17] By that clause full permission was accorded to French missionaries to purchase land and erect buildings thereon throughout the empire; and further, all churches, schools, cemeteries, lands, and buildings which had been owned by persecuted Christians (Chinese) in previous centuries were to be paid for, and the money handed to the French representative in Peking for transmission to the Christians in the localities concerned. This astounding demand, in our eyes at once so truculent and so impracticable, seems to have been to the Chinese neither more nor less oppressive than the rest of the treaty, and they signed without demur, under the usual mental reservation. But it was in germ an official recognition of a French protectorate over Chinese Christians, and of corporate communities of Christians held qualified to be served heirs to those who had been persecuted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—a germ which might be cultivated with greater or less success, according to the skill of those who had the care of it. Some effort of imagination is required in order to realise what is implied in this surreptitious article.

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We must suppose [wrote Sir Rutherford Alcock] a French army entering London and there dictating the conditions of peace, and among others one that all Church property confiscated by Henry VIII. should forthwith be restored to the Roman Catholic Church by the present holders, however acquired, and without compensation, and that the French Government could be appealed to in order to enforce the rigorous execution of the stipulation.

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How the stipulation was enforced is thus described by Prince Kung in his circular of 1871, more fully noticed below:—

During the last few years the restitution of chapels in every province has been insisted upon without any regard for the feeling of the masses, the missionaries obstinately persisting in their claims. They have also pointed out fine handsome houses (belonging to, or occupied by, the gentry or others) as buildings once used as churches, and these they have compelled the people to give up. But what is worst, and what wounds the dignity of the people, is that they often claim as their property *yamêns*, places of assembly, temples held in high respect by the literates and the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Buildings which were once used as chapels have been in some cases sold years ago by Christians; and, having been sold and resold by one of the people to another, have passed through the hands of several proprietors. There is also a large number of buildings which have been newly repaired at very considerable expense, of which the missionaries have insisted on the restitution, refusing at the same time to pay anything for them. On the other hand, there are some houses which have become dilapidated, and the missionaries put in a claim for the necessary repair. Their conduct excites the indignation of the people whenever they come in contact with each other, and it becomes impossible for them to live quietly together.^[18]

Bitter consequences have resulted from the enforced operation of the interpolated clause, for the French Government, as is shown above, took full advantage of the pious fraud. Neither did the Chinese themselves, on discovering the truth, openly resent this example of how the foreign religion "porte les hommes à la vertu." The fraud was more than condoned by missionaries of all nations and sects, whose legal title to residence in the interior of China, distant from all authority, rests solely on the interpolated French clause, the benefit of which accrues to them under the most-favoured-nation privilege. British Protestant missionaries, not altogether satisfied with this tainted title, in a long letter to their Minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock, claimed the right of inland residence on another ground. They adduced the public declaration of Mr Burlingame, that "China invites Protestant missionaries to plant the shining Cross on every hill and in every valley"; to which the answer was simple, that the Chinese Government disavowed the promises of the envoy, and repudiated the implied obligation. The British Government disapproved of the claim under the French treaty, though in rather ambiguous terms, because it rested "on no sound foundation, but on an interpolation of words in the Chinese version alone in the French treaty with China." Since then, however, the pretensions of the French missionaries have been vindicated less by the interpolated clause itself than by the vigorous exercise of all the rights conferred by it, and very much more. The clause thus lent material force to the spiritual ferment, accelerating by many degrees its disintegrating action. It may be alleged, in palliation of the light-heartedness with which the whole subject was treated by the negotiators of the treaties, that they could not have foreseen such a development of their innocent toleration clause; but the circumstance only emphasises the urgent need there was for a clear definition of what was really meant by it.

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But if toleration be the note of Chinese polity—concerning not religion alone, but almost every matter affecting government—it may be asked, What is it in the propagation of Christianity that excites the hostility of people and rulers? It is that the missionaries present themselves to Chinese view as the instruments of powerful nations bent on the ruin of the empire. They enter

the country with a talisman of extra-territoriality; their persons are sacred; the law of the land cannot lay hands on them. That is the first stage. The second is, that they seek to extra-territorialise their converts also, whose battles they fight in the provincial courts and in the rustic communes, and so make it of material advantage to the people to bear the banner of the Cross. Many missionaries are really zealous in the work of alienating the Chinese from their natural allegiance, and of encouraging them to seek the protection of foreign Powers as against the native authorities. Thus a revolution of the most vital nature is in progress, and is being pushed on with all the energy which Christian, combined with ecclesiastical and political, zeal can throw into the work. Village is set against village, clan against clan, family against family, and a man's foes in China are too often they of his own household.^[19]

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No doubt the Chinese Government are to blame for having allowed such a state of things to grow up; but it is part and parcel of their drifting attitude towards everything. It is not that their apprehensions are not aroused, but that they lack initiative to avert the danger which they fear. While in theory they do not admit the claim of any foreign Power to protect Chinese subjects, yet in practice the thing goes on, and is acquiesced in. So formidable, indeed, have the foreign missionaries become, that most of the provincial authorities are afraid as well as jealous of them; and peace-loving viceroys give the simple injunction to their prefects and magistrates that on no account must they permit dispute with foreigners or native Christians. This means that the Chinese Christian must be upheld, right or wrong, and the Christian would be very un-Chinese if he did not take advantage of such a privilege to trounce his heathen neighbours.

The right given in the French treaty of acquiring land and building houses in the interior is one of the most constant causes of local quarrel. Real estate in China, being held not on personal but on family tenure, can only be rightfully alienated by the common consent. A dissentient member holding out, or reviving his claim for purposes of extortion after assent has been given and transfer made, may become a convenient instrument in the hands of agitators against the foreigners; and where there is no such dissentient it is not unusual for the local authorities to create one by forcible means. A case in point may be mentioned in illustration. A building was made over to the Baptist Missionary Society by a Chinese family, every precaution being taken to obtain the unanimous consent of its various branches. When the deed had been signed by the head of the family and other responsible members, the local magistrate examined the chief of the clan, denounced him, and punished him severely by bastinado. Two of the signatories, thus intimidated, disowned their own act, thereby invalidating the deed by non-unanimity.

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Nearly all the attacks on missionaries proceed in one form or another from that fecund nursery of feuds, the land question. Whatever the merits of the dispute, the foreigner is *prima facie* in the wrong; for he is an alien, an intruder, and he erects buildings which are outlandish, offensive to taste, and of sinister influence; and whosoever, albeit the most disreputable member of a family of three or four generations, proclaims a grievance by which he has lost his birthright, is sure of a sympathetic following. Thus without taking into account individual indiscretions, or infirmities of temper, open attacks on time-honoured customs, and so forth, there is a perennial root of bitterness in missionary enterprise in the interior of China, which throws out shoots culminating in murder and fiendish ferocity; and all this without even a distant approach to the kernel of Christianity which lies behind the outworks.

For what the Chinese authorities have failed to do by the legitimate means at their command, their underlings and the circle of gentry that surrounds each provincial centre attempt to do by illegitimate and criminal methods. Hatred of missions and converts shows itself by violent outbreaks in which innocent and guilty suffer a common fate; mobs are excited by false suggestions, scholars write inflammatory placards filled with the foulest calumnies, and the higher officials "let it work"—secretly applauding, but ready, if called to account, to exculpate themselves and blame the poor ignorant people.

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The charges which form the staple of these attacks turn largely upon the murder of children in order to make use of eyes, members, blood, &c., in certain Christian rites; and they are so extravagant and absurd that foreigners are apt to doubt that even the most ignorant among the people really believe in the crimes which are alleged against Christians. The best authorities, however,—as, for example, the late Sir Thomas Wade,—do not question the sincerity of the popular belief; and indeed if we compare these charges with those made against the Jews by influential sections of Christians in Europe, we shall be surprised at their practical identity.

For this deplorable state of things no one has been able to suggest a remedy. What has been done cannot be undone. To mend it even would require such united action among the Great Powers as it is hardly possible in the present state of the world to conceive. France, indeed, on the morrow of the Tientsin massacre, did appeal to the co-operative principle as a protection to all foreign interests in China. The French ambassador in London addressed the Foreign Office in these terms:—

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Bien que les victimes de ces attentats soient presque exclusivement des Français, on ne saurait contester que des faits pareils révèlent l'existence de dangers qui menacent indistinctement tous les étrangers résidant en Chine. C'est en considérant leurs intérêts comme solidaires dans ces contrées de l'extrême Orient que les Puissances européennes peuvent arriver à assurer à leurs nationaux les garanties et les sécurités stipulées dans les traités.

In the subsequent action of France in China, however, there has been no trace of regard for any such principle of solidarity. Indeed, were the Powers ever so amicably disposed towards each

other on other questions, they could not agree in this, the objects of their policy being absolutely irreconcilable.

"We cannot doubt," wrote Sir Rutherford Alcock, "that the missionary question is the main cause of disturbance in our relations with China, and of danger to the Chinese Government itself no less than to all foreigners resident in the country, missionaries and laymen alike." He recommended in 1868 that "the treaty Powers should, if possible, come to some understanding on the religious and missionary question as the necessary preliminary to any united action for the common benefit, the acquisition of increased facilities for trade, &c." And he says, "As regards Chinese converts, any attempt to extend a protectorate over them would of necessity either fail or be subversive of the whole government of China." But in the same paper he states that "France, with no trade in the East, is ambitious of a protectorate over Roman Catholic missions"; and that "with regard to converts protection has been partially extended to them under the ægis of the French Government, and that persistent efforts were being made to make that protection effectual." [238] These efforts have been still more persistent during the generation that has since passed. With France the protectorate over native Christians is the great objective of her Chinese diplomacy—not the ultimate end, indeed, but the lever by which that end may be attained. To suggest to France, therefore, the abandonment of this policy would be about as hopeless as asking her to give up her colonies as the preliminary to an international conference. And while France protects the proselytising machinery of the Roman Catholic Church and its consequent usurpation of the Chinese authority, it would seem of little avail to place other missionaries under restriction.

The fruits of this war of the social elements began to be harvested in 1868, as Sir Rutherford Alcock observed; but that was only the beginning of a long series of conflicts which have marked the progress of missionary work in China up to the present day. Riot, outrage, and massacre are its regular landmarks. The outbreaks have so much in common that it would serve no useful purpose to trace them in detail, or attempt to apportion praise or blame to this or that individual or sect. The one which has left the reddest mark on history, and, being enacted in the presence of a foreign mercantile community, brought the several factors in the question into a clearer light than can ever be thrown upon outrages in remote parts of the interior, is the Tientsin massacre of 21st June 1870. This occurred six months after Sir Rutherford Alcock left China, while Mr Wade was *chargé d'affaires* for Great Britain, and Count Rochechouart for France, in Peking. [239]

The massacre of sixteen French Sisters of Charity, including an Irish girl, Alice Sullivan, a French consul, and several French subjects, also—unwittingly, according to the imperial edict treating of the occurrence—a Russian merchant and his wife, was the work of an organised band, led by the city fire brigade, under the direction of the civic authorities. The crime had been planned for some time: it was preceded by the murder of an isolated English missionary, Mr Williamson, near Tientsin, and by an attempted anti-foreign rising in Nanking, which was promptly suppressed by the viceroy, Ma, who was soon after himself assassinated. (He was a Mohammedan.) The impending outrage in Tientsin was foreseen, and warning given, several days before. An Englishman was attacked on the 19th for no reason. The official highest in rank on the spot—not, however, a territorial authority—was Chunghou, a Manchu, holding the office of Imperial Commissioner for Trade, and very friendly to foreigners. Admiral Keppel says of him that he was the most finished Chinese gentleman he had ever met, with the exception of the viceroy of Canton (probably meaning Kiyng). The governor of the province was Tsêng Kwo-fan, whose capital was Paoting-fu, some 100 miles in the interior; and his subordinates, the prefect and magistrate, were the authorities at Tientsin immediately responsible for the massacre. Chunghou had warned the Peking Government several weeks before of the progress of the agitation against the French mission. [240]

The Imperial Government immediately on the occurrence issued an edict describing the massacre as "a quarrel between the people and the missionaries resulting in a fight," but were promptly driven from that position and pressed, not only by the French, but by all the foreign representatives, to investigate and do justice in the case, Count Rochechouart demanding the capital punishment of the three mandarins who had instigated the massacre. On this the Chinese Government remarked in a secret edict, "Rochechouart, with boundless arrogance, demands the execution of the Fu and Hsien, a demand ten thousand times to be rejected." Under pressure, however, the Government ordered the governor-general, Tsêng, to proceed to the spot and investigate. After a protracted journey he reached Tientsin and commenced to take evidence, not of the crime committed, but of the suspicions which had been excited against the Sisters of Mercy, whom, after ransacking their cemeteries for mutilated children, he eventually acquitted. He then suspended the magistrates *pro formâ*, and spoke of sending for troops to catch the rioters! On receiving the viceroy's report another imperial decree was issued repeating the original falsehoods, and causing much disappointment to the foreign Ministers. Renewed pressure from them, not without hints of stronger measures, resulted in the offer of fifteen of the mob to be executed, which, being unanimously rejected, the Chinese Government, apparently thinking it was the number that was inadequate, threw in five more, making twenty in all. Sixteen were actually beheaded, the remaining four being saved by the timely arrival of the Russian Minister, who protested against the execution of the men accused of murdering the Russians, because he did not believe in their guilt. Compensation was paid by the Chinese officials to the families of the executed men, which, with the honours done to their dead bodies, showed that they were sacrificed not for crime, but for reasons of State. Of course pecuniary compensation was made on account of the victims of the massacre, the Chinese Government being never hard to deal with where money is concerned. The prefect and the magistrate who had busied [241]

themselves after the tragedy in torturing Christians, in order to extort from them confessions which would justify the massacre, were nominally banished, though it was perfectly understood that this was a pure matter of form.



**RUINS OF FRENCH CATHEDRAL AT TIENTSIN, BURNED
JUNE 20, 1870.**

As part of the reparation for the massacre the Imperial Commissioner for Northern Trade, Chunghou, was despatched in the early part of 1871 on a mission to France to express the regret of the Chinese Government for what had occurred. This official, the first man of rank who was ever sent out of China, received but an indifferent reception from the President of the French Republic. Being the highest authority in Tientsin at the time of the massacre, and having known of the preparations for an outbreak of some kind, Chunghou was severely blamed by Europeans on the coast of China, who alleged that the massacre could have been prevented had he put forth his authority. Meetings were even held on the subject in Shanghai, and remonstrances were sent to Europe against Chunghou's being received anywhere as an ambassador until he should exonerate himself from all share in the Tientsin atrocity. These representations, no doubt, had something to do with the attitude of the French Provisional Government, which, on other grounds also, was probably little disposed in that year to occupy itself with the affairs either of the Church or of China. [242]

There is reason to believe, however, that Chunghou's conduct during the affair of Tientsin was not inconsistent with innocence; for although he was a man in authority, it was only as superintendent of trade, having no control whatever over the hierarchy of territorial officials, who were under the orders of the viceroy, Tsêng Kwo-fan. Beyond his personal attendants it is not probable that Chunghou could move a corporal's guard in Tientsin, and his position was such that the local authorities and their myrmidons looked with the keenest jealousy on any departure of the superintendent of trade from the strict line of his own functions. He dared not, in fact, move a finger against officers who owed allegiance to the viceroy, and in apprising the Peking Government of the rumours which were current, Chunghou probably considered that he had gone as far as public duty warranted. These somewhat anomalous relations between two high dignitaries of the empire were put an end to when Li Hung-chang succeeded Tsêng Kwo-fan as viceroy of Chihli; for he was appointed also the successor of Chunghou as superintendent of trade, and resided for the most part of his time in the commercial port, Tientsin. The two offices continue to be combined in one person.

Most of the typical features of a missionary outrage were in this case exemplified—ferocious placards and brochures, circulation of calumnies against the missionaries, guilt of the local authorities, their immunity from punishment, and the official publication of travestied versions of the occurrence. There was also, we may add, a lurking disposition on the part of foreign Governments to give credit to the Chinese charges against the missionaries. Finding themselves unable by pressure on the Chinese to obtain satisfaction for past or security against future outrages, they were seldom indisposed to cover their impotence by throwing the blame on their own people. [243]

There was, consequently, readiness in certain foreign official quarters to dwell on undefined "indiscretions." It was too easily assumed in the beginning that the practice of the Sisters of Charity of purchasing destitute children reasonably excited the suspicions of the people. As a matter of fact, however, as was admitted afterwards, this alleged practice of the Sisters was entirely imaginary. It was also assumed that the massacre was a spontaneous act of the populace, who believed the stories of kidnapping. But in view of the fact that these agitations arose simultaneously in distant parts of the empire, this theory of sporadic action could not be sustained: besides, as Tsêng Kwo-fan himself shrewdly enough pointed out, no child had been missed from any family at Tientsin, and the idea of a disciplined fire brigade and a great city mob being suddenly roused to fury by the abstract idea that somewhere children had been kidnapped by somebody is too altruistic for ordinary belief. The mob needed an instigator, and the instigator

was well known.

In the diplomatic correspondence which ensued, admitted on all hands to be most unsatisfactory, the British *chargé d'affaires* had occasion to complain to Prince Kung that in the communications that passed foreign Ministers and their Governments were spoken of as vassals, which, coming two years after Mr Wade's warm support of the Burlingame mission, was instructive as regards the progress in liberal ideas which had been claimed for the Chinese. [244]

Another consequence of this affair may be noted. The instructions to British naval officers in China, which had been dictated by Mr Burlingame in 1869, were virtually reversed after the Tientsin massacre.

It was the general belief at the time that, literally by the fortune of war, the Chinese Government narrowly escaped a signal retribution for its continued guerilla warfare against foreigners as represented by the missionary vanguard. Information travelled slowly then. The nearest telegraph stations to Peking were Kiachta on the Russian frontier and Colombo, and there was only periodical communication with either, so that it happened that the official news of the massacre reached the British Foreign Office on July 25th. If we recall what was transpiring in the capitals of Europe during that month of July 1870, we may permit ourselves the speculation that events might have taken quite another turn had the news from China reached the Tuileries a month earlier than it did. The Chinese Government themselves were strongly imbued with this idea. In an interesting interview which Consul Adkins had with Li Hung-chang in October, after he had succeeded to the viceroyalty of Chihli, in which the incident was discussed, the viceroy could not conceal his anxiety. The pith of a Chinese interview usually lies, like that of a lady's letter, in the postscript, and as Mr Adkins was taking leave the governor-general asked him, "Do you think France will make war next year?" (It is worth noting that in his report of the interview Mr Adkins expressed himself "reassured by the governor-general's tone and manner." "I take for granted," he wrote, "that he will not tolerate any outrage on foreigners within his jurisdiction;" and this forecast of Mr Adkins has, we believe, been completely borne out by the event.) [245]

But although the Chinese had escaped a great peril, they were somewhat shaken in their sense of security for the future. The attacks on missionaries had no doubt gone further than was altogether safe, since the indignation of the foreign Powers had been roused almost to the pitch of war. The provincial authorities having had their own way so long, threatened to be too strong for the Central Government, and were likely to embroil them with foreign nations; while in their turn the "literati and gentry," unemployed officials and the leaders of disorder in the great provincial cities, were also becoming too demonstrative for the provincial rulers. It was clear to the authorities that they were face to face with a dangerous situation, and, contrary to their traditional practice, they began to devise measures in order to meet it. The missionary, they now saw, was with them for good, the hope of expelling him by intimidation must be relegated to fanatics of the non-practical school, and it would be imbecile to shut their eyes any longer to facts. No doubt they had allowed things to go too far in the admission of foreigners into the interior, trusting to the resourcefulness of the provinces in insidious means of repression, but to retrace their steps was now impossible. They could no longer hope to expel the missionary, but they would contrive some means to mitigate the dangers of his presence. They would, in short, endeavour to supply, in concert with the treaty Powers, that culpable omission in the treaties by henceforth regulating the missions and defining their rights and obligations. [246]

The result of these cogitations was an elaborate scheme for the control of missions which was published in the summer of 1871, and was addressed to the French Government, and by them communicated to the others. That the Chinese Ministers of themselves took so unprecedented an initiative it is not necessary to believe. The circular was attributed to that greatest of all Chinese statesmen, Wênsiang, but the unseen hand that has done so much to assist China out of her international difficulties may easily be traced in this notable State Paper. In the preamble the case is stated much as we have endeavoured to set it forth: "Trade has in no degree occasioned differences between China and the Powers. The same cannot be said of the missions, which engender ever-increasing abuses. Although in the first instance it may have been declared that the primary object of the missions was to exhort men to virtue, Catholicism, in causing vexation to the people, has produced a contrary effect in China." The circular submitted eight rules for the government of missionary relations with the people and officials in the provinces. The rules referred to (1) the management of orphanages, which it was proposed either to close altogether or to place under severe restrictions; (2) the mixed attendance of women and men at public worship, which, being contrary to Chinese propriety, scandalised the people; (3) the legal status of missionaries in the interior, and the evil consequences of the *imperiam in imperio* which had resulted through the missionaries' separating themselves, and even their native converts, from the jurisdiction of the local authorities; (4) the restriction of proceedings in the case of riots to the persons actively participating in the same; (5) the clear definition of passports, so that missionaries should not be able to move about at will, leaving no trace; (6) the need of strict examination into the character and antecedents of converts; (7) the etiquette to be observed by missionaries in intercourse with officials, the missionaries not to arrogate official style; and (8) the reclamation of alleged sites of ancient churches to be stopped, great injustice having been done to Chinese through their being obliged to surrender properties which they had honestly bought and paid for. [247]

Many things have happened since 1871, and each transaction with foreigners has involved greater and greater encroachment on the Chinese prerogatives. Thus the objection taken in 1871 to the missionaries' arrogating official style has now been so completely waived that the Chinese

Government itself bestows official rank on missionaries, and has sanctioned a rule of etiquette for their intercourse with the high Chinese authorities. Thus "bishops are authorised to demand to see viceroys and governors of provinces; vicars-general and archdeacons are authorised to demand to see provincial treasurers, judges, and taotais; other priests are authorised to demand to see prefects of the first and second class, independent prefects, sub-prefects, and other functionaries. The various orders of ecclesiastics are to visit and write to the corresponding orders of Chinese officials on terms of equality, and these officials will naturally respond, according to their rank, with the same courtesies."^[20]

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This famous circular of 1871 unfortunately perished at its birth: it was roughly attacked in the foreign press, and met with a very cold reception by the Foreign Offices. The English and American Governments seemed satisfied with the reflection that the strictures on missionary practices applied specially to Catholics, and pleased to be able on that account to dismiss it from consideration. From that day to this the evils complained of have gone on increasing and accumulating year by year, outrages and massacres following each other without interruption, and the exacerbation of feeling between foreign missionaries and the Chinese population going on with accelerated speed. The political results to China have assumed in these later years the very concrete form of territorial spoliation, and the Chinese have had abundant experience of the religion which makes nations strong and the people virtuous. That is not to say, however, that there is not good seed already germinating under the snow, which may hereafter bear the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Meanwhile the naked unregulated forces are in open conflict, and he would be a bold prophet who should forecast the issue.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

THE EXPANSION OF INTERCOURSE.

I. RUSSIA AND FRANCE ADVANCING.

Influx of treaty Powers—Diversion of Chinese foreign policy into new channels—Aggrandisement of Russia—And France—At the expense of China—Affecting whole policy of China for thirty years—The rise of German influence—And Japanese.

Up to this stage the foreign relations of China have been traced from what is practically a single point of view—the English—without sensible distortion of their true proportions. But the events of 1857-60, and the treaties by which they were crowned, introduced new factors and a wider ramification of international connections. The arms of England and France opened the door to an influx of Powers eager to reap where they had not sown; and though the full effect was not realised till many years later, the shifting of foreign intercourse from an essentially Anglo-Chinese to a Sino-cosmopolitan basis became a potential reality on the day that Peking surrendered to the Allies. Foreseeing such a result, the negotiators of the treaties of 1858 advisedly refrained from pressing the Chinese Government more than was essential to the freedom of commerce, on the ground that other Powers less restrained than the authors of the treaties by a sense of moral responsibility might take undue advantage of concessions extorted from the vanquished. This prevision has been borne out by events, for the original "three treaty Powers" soon became thirteen, and the old solicitude for the conservation of China was gradually discovered to be confined to the small minority who had a substantial commercial stake in the country. With the increase in their number there naturally also appeared diversity of interest, scarce perceptible in the beginning, but ever widening with the progress of events until at length a stage of violent antagonism in the policy of the Powers was reached. The division among their enemies, which Chinese statesmen have deplored their inability to compass, has thus been brought about without their aid; but so far from realising the Chinese dream of ruling the barbarians, the division has only exposed the empire to the ravages of rival spoilers.

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It is impossible to do more than glance at the several channels into which the foreign relations of China have branched off since 1860. Yet they intersect each other at so many points as to form a

network which can only be intelligently considered as a whole. The quasi-biographical form of the present work may be appropriately dropped, so far as China is concerned, with the beginning of 1870, when the more immediate subject of it disappears from the stage of action to reappear as a perspicacious critic surveying the scene from a distant but commanding standpoint.

Two developments of far-reaching importance found their proximate starting-point, though not their origin, in the crisis which laid China prostrate in 1858 and 1860. These were the extension of the Russian empire to the Pacific Ocean, and the creation of that Asiatic empire which had been the dream of France for two centuries. China being by these vast territorial aggressions placed between the upper and the nether millstone, the anticipated advance of the two Powers has exerted an influence on her destiny scarcely less potent than the Japanese war itself, with which it so effectively co-operated. The soldier-statesmen of Russia foreseeing, what the war of 1854-55 was soon to demonstrate, that the sea route to their Pacific possessions was at the mercy of the maritime Powers, resolved to make a dash for a line of communication by land, and in pursuance of this adventurous conception forced their way down the Amur in spite of the feeble remonstrance of the Chinese wardens of the marches. What was thus taken by the strong hand in 1854 was formally ceded in 1858, when, first, the Amur province, with the free navigation of the river, and, next, an undefined condominium in the Usuri province, were granted by treaty to Russia. This was but a step towards the absolute cession, two years later, of that territory, including the whole Manchurian sea-coast, 600 miles in length. These extensive cessions, giving Russia the command of North-Eastern Asia, were extorted from China while *in extremis* as a direct result of the Anglo-French victories.

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So with the French establishment in the south-eastern section of the Continent. The expedition sent to the Far East in conjunction with that of Great Britain was, on completion of its work in China, withdrawn to Cochin-China, and, in an alliance of brief duration with Spain, invaded that dependency of the empire of Annam—a vassal of China—and captured Saigon. The Spanish partnership being thereupon dissolved, the French empire of "Indo-China" was inaugurated with a free hand. Zeal for religion was the motive of the invasion: "The emperor wished to put a stop to the constantly recurring persecutions of Christians in Cochin-China, and to secure them the efficacious protection of France." The record of the phenomenal progress of the new French empire since the treaty of Saigon in 1862 has been related by many eloquent pens. M. F. Garnier, the heroic explorer; M. de Carné, his colleague; M. Lanier, M. Deschamps, M. de Lanessan, and a host of enthusiastic French writers, have depicted in glowing terms not only the process, but the motives and aspirations, of the French "empire-builders."^[21]

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The pressure, latent and active, of these two powerful neighbours has given its tone to the policy of China during thirty years, and in such a way that her relations with the commercial nations who did not menace her integrity have been relegated to a secondary place.

The new German influence in the Far East, which had its modest beginnings in the treaties so reluctantly concluded by the Japanese and Chinese in 1861, has grown in importance *pari passu* with the rapid development of the German empire itself, ably seconded, it must always be allowed, by the personal qualities of the Ministers who have been successively chosen to represent the Fatherland at Peking and Tokio. The first resident Minister to China was Baron Rehfues, who opened the Legation in Peking in 1866, under the treaty of 1861.

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Another nation destined to play a leading *rôle* among the Powers in the Western Pacific was during the same period rising like the sun in the eastern sky. Nor was it very long before the nascent Power of Japan began to make its weight felt in the conflicts and concerts of the Far Eastern world.

It is obvious that under these various influences operating from without, and the reflex action set up within the State itself, the character of China as a political and diplomatic entity could not any longer be what it had been in the years before the war. What had been simple became complex; no international issue could be raised in an isolated form; nor could China make any move, whether voluntary or involuntary, without facing the critical observation of many interested parties. This multiple responsibility to Powers by no means at one in their aims, and each assuming over her a status of superiority, could have no other effect than to reduce to nullity any efforts China might make either to improve herself or please the Powers. It was impossible to please them all. Decades before the Japanese war, more than one of them had offered her armed assistance in thwarting the designs of a third,—which things Chinese statesmen pondered in silence.

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II. JAPAN AGGRESSIVE.

Extraordinary progress of Japan—Nation becomes restless—Invades Formosa—Bought off by China.

The civil war in Japan had been fought with characteristic energy during three years, when a revolution, the like of which was never before seen, established the new empire on the double foundations of hereditary monarchy and popular suffrage. The effect of the revolution was to concentrate the whole strength of the State under the government of the Mikado, and thus enable it to give free play to the widest ambitions. With incredible rapidity the nation made itself efficient for every enterprise of peace or war. The best that the Western world had to teach was

eagerly appropriated by a people just aroused from a long sleep, and anxious to make up lost time. They went so fast, indeed, that onlookers shook their heads, and their best friends would have applied the brake had it been possible. But the nation was self-reliant, and in its first adolescence it began to be aggressive.

Within six years of the revolution of 1868 an expedition was sent to invade the Chinese island of Formosa. Through the good offices of Sir Thomas Wade, British Minister in Peking, war between the two empires was averted, and the Japanese forces withdrawn. They were virtually bought off, a proceeding characterised by Sir H. Parkes as pusillanimous on the part of the empire of China. The transaction really sealed the fate of China, in advertising to the world that here was a rich empire which was ready to pay, but not ready to fight. The euphemisms under which the ransom was disguised deceived no one unless it were the Chinese themselves. The vast cessions to Russia, incredible as they appeared, had at least the palliation of a dire emergency, and verbal equivalents in the shape of promises of deliverance therefrom. The submission to Japan, on the other hand, was made in a time of comparative ease. [256]

The incident had yet a further significance. The pretext of the Japanese invasion was injuries done to shipwrecked Liuchiuans, a people whom China till then and for some years later considered her own vassals, and who had for centuries paid her regular tribute. Such an episode was therefore a sure mark of imperial decadence;—a definite step, moreover, in the downward process, to be followed not long after by the Japanese boldly asserting a claim to the Liuchiu Islands, against which China could only interpose an inarticulate protest. The meaning of these indications was not likely to be lost either on the Japanese, who were more immediately concerned, or on other less interested onlookers. And what has the subsequent history of China been but a development of the symptoms?

III. KOREA OPENED.

Japan concludes commercial treaty with Korea—Establishes working relations—Exciting jealousy in China—The suzerain—China replies by opening Korea to the whole world.

The expanding life of Japan was soon to overflow in another direction. The kingdom of Korea lay within twelve hours' steaming from the Japanese coast: it had a historic and a mythical interest for Japan; it had been the source of her culture as well as the scene of her conquests and ultimate defeat. With the exception of piratical raids on the coast towns of China, Korea was the only foreign field into which Japanese arms had been carried, and the prowess of their peninsular heroes was cherished as a sacred treasure by a people singularly tenacious of their heroic legends. After an interval of three centuries the new Japan directed its ambition to the scene of its medieval exploits; and the "hermit kingdom" was at last dragged from its seclusion and forced to play an unwilling part in the international game. The modern spirit had tempered the military passion, commerce and industry supplied the ballast to adventure, and instead of landing an army of 200,000 men, as they had done in 1592, the Japanese, in 1876, re-established themselves in the peninsula through the peaceable agency of a treaty of amity and commerce—a weapon newly borrowed from the armoury of Europe. This movement of the Japanese was by no means intended to "open" Korea—except to themselves. On the contrary, it appears that that very astute people ingratiated themselves with the king's Government by aiding, or professing to aid, them to keep the country closed to all other nations. [257]

But, like every other attempt to isolate an international question, the exclusive effort of the Japanese not only failed, but resulted in opening Korea instead of closing it. They could not lock themselves in: the key was on the outside of the door. Although they disguised their feelings, the Chinese authorities had been gravely disturbed by the attacks of the French and the Americans on Korea in 1867 and 1871. The audacious advance of the Japanese aroused them to the extent of considering the merits of a counter-move; for Korea was the secular battle-ground between China and Japan, the historic stepping-stone between the two countries. And Korea was a vassal to China, if ever one State did occupy such a relation to another. By old tradition, by effective conquest, by solemn engagement, by regular tributary missions, by the prerogative of investiture, by the obeisance of the sovereign before the Chinese envoys sent on great occasions, by every kind of acknowledgment which the servant could render to the master, was the suzerainty of China established. [258]

China's relations to her tributaries was perhaps the best feature in her imperial character. There was protection, nominal or real, but never a shadow of domination. The ceremonial once settled, the most complete independence was accorded to the vassal State, the imperial object being never oppression or exploitation, but the girdling of the empire with a cordon of contented States looking with filial eyes towards the Dragon throne. Of these filial States Korea was the most important, on account of its geographical position as commanding one of the main approaches to the Middle Kingdom, or, as the king himself once expressed it in a memorial to the emperor, as "the lips protecting the teeth." For China the Korean peninsula has been a strategical stronghold, but its importance was increased a hundredfold when the statesmen of Peking came to realise what they had done in giving away the whole Manchurian sea-coast, leaving them no outlet to the Sea of Japan excepting through Korea, which, moreover, was studded all round with excellent harbours, useful to friends and tempting to enemies. [259]

The wise policy which the emperors had observed towards their tributaries had borne valuable fruit in Korea. For two hundred years the Peking Government had dealt so benignly with king and people as to have inspired feelings of genuine affection combined with deep reverence for the "big country." Whether collectively or individually, officially or privately, the Chinese were warmly welcomed everywhere without ever abusing the courtesy of their hosts—in marked contrast, it must be observed, to the Japanese, whose record in Korea has been one of unbroken brutality, producing a general feeling of aversion.

If anything, therefore, could excite the jealousy of Chinese statesmen, it would be to see this filial dependency being tampered with by strangers, more especially by their hereditary foes, the Japanese. Better all the world in Korea with Japan excluded, than Japan in with the rest of the world kept out. Slow of apprehension, and still slower of action, her unpractical conservatism in high places reducible only by sap and mine, China brooded over the Korean problem for some years before any result of the incubation appeared. The conclusion eventually arrived at was to neutralise the Japanese action by opening Korea to the whole world under treaty. The realisation of this scheme was as usual placed in the hands of Li Hung-chang, who on the one hand recommended the Korean king to conclude commercial treaties with foreign Powers, and on the other encouraged the latter to open negotiations. Hence the general opening of the country in 1882, with its train of tragic consequences. [260]

The terms of the foreign treaties with Korea had not been thoroughly thought out, and the very ambiguity was perpetuated which it was the interest of China to clear away. The treaties purported to be made with an independent State, whereas Korea was a vassal, and the inconsistency was attempted to be remedied by a separate letter from the king to the Powers with whom he had concluded treaties, declaring, notwithstanding, that the Chinese emperor was his suzerain.

IV. THE FIRST IMPERIAL AUDIENCE—SUCCESSION OF KWANGHSU.

End of the minority of Emperor Tungchih—Audience of the foreign Ministers in 1873—Under derogatory conditions—Death of the young emperor—Empress regent's *coup d'état* in selecting successor—Her own nephew—Eighteen years' minority of Emperor Kwanghsu.

An event looked forward to for twelve long years with patient expectation, and with hope, lively at the beginning but fading away towards the end of the period, that it would prove the sovereign remedy for the defects of Chinese intercourse with the world, was the assumption of power by the young emperor, who attained his majority in 1873. The diplomatic body busied themselves greatly in preparations for their first audiences with the sovereign to whom they were accredited. The Chinese on their part were no less anxiously engaged in devising means of lightening the blow to their prestige in consenting to receive foreigners at all, while dispensing with the prescribed prostrations. Obligated to yield the main point, the Court officials minimised its significance by imposing sundry derogatory conditions as to the building in which the audience was to be granted, and by the terms in which it was referred to in the imperial decree, which represented the foreign Ministers as "imploring an audience," and by other like devices. [261]

The first to be admitted to the presence was the representative of Japan, who held the rank of ambassador. Next came the resident Ministers of Russia, the United States, Great Britain, France, and Holland, in a body; and lastly, the French Minister separately, in order to convey the reply of his Government to the mission of Chunghou respecting the Tientsin massacre of 1870. The several letters of credence were placed on a table. The emperor "seemed to be speaking" to Prince Kung, though no sound was heard. The prince in his turn addressed a few words to the five Ministers, in Chinese, purporting to be what the emperor had spoken in Manchu, and the audience was at an end, the whole ceremony lasting about five minutes.

By long anticipation a superstitious halo had formed round the abstract question of audience: it grew into a kind of fetish. Mr Lay shrewdly observed that the object of the "resident Minister" clause in the treaties had been misunderstood by foreigners in being regarded by them as an end instead of only a means. Mr Wade, who was British Minister at the time, made no such mistake; for though he consistently laid stress on ceremonial, it was, as he has frequently explained, because with the Chinese form was more than substance, and included it. A proper regulation of official etiquette was in his estimation the principal key to the remedy of material wrongs. From this point of view a five minutes' audience of the Son of Heaven, even in dumb show and once a-year, was a step of real importance. "The empire," wrote Mr Wade, "has for the first time in its history broken with the tradition of isolated supremacy—not, it may be, with a good grace, but still past recall; and while I would anxiously deprecate a too sanguine estimate of its results, I am as little disposed to undervalue the change that has been effected." [262]

But whatever hopes of a practical kind were raised by this ceremonial innovation were doomed to speedy extinction, for the emperor did not survive to grant a second reception. He died within the year, and was succeeded by another infant, involving a second minority much longer than the preceding one. Eighteen years, in fact, elapsed between the first imperial audience and the second.

The Emperor Tungchih, though but eighteen years of age, left a legend behind him. The gossip of the capital assigned to him considerable independence of character, and a certain audacity in

breaking bounds without the discreet chaperonage enjoyed by the Prince Siddhârtha in his explorations beyond the palace precincts of King Suddhâdana. He was, if common report belied him not, a true son of his mother in certain respects, though of her masterful statecraft, and the qualities which become a great monarch, he was too young to have given proofs. Leaving no heir, the deficiency was promptly supplied by the resourcefulness of the empress-mother. As the widow of the Emperor Hsienfêng and co-regent, she adopted a posthumous heir to that monarch to replace his own son. Her choice fell on the infant son of Prince Ch'un, the youngest brother of Hsienfêng. The mother of the adopted child was the empress-regent's own sister, and by thus enthroning her nephew the regent assured herself another long lease of power. The proceeding was irregular, there being two older brothers of Prince Ch'un alive and having sons. The nearest heir was the infant grandson of Prince Tun, the fifth son of Tao-kuang, but though Prince Tun himself had thirty years before been given in adoption to an uncle, the claim of his descendants to the imperial inheritance being thereby weakened, he seems never to have renounced his rights. At the time of the decease of Tungchih there was so much apprehension of disturbances in Peking, both on account of the succession and the form of the regency, that the 'Times' (February 4, 1875) wrote, "A battle on this question would seem almost inevitable, and notwithstanding the proverbial slowness of the East in most things, in crises like the present aspirants to Eastern thrones are wont to display both energy and readiness when the moment arrives for a *coup d'état*." [263]

The next in seniority of the sons of Tao-kuang was Prince Kung, whose title was uncompromised by alienation, and he had a son eligible. Whatever may have been the reasons for setting aside the claims of the two elder brothers to occupy the Dragon throne, they were considered to have been wrongfully set aside, and of this more will doubtless be heard in the fulness of time. Since, for reasons well understood, no natural heir to the present monarch can succeed him, there must be fresh recourse to adoption when or before the necessity arises, and what influences, native or alien, may then be concentrated on the imperial succession is a speculation on which it would be [264] profitless to enter.

The empress-regent's *coup d'état* of January 1875, when on a bitterly cold night her infant nephew was taken out of his warm bed, conveyed into the palace, and proclaimed emperor the following morning, answered the scheming lady's expectations, for she has ruled the Chinese empire from that day to this. By the same stroke she was enabled to disembarass herself of her original confederate, Prince Kung, to whose ambition she dealt a crushing blow in ousting his family from the succession. The two had come to hate each other with more than common virulence; and now that Prince Ch'un had been set on an unassailable pedestal as father of the reigning sovereign, the regent placed her trust and confidence in him, and shared with him the sweets of empire. Inasmuch, however, as the regent was a woman, and her imperial brother-in-law neither a man of affairs nor in a position to assume any outward share in the Government, it was necessary to bring in a practical statesman to stand between them and the outer world. This position of confidence was occupied for twenty years by the grand secretary, Li Hung-chang. [265]

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MURDER OF MR MARGARY, 1875—CHEFOO CONVENTION, 1876—RATIFICATION, 1885.

I. THE MURDER OF MR MARGARY, 1875.

Efforts to reach China from Burma—Expedition under Colonel Browne—Mr Margary appointed interpreter—Meets party at Bhamo—Precedes them into China, and is assassinated at Manwyne—Discussion thereon with the Chinese Government—Tsên Yü-ying, Governor of Yunnan—British Minister charges him with the murder—Demands his arraignment—Sends commission from Peking to Yunnan to take evidence—Unsuccessful.

Ever since the conquest of British Burma, and more especially since the treaty concluded with the King of Burma in 1862, political and commercial speculation had been busied with the mountainous country which divides it from the empire of China. The fact that next to nothing was known of that wild region, combined with the prospect of reopening the old caravan route which had been some time closed by disturbances among the frontier tribes and by Chinese insurgents, constituted a great stimulus to exploration. To this end projects were from time to time considered by the Indian Government—sometimes at the instance of enthusiastic officials, sometimes urged by the superior authority of the British Government under pressure from mercantile bodies in England. South-western China, however, was as jealously guarded from [266] intrusion as the sea-coast had been, and no progress was made in penetrating its mystery.

After the failure of an exploring expedition under Colonel Edward B. Sladen in 1868, the Indian Government, in furtherance of the wishes of the Government at home, sanctioned yet another attempt six years later, though with decided misgivings as to any successful issue. Arrangements were made during 1874, and the expedition, under Colonel Horace Browne, was despatched from Burma *viâ* Bhamo in the beginning of 1875. The British Minister in China had been asked for his co-operation, and in particular he was requested to furnish Colonel Browne with a competent

interpreter. It was arranged that this official, armed with a Chinese passport issued by the Government at Peking, should make his own way through China from the coast and join Colonel Browne at Bhamo.

The choice of her Majesty's Minister fell upon one of the most promising officers in the consular service, Mr Augustus Raymond Margary, who proceeded from Shanghai by way of the Yangtze to the province of Yunnan, and in five months accomplished his perilous pioneering journey with perfect success, arriving on the 17th of January at the rendezvous, where he was received with the warmest feelings by Colonel Browne and his party, and with surprise and admiration by the Burmese.

On being joined by Mr Margary, the mission prepared to start from Bhamo towards China. Everything seemed auspicious for the expedition. On arriving at the Burmese frontier, however, the party were met by sinister rumours of armed opposition to their passage through the Kakhyen hills. Margary, having just come safely through these districts, volunteered to proceed alone to ascertain the truth of the reports which they had heard. How he was treacherously assassinated at Manwyne, the first city within the Chinese border, and how Colonel Browne's mission was assailed and driven back by armed bands, has been told by Dr John Anderson in 'A Narrative of the two Expeditions to Western China' of 1868 and 1875, and by Sir Rutherford Alcock, the sympathetic editor of Mr Margary's 'Letters and Journals,' as well as in numerous Government publications.

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It became then a question of the gravest import to fix the guilt of this treachery, and to consider what means could be adopted for avenging the death of a young Englishman within Chinese territory, and bearing a passport from the Government of Peking. "Whether it be Burmese, Kakhyens, Shan tribes, or Chinese that are in question, it is impossible we can accept a defeat of this nature, brought on, too, by our own spontaneous acts," was the conclusion of Sir Rutherford Alcock. Governments which resorted to the assassination of individuals under their own safe conduct must be deterred, by persuasion or by force, from the use of such tactics. The demand for redress which was made direct to the Tsungli-Yamên was followed by a wrangling and evasive discussion as to the conditions on which the passport had been granted. These, it must be admitted, had not been so definitely stated as they might have been. Passports, as Mr Wade, then Minister in Peking, explained, were granted in two forms—for "business," meaning trade, or for "pleasure," rendered in Chinese "tour or travel." It was in the latter form that the passport for Colonel Browne was applied for, and the Chinese made a plausible defence of their position on this narrow ground, asserting that the subsequent declaration that the mission was intended to open a trade route through Chinese provinces, where they alleged no trading rights for foreigners existed, could not be covered by a passport granted for pleasure.

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The voluminous discussion on international rights which followed, although academical in form and irrelevant to the question at issue, betrayed the animus of the Chinese Government in regard to commercial concessions in the interior; but it is possible that the true motive for the repulse of Colonel Browne's expedition, of which Mr Margary's murder was but an incident, lay deeper. Europeans are accustomed to make light of oriental suspicions, and the idea that Colonel Browne's party was the vanguard of a hostile force to be treacherously introduced into Chinese territory under passport may seem too fantastic to have been entertained in good faith. Yet if we consider on what trivial grounds even the civilised Powers of Europe will at times suspect each other of the most grandiose designs, and how often the suspicion is justified, we need not dismiss as incredible the fact that, in a frontier province which had recently been the scene of a formidable rebellion, an armed escort accompanying a foreign tourist party should have caused sincere misgivings in the minds of the authorities. Nor do the facts of the case exclude the possibility of such suspicions being suggested from without, even if they did not arise spontaneously within. Apart from these special considerations, the chances of success would probably have been greater if the mission had started from the Chinese side, where the right of travel and exploration had already been established.

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The verbal polemic over the conditions of the passport did not, however, touch the matter in hand, which was the murder of a British official for whom the Chinese Government, both imperial and provincial, were expressly responsible. It is not necessary at this day to pronounce judgment on the identity of the actual criminal. The murder was the result of a conspiracy in which Chinese and Burmese were both implicated. They were alike interested in preventing the passage of the mission, and the strong opposition of the Burma Government was not unknown to Mr Margary, for he had noted it in his Journal.

The King of Burma, the father of the well-known Theebaw, was a learned pandit and a devout Buddhist, as severe in regard to heretics as the crowned heads of Europe were in the days of the Inquisition. The Court of Ava, in its claims to obeisance from foreigners, was almost as exacting as the Son of Heaven himself, and the priests lorded it over the community with the arrogance of a pampered caste. Thus foreign intercourse was heavily hampered, and a good understanding rendered almost impossible. Fears for their prerogatives must have inspired the royal and priestly coterie with aversion to that restless element which was always trying to "open up" other people's country and to explore trade routes. Hence the motive for obstructing the passage of a foreign expedition between Burma and China was as strong on the Burmese as on the Chinese side.

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Tsên Yü-ying, the Chinese governor, held an exceptionally strong position in his province, and the officials stood very much in awe of him. Though not a pure Chinese, having been born in the

mountains of Kwangsi, of aboriginal parentage on one side, his personal prestige was very great. A fighting man from his youth, he had acquired an immense reputation in suppressing the Mohammedan rebellion in Yunnan. This he did in oriental style, extirpating the rebels so far as he could, root and branch. To save the trouble of burying many thousands of old people and children, he had them drowned in the Tali Lake. The military commander who was told off for this pleasing duty palliated the massacre, when in after years narrating these occurrences, by saying there were not really 10,000 but only 3000 thrown into the lake. This official had remonstrated with the governor against the sentence, saying that such severity was not in accordance with Tao li (principle); but Tsên replied, "You have nothing to do with Tao li; you must conform to the Leu li" (Penal Code).

Tsên Yü-ying was therefore something greater than an ordinary provincial governor, and wielded something more than the authority belonging to his office. Not only was he responsible, as all governors are, for what was done within his government, but it is difficult to conceive of any important incident occurring there without his personal sanction. But which was the leader in the plot, whether the acting-governor Tsên Yü-ying or the King of Burma, is comparatively unimportant; suffice it that her Majesty's Minister fixed, on grounds which satisfied himself, though of course on inferential evidence only, the instigation of the crime on the governor-general Tsên Yü-ying; and whether the direct guilt were brought home to him or not, there could be no question about his responsibility under the Chinese principle of administration. "From the governor-general downwards they are each and all individually and collectively held responsible for all that may happen in the limits of their jurisdiction." Accordingly, after much preliminary discussion, Mr Wade demanded that that high official should be censured for neglect of duty, and, on later information, that he should be brought for trial to Peking. To this demand the Peking Government refused to listen, and after feigning for many months to have no knowledge of what had taken place, they produced a report from the governor-general himself inculcating certain subordinates, of whom he seemed willing to make a nominal sacrifice. This report was so openly mendacious that Sir Thomas Wade threatened to haul down his flag if it were published.

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Unluckily for the successful prosecution of the demand for the arraignment of the viceroy, the British Minister became entangled in a cat's-cradle of negotiations for the revision of the treaty of Tientsin, with which the Yunnan outrage got so mixed up that the different questions never could be, or at any rate never were, separated again. Throwing the net is the tactical device in which the Chinese excel. The demand for reparation for the murder was alternately put forward, modified, and withdrawn according as the general propositions were shuffled about, and thus the effect of a concentrated attack on the essential point was lost. The minister on his own showing found himself in a succession of dilemmas, while the Chinese defensive position was clear throughout: it was to refuse everything, evade when direct refusal was dangerous, and in short to baffle all attempts of the British Minister to get to close quarters with the question. Sir Thomas Wade was several times brought by these elusive tactics to the point of threatening withdrawal of the Legation, which in itself the Chinese would have welcomed as a householder might the "positively last visit" of a tax-collector, but for the ulterior consequences to be apprehended.

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After many months of fruitless labour Sir Thomas Wade resolved to send a commission of his own to Yunnan to collect evidence as to Margary's murder. His right to do so was at first contested by the Chinese; but after considering the matter, and getting the best advice at their command, they assented, and named High Commissioners to meet the British officials. The Hon. T. G. Grosvenor, secretary of Legation, was detached for this duty, assisted by two of the most competent men in the consular service—Mr Colborn Baber and Mr Arthur Davenport. On the Chinese side were appointed the viceroy of the Hu Kwang, Li Han-chang, elder brother of Li Hung-chang, another official to whom Sir Thomas Wade objected strongly, but in vain, and Tsên Yü-ying himself, the inculcated party. The promises made to the British Minister before he would allow the mission to set out were broken as soon as it was fairly on its way, and Sir Thomas Wade had serious thoughts of recalling it, foreseeing that it was destined merely to waste time. What possible hope, indeed, could there be of isolated foreigners collecting evidence in a distant city against the high provincial officials? No evidence was taken. The British Commissioner was simply presented with the original report, to which was added the so-called "confession" of thirteen savages "kidnapped to do duty as prisoners at the bar." These savages could not speak Chinese, nor was their language understood by any one in the viceregal court; it was evident that they had never been near the scene of the crime, nor did they look in the least like men who were pleading guilty to a capital charge.

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The motive of the Chinese in yielding to the appointment of the British commission, after refusing their assent to it, only occurred to Sir Thomas Wade when they recommended that Mr Grosvenor should remain in Yunnan until the case was closed. No coercive measures, they calculated, would be taken against them while these hostages remained in their hands. From first to last the only question that occupied the mind of the Chinese Government was whether force would be applied or not. And if they read—as of course they did—the English newspapers of the day they would see that the contingency of war was dwelt upon throughout the year 1875 as the sole alternative to the condign punishment of the Governor-General of Yunnan-Kweichow. This was, indeed, from time to time directly threatened by Sir Thomas Wade, and he had applied for the Flying Squadron to come on from India to support his demands. When at last, after eighteen months' struggle, he abandoned the negotiations, and "abruptly left Peking" for Shanghai in order to be in direct telegraphic communication with the Home Government, he wrote, "I had, in the last fortnight, again and again threatened either to remove the Legation or to recommend to her Majesty's Government the extremest measure of coercion unless I had secured a very moderate form of

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reparation."

When Prince Kung realised the fact that the British Minister had actually left the capital he became suddenly serious, and sent after him to say there had been a misunderstanding, which would have been cleared away if he had only waited. At the same time the prince had recourse to his foreign adviser, the Inspector-General of Customs, who stood to the Government somewhat in the relation of a "medicine-man." The inspector-general had taken an active part, both direct and indirect, in the comedy of the preceding eighteen months—whether as an ally or an opponent of the British Minister seems not to have been quite clear to the comprehension of the latter.

An imperial decree was immediately despatched to the Grand Secretary, Li Hung-chang, instructing him to detain the British Minister on his way through Tientsin, in order to confer with him on the Margary case. This proposal Sir Thomas Wade declined on several grounds: among others, that at a previous stage of the negotiations the promises made by Li Hung-chang had been repudiated by the Peking Government. This effort to stop him at Tientsin having failed, Mr Hart was despatched in hot haste after Sir Thomas Wade to Shanghai, ostensibly to discuss the "commercial question," but really to induce the British Minister to re-enter the arena of negotiation,^[22] in which the Chinese felt themselves safe. Sir Thomas, therefore, consented to meet a special commissioner, but without committing himself as to the scope of the intended conference. The High Commissioner was Li Hung-chang, and the place of meeting Chefoo, the locality being selected by Sir Thomas Wade himself. There was concluded the famous Chefoo Convention.

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II. CHEFOO CONVENTION, 1876.

Negotiations with Li Hung-chang at Chefoo—Mr Hart assisting—Sir Thomas Wade hurried into making an unsatisfactory settlement—Chefoo convention analysed—Net result an increase in the customs dues—Criticised by the merchants.

It was in the month of September, the summer not yet over, during which season the sea air and fine beach of Chefoo made it at that time the best health resort for the China coast. Visitors from Peking occasionally varied their summer residence at the Western Hills by spending a few weeks at Chefoo, and in 1876 there were several members of the diplomatic body taking their holiday at the watering-place, the meeting of the British and Chinese plenipotentiaries constituting for them an added attraction.

Sir Thomas Wade had originally no intention of concluding a formal convention, nor had he authority for closing the Yunnan question without further reference to his Government; but circumstances proved too strong for him to keep to his resolution. He, in fact, found himself in such a position of difficulty as is perhaps best described by the word "cornered"—the advantage of the game having passed entirely to the other side. The Chinese commissioner was powerfully reinforced by the inspector-general, supported by the local commissioner of customs for Chefoo; and the neutrality of those of the diplomatic body who were on the spot was believed to be benevolent to the Chinese. The "co-operative policy" of Mr Burlingame's day had for the time being at least lapsed, and particularist views among the Powers or their representatives began to prevail. The British Minister, deeming the matter in dispute with the Chinese a purely British concern, did not hold it incumbent on him to hamper his negotiations by daily consultations with his colleagues, who on their part resented his reticence, claiming it as a right that, considering how their national interests might be affected by the result, they should be kept informed of the progress of the negotiations. Sir Thomas Wade admits that, among other considerations, it was the impatience of these colleagues of his to see the discussion definitely terminated which induced him to close the case without waiting for further instructions from his Government.

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It must be borne in mind that the problem before the Chinese High Commissioner had never varied: it was the extremely simple one, how to screen the ex-governor Tsên Yü-ying, whether guilty or innocent, without encountering a British armed force. The fate of the negotiations depended entirely on the probable movement of the Flying Squadron, which was lying at Talienswan, a hundred miles off. No greater service could have been rendered to the Chinese Government than to assure the High Commissioner that he had nothing to fear from the British ships. The foreign Ministers who were present had their Intelligence Departments in full activity, and they had a shrewd notion of the limitations of the Flying Squadron, which they were free to communicate to the Chinese plenipotentiary. They were aware that the time—September 1876—was not opportune for the British Government to embark on distant enterprises of indefinite possibilities. From one source or another the assurance was given to the Chinese negotiator, and once convinced, on whatever evidence, that the British guns would fire nothing but salutes, Li Hung-chang felt himself master of the situation. It then became his turn to force a settlement, and he at once assumed a peremptory tone with the British Minister, notifying him that he would leave Chefoo on a certain day, convention or no convention. Sir Thomas Wade had, or thought he had, no choice but to capitulate to superior force. Pressed by his diplomatic colleagues, as has been said, as well as by the expressed desire of his own Government to get the tedious matter settled, he had to accept the best agreement he could get, and the Chefoo convention was the result.

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The fear of coercion being eliminated, the negotiation became reduced to a custom-house affair

like the treaty revision of 1869, the Chinese seizing the occasion to renew their former efforts to obtain an increase of revenue from foreign trade. Instead of adding to the import duty on foreign merchandise as in 1869, they now proposed to extend the area of internal taxation, and in particular they prepared the way for an indefinite increase in the opium revenue. This was the substantial part of the convention. New ports were opened in harmony with the scheme.

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A clause referring to residence at Chungking in Szechuan provided that British merchants would not be allowed to reside there so long as no steamers had access to the port. When, under this contingent clause, it was attempted to make the conditional permission effective by sending steamers to the port, the Chinese Government offered opposition, and the right was abandoned by Great Britain.

As for the Yunnan affair, the settlement of it gravitated to the form which had been universally condemned. "Do not let the nation lay itself open to the contempt of an Asiatic people by accepting money for life treacherously taken by official order," wrote Sir R. Alcock in July 1875. But "the series of bad precedents" was once more followed, and "blood-money was accepted for the life of a British subject."

It was thought important to publish far and wide the terms of settlement, and a proclamation with Sir T. Wade's *imprimatur* was posted throughout the country. It was remarked, however, that this proclamation embodied the very falsities against the publication of which the British Minister had previously protested under threat of breaking off diplomatic relations. The guilt of notoriously innocent parties was assumed in it, but their pardon granted on the fictitious ground that the evidence against them would not suffice to convict by the processes of British law.

A separate article provided for a mission of exploration by way of Szechuan and Tibet in the following year.

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A subject on which Sir Thomas Wade had long set his heart was an improvement in the terms of intercourse between foreign and Chinese officials, with a view of putting an end to the habitual assumption of superiority of the Chinese. This was treated in a few empty words providing that the Tsungli-Yamên should invite foreign representatives to consider with them a code of etiquette, a clause imposing no obligation whatever on either party.

Another question which had greatly occupied the minds of both the British Government and its successive representatives ever since 1833 was the establishment of a code of laws to regulate the civil and criminal relations between foreigners and Chinese at the treaty ports and elsewhere. This had formed a feature in the supplementary convention of 1869, the undertaking in which did not, however, extend beyond the general terms that "it is further agreed that England and China shall in consultation draw up a commercial code."

Strongly approving, however, of the abstract idea that China should adopt a written code of commercial law as a first step towards a general legal reform, Sir T. Wade nevertheless uttered a useful caution to those ardent reformers who see in a good code of laws a panacea for either national or international grievances. "No nation," he says, "worked harder at its legislation than China; but in the way of justice there are at least two serious impediments—an ignorance which renders due appreciation of the value of evidence, especially in criminal cases, impossible; and a dishonesty that would be fatal to the administration of any laws, no matter how enlightened." He illustrates this by relating an instance of the obstinate nature of the *chose jugée* in China.

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In a case [he says] the termination of which is just announced at Peking, we have a woman wrongly convicted, on a confession extorted from her by torture, of the murder of a husband who died a natural death, the injustice being so patent that the fellow-provincials of the accused appealed to Peking. Orders being issued for a rehearing of the case, the former decision was affirmed in the province, and this a second and again a third time. The proceedings were then removed to Peking; and it is in the end established that magistrates of districts, prefects of departments, the governor of the province, and the high officer charged with the public instruction of the province, who had been specially commissioned to rehear the case, have all more or less combined to conceal the delinquency of the first authority who heard it; with whose guilt the rest, his seniors, had associated themselves either through carelessness or from a corrupt motive. These proceedings lasted over two years.

One point, however, was definitively gained in connection with jurisprudence, the recognition of the British Supreme Court as a means of discharging treaty obligations.

The convention as a whole was subjected to the same kind of criticism as that of 1869 had been. The Chambers of Commerce pointed out that it sanctioned Chinese exactions which had been up to that time consistently resisted as violations of the treaty of Tientsin. Imposts, condemned by the Chinese themselves,^[231] which were to be abolished altogether by the terms of the Alcock convention, were by the Chefoo agreement not only recognised as lawful, but the area of their levy, within which the taxes were to be freed from all restrictions whether as to their amount or incidence, greatly extended. It would appear, therefore, said the merchants, "better to revert to the clear and simple provisions of the treaty of Tientsin, and insist on their being carried out without evasion." So far, they say, from simplifying the question of the taxation of foreign goods, the obliquely worded clauses in the Chefoo convention tend to quite the opposite result. "New elements of obscurity have been introduced, and if twenty years have been spent wrangling over the comparatively simple wording of the Tientsin treaty, it is to be feared that no person now living will see the end of the controversies which will rage over the indefinite arrangement set forth in the Chefoo convention."

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Opium was also for the first time introduced into a treaty, for the purpose of increasing the Chinese revenue from it and of making the maritime customs, supported by the British Government, the agent for its collection. The Chinese had always been at liberty to levy what internal taxation they pleased on opium; but, said the Chamber of Commerce, for the "English Government to make itself even indirectly answerable for the collection from Chinese of an impost of indefinite amount, varying at each port according to the caprice or the necessities of local authorities who are not even specified, would surely be to introduce a most inconvenient precedent." The convention was left for nine years unratified by the British Government. It could not be ratified because, among other reasons, five of the treaty Powers took the same objection as the British and other merchants had taken to the curtailment of the area of exemption from inland taxation—in other words, to the legal sanction extended by the agreement to unlimited exactions of the Chinese tax-collectors which had up till then been resisted as illegal. [282]

During the eight years following the signature of the Chefoo convention incessant discussion and agitation on the subject of the duties on opium and general merchandise kept the British Legation in Peking, and in a lesser degree the Foreign Office at home, in full activity. The question was turned over in all its aspects, threshed out on this side and on that, and numerous schemes were proposed for readjusting the imposts. The British Minister displayed the utmost ingenuity in evolving variations on the central theme, in which ethical, political, and sentimental considerations played their part, but without advancing the solution of the problem. The problem was altogether too simple for such recondite treatment. The Chinese throughout all the tortuous disquisitions pressed towards the one object of a substantial increase in their revenue, by whatever means it might be arrived at; and eventually they attained their object, as those generally do who concentrate their attention on a single point.

III. THE RATIFICATION, 1885.

Ratification postponed—Tedious discussion during nine years—Chinese claiming large increase in opium duty—Ultimately granted—By agreement signed in 1885—Hongkong and Macao made stations for collecting opium duties.

The convention simmered for nine years before its final ratification. The two Governments skirmished in the air all that time, misconceiving each other's aims and avoiding close quarters. The policy of Great Britain with regard to opium had been fatally deflected by unpractical considerations. The article had been placed by the trade regulations appended to the treaty in the exceptional position of being excluded from the privilege accorded to all other merchandise of exemption from inland taxation by payment of a fixed charge. The Chinese authorities were therefore at liberty to tax the article in transit to any extent they pleased. For reasons connected with their own administration, this unlimited power of taxation in transit was not deemed sufficient to produce the desired amount of revenue, and they were intent on supplying the deficiency by an enhanced import tariff. The difference between the two forms of taxation was that the inland duty was collected in a Chinese sieve, while the import duty was levied with the formalities of a banker's counter. Naturally, therefore, the Chinese Government missed no opportunity of pressing for an increase on the tariff fixed by treaty. It was the main object sought by them in the unratified convention of 1869. Failing then, they renewed their efforts in the Chefoo convention of 1876, seeking the same end by an inverted process, like taking a sea-fort from the land side. Instead of reviving the discredited proposal, they effected a turning movement by extending the area of the inland dues until it included the port of landing. Why, having full licence over the whole empire, a few acres added to their tax-collecting province should have been deemed of such vital importance is not perhaps at first sight self-evident. The reason was that under the proposed system the machinery of the Imperial maritime customs could be employed in collection, with the protection of the foreign consuls. [283] [284]

The concession was set forth in cryptic form in the convention, but the Chinese knew very well what interpretation they intended to give to the clause. That intention remained unaltered, though tactics varied. By the light of the vague and pointless correspondence carried on for seven years with the British Government they saw their way to advancing considerably beyond the position gained by the convention. They consequently raised their demands in proportion as they found the British Government yielding, until eventually they reached a vantage-ground where they could safely unmask and make direct for their object, an increase in the import tariff pure and simple. Eighty taels were added to the thirty allowed by the old treaty, and the opium duty was thus really trebled at a stroke.

The negotiations which led up to the convention are chiefly interesting as showing how easily the Foreign Office was chased from cover to cover by the Chinese Minister. Having once got the enemy "on the run," the Marquis Tsêng did not relax his pursuit until, notwithstanding one or two rear-guard actions, he capitulated without conditions.

After seven years of active deliberation the definitive diplomatic conference was opened by Lord Granville in January 1883. As a preliminary, the basis of the negotiations was rigidly defined by Mr (now Lord) Currie, in accordance with the Chefoo convention, thus: the regulation of the *likin* taxation, and specification of the barriers at which collections were to be made.

But, as we have hinted, the Chinese aspirations had in the mean time far transcended the scope [285]

of any provision of any treaty. No longer content with regulating *likin*, their first step in the conference was to induce Lord Granville to abandon the preliminary stipulation he had so carefully laid down. The Chinese Minister proposed a general commutation rate, uniform at all the ports, supporting the claim by sundry specious arguments. The *likin* barriers had been a chronic grievance of the merchants. The marquis held out a prospect of their abolition as a consequence of the single-payment commutation of inland dues on which he was intent. It is a feature of Chinese bargains of every description that something definite should be conceded on the one side, and something indefinite promised on the other,—the "bird in the hand" invariably for the Chinese. There was nothing surprising, therefore, in the time-honoured formula being employed in these diplomatic interchanges.

In moving from his base, Lord Granville, of course, ceded everything; but he made a final stand at the amount, declaring that "he could not agree that the *likin* payment should be fixed at more than 70 taels"; moreover, that he "would require full information as to the guarantees which would be given that opium would not be subject to any further payment while in transit." One such guarantee was already provided for in the convention, which stipulates "that the nationality of the person possessing or carrying the merchandise would be immaterial." This was deemed of great importance to trade, because since it was not always possible for a foreign owner, or even a deputy of his own race, to accompany a parcel of goods into the interior, the permission for Chinese to accompany them was essential to the working of the transit business. The contention of the merchant had always been, that the exemption from dues was a privilege attaching to the goods, and not to the temporary owner or transport agent. On the other hand, as the goods could not speak, the option of sending either a native or a foreigner at the merchant's own choice was considered a useful check on illicit exactions. [286]

The confident manner in which the marquis brushed away both of Lord Granville's ultimata showed how well he had profited by his experience of Foreign Office diplomacy. To Lord Granville's maximum of 70 taels (the sum actually agreed upon with the Chinese Government) the marquis said he was sorry, but his instructions did not permit of his accepting less than 80 taels per pecul. It is not customary to ask for proofs of good faith from ambassadors acting "on instructions," and Lord Granville simply yielded the point, while entering a mild protest against being forced by a Chinese *non possumus*.

And the right of the foreigner to accompany his goods, on which so much stress had been laid, was disposed of with exquisite assurance by the Chinese Minister, who was confident that such a mere detail "would not be allowed to stand in the way of a settlement," notwithstanding that it involved a reversal of the Chefoo convention.

And as to the guarantees for fulfilment, the Marquis Tsêng was sure that "the strongest guarantee would consist in the moral obligation" on the part of the Chinese Government to carry out arrangements of their own proposing. Thus, by sheer persistence, the Chinese gained every point, securing not only a threefold duty on opium, but the assistance of her Majesty's Government in its collection, for that was the meaning of transferring the levy from the interior to the seaport. The agreement, concluded by Lord Granville in June, was signed by Lord Salisbury in July 1885, under the title of an "Additional Article to the Chefoo Convention." [287]

It is right to add, on the authority of recent observers, that the convention has worked smoothly, no complaints being heard of inland exactions in contravention of its terms. It thus appears that the moral guarantee on which the Marquis Tsêng spoke so confidently was after all of some validity. But as the only source from which complaints could come would be those foreign agents who were by the terms of the convention expressly excluded from conveying or accompanying opium into the country, the negative evidence is not absolutely conclusive.

It would have been most interesting to gain from so enlightened a Minister as Tsêng some insight into the causes of the continual friction and recrimination which attend the operation of the commercial articles in the Chinese treaties, but his despatches have reference only to the question of the moment. "The Imperial Government," he says, "have often been held responsible for the friction caused in working arrangements but ill-adapted to the state of the country, and which a better knowledge of its internal conditions would have shown to those who framed them are incapable of execution." "The present scheme," he intimates, "being in harmony with existing institutions," may be expected to work smoothly. Existing institutions, therefore, are opposed to local taxation and in favour of single commutations. When, however, a different thesis has to be sustained, we are assured by other authorities that "existing institutions" claim arbitrary, variable, and unlimited taxation of goods in transit for the benefit of the provincial exchequers, and that it is the attempt to commute these by a payment at the port which is the true cause of the friction and disputation. [288]

The natural corollary followed the ratification of the Chefoo convention. The desire of the Chinese Government, cherished for nearly thirty years, to establish a customs station in Hongkong was virtually consummated in the following year. The trade of the colony had been vexed by a perpetual blockade by so-called revenue cruisers which harried every native vessel entering or leaving the harbour. The hope of getting the investment relaxed may have induced the acquiescence of the colony in any alternative. The Chinese sought to grip the opium supply by the neck, which could only be done by their obtaining control over the harbour of Hongkong. This was conceded, and a customs station was established on the Chinese side of the anchorage, while an office was opened in the city of Victoria.

There was a second "neck" to the opium supply—Macao. The arrangement made with Hongkong

without a corresponding agreement with Macao would have merely driven the trade from the one to the other. Overtures were therefore made to the Portuguese, who, unlike the English, were offered a valuable consideration for admitting the control of the Chinese customs into their waters. They then obtained for the first time a treaty of independent sovereignty for the colony. [289]

The effect of all these negotiations and arrangements, whether intended or not, was to stimulate the cultivation of Chinese opium to a high degree, and this, according to the impartial testimony of an ex-German Minister, is, apart from the increase to the Chinese revenue, the net result of the anti-opium agitation.



CHAPTER XXV.

A CHAIN OF INCIDENTS.

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I. DISPUTE WITH RUSSIA *RE* KULDJA.

Insurrection in Kashgaria—Russia occupies Kuldja—Engaging to evacuate when country settled—Tso Tsung-tang's march—Death of Yakub-beg—China reoccupies Kashgaria—Calls upon Russia to retire from Kuldja—Relations become strained—Chunghou concludes treaty with Russia—Violently repudiated by empress—War threatened—Gordon summoned—Dispute arranged by Marquis Tsêng.

The dilatoriness of China in making a stand against Japanese pretensions in Korea may be partly explained by her serious preoccupations elsewhere. She had been immersed in a sea of troubles. She seemed to be enveloped in rebellion. In the south-west the province of Yunnan had been severed from the imperial rule, and in its recovery the land was almost depopulated. In the north-west there were also Mohammedan risings, and in far-distant Kashgaria, separated from China by a thousand miles of desert and militarily untenable by her, the adventurer known as Yakub-beg set up an independent government, which he maintained for some years. Anarchy on her frontier afforded to Russia the pretext of occupying Chinese territory to maintain order; but she was scrupulous in assuring the Peking Government that this step was provisional, and that she was ready to restore Kuldja as soon as the Chinese were again in a position to resume the government of the town and territory. The time came sooner than was expected. The famous march of Tso Tsung-tang, who halted to grow grain for the support of his army, and the disaffection in his camp leading to the demise of Yakub, enabled China to reoccupy the revolted districts. Russia, on being asked to redeem her pledge as to Kuldja, made conditions which were not acceptable, and a diplomatic campaign was entered upon. A high Manchu official, Chunghou, the same who had been sent to France in 1871, was despatched to Prussia, where he concluded the treaty of Livadia, which was so repugnant to the empress-regent and her advisers that not only was it repudiated at Peking, but the envoy was delivered to the Board of Punishments. Relations became strained between Russia and China, and on both sides there were hints of a resort to force. In view of this eventuality the Chinese Government were recommended to apply for the services of their old champion, Gordon, who, unknown to them, had taken service with Lord Ripon, the then new Viceroy of India, and, equally unknown to them, had precipitately resigned that service. The Chinese had a large body of troops in Manchuria; the long line of Russian communication was very weak along that frontier; the governor of Eastern Siberia, declaring himself unable to resist a Chinese attack, had urged the Government at St Petersburg to come to terms at once with China, and wait for a suitable opportunity to recover what they might be obliged to cede. The Chinese Government hoped that if Gordon would come to their assistance, and take command of their Manchurian levies, his name would be a host in itself, and his appearance on the scene would at any rate convince the Russian Government that China was in earnest. With this view an invitation was sent to General Gordon in a telegram from Sir Robert Hart, which found him in Bombay. The invitation was unconditional; it indicated no purpose and named no price. Gordon took it entirely on trust, closed at once, and proceeded to China. Having been given no clue as to what service was expected from him, Gordon, nevertheless, not only came to a conclusion of his own on the subject, but supplied his views to the newspapers before leaving India, and at every port of call on the route. He declared he was going to China to induce her to make peace, for she was unable to do otherwise. In this he was of an opposite opinion from the Russian governor-general. But whatever the merit of his opinion, the object of the Chinese in [291]

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sending for him was of course frustrated by his published declarations. These being communicated to the Government at Peking, they saw that so far from stiffening them in their negotiations with Russia, Gordon's presence would seriously embarrass them, and they accordingly endeavoured to prevent his coming. Through Sir Robert Hart they sent a message to meet Gordon at Chefoo, requesting him to proceed no farther. Disregarding this request, he continued his journey to Tientsin, where he had interviews with his old friend the Viceroy Li; and he also made his way to Peking, where by the aid of an indifferent Cantonese interpreter he made representations to the Tsungli-Yamên, some of which the interpreter dared not reproduce in Chinese. Gordon left without seeing either Sir Robert Hart, on whose authority alone he had come to China, or the British Minister, Sir Thomas Wade. The advice he left with the Chinese Ministers was to renounce the endeavour to organise an army on Western models, and not to waste money on modern weapons, but to trust rather to numbers and the Fabian strategy which was natural to them. This being promptly published in foreign journals, was regarded as highly paradoxical, if not cynical; but it was recalled to mind fifteen years later, when China was being defeated in the pitched battles against which Gordon had warned them.

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The Kuldja dispute was eventually disposed of by the Chinese Minister, Marquis Tsêng, who negotiated a treaty at St Petersburg, by which the territory was nominally receded to China, while its strategical positions were retained in the occupation of Russia, thus rendering the whole region untenable by Chinese troops.

II. KOREAN IMBROGLIO, 1882-1885.

Outbreak in 1882—Conspiracy of the king's father—Attack on Japanese legation—Chinese troops control the capital—Foreign innovations—Brought bad elements to the surface—Conspiracy in 1884—Assassinations—Treachery of king's confidant—Kim Ok Kun's escape to Japan—The avenger—His elaborate preparations—Assassination of Kim—Joy in the Korean Court—Honours to the assassin—Japan dissatisfied—Count Ito's mission—Japan secures equal rights with China in Korea.

The Russian question settled, China had leisure to attend to Korean affairs, of which the importance was becoming more and more clear to her statesmen. The scare on the north-west was in another form transferred to the north-east, where there was the double risk of complications arising from both Russian and Japanese encroachment on Korea. The opening of the country to foreign intercourse, intended as a protection against such dangers, was soon discovered to be inadequate. A procession of events, dating from the signing of the treaties and culminating in 1885, transformed the kingdom from a vassal to a quasi-independent State.

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The first link in the chain, so far as visible effects were concerned, was an *émeute* which took place in Söul in 1882. The father of the king had occupied a position as regent curiously resembling that of the Empress-Dowager of China, and being ambitious to regain the authority which he had laid down on the king's coming of age, raised a conspiracy to depose him. In connection with the plot a mob was let loose on the Japanese legation, where a desperate struggle ensued, in which, and in the running fight which they made towards the seaport, a number of Japanese were killed. The survivors were conveyed to Nagasaki in a British ship-of-war. What provocation the Japanese had given for this savage onslaught is not a matter on which we need enter. The point is that it afforded justification for sharp reprisals. Perceiving this, and being in a position of unaccustomed preparedness, the Chinese Government—that is to say, Li Hung-chang—adopted prompt measures for anticipating action on the part of the Japanese. They despatched an envoy with a body of troops and a naval squadron to the seaport of the capital where they at once put down the conspiracy, re-established the king's authority, and by a clever but wonderfully common oriental ruse captured the Usurper, and carried him off to China as a State prisoner. The Chinese troops remained in the vicinity of the capital, and a Resident on the Indian pattern was installed at the Korean Court.

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Before long a foreign element began to be introduced into the Korean administration. Among other things a branch of the Chinese customs service was established, and, as in China, many duties besides that of raising a revenue soon claimed the attention of the foreign commissioner. No more effective first step in the regeneration of such a country could have been undertaken than an honest administration of its maritime revenue. It was a measure both good in itself and prolific of beneficial results in many directions. Other reforms, however, were projected which required a certain preparation of the soil and a careful consideration of social forces and conditions. The introduction of foreign ideas of any kind into a country which, so far as politics were concerned, might be considered virgin soil, was, to say the least, a hazardous experiment. Undigested schemes for the Europeanisation or the Japonisation of a Government which had up till then banished foreign intercourse entirely from its shores was likely to have an effect analogous to that of suddenly administering strong meat to the victim of protracted privation. Korean affairs were even less understood by foreigners than Western affairs were by the Koreans, so that the yeast thrown into the Korean dough produced risings for which Western foreigners at least, whatever may be said of the Japanese, were quite unprepared. Factions sprang up like fungoid growths in an excavation, sordid ambitions were set in motion, and the royal Court became a hotbed of intrigue towards which the most flagitious elements in the capital were naturally drawn.

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The agitation which was fed from these various sources broke out into open violence in 1884,

when two of the king's Ministers were assassinated by a band of conspirators. It would be futile to attempt to unravel the plot; its visible consequences only need be considered as further links in the chain of events, and also as affording some curious evidence of the manner in which the new alien civilisation was beginning to adapt itself to that which was ingrained in the Korean character. The professed object of the plot was understood to be the severance of the Chinese tie through the instrumentality of the Japanese, and the king himself was believed to be privy to this scheme. It is probable that the high political and patriotic ideal was but the rallying flag under which diverse schemers might pursue their several ambitions. The Koreans are credited with a special dose of the subtlety which belongs to Asiatic races, and whatever the real intentions of the king may have been, the conspirators were false to him. A concise contemporary account of the fray given in a message to the 'Times' states that—

The rising against the King of Korea is the outcome of reactionary intrigues similar to the movement in 1882, when the present king's father was captured and taken as a State prisoner to China. Defective accounts only have been received of the recent events. On the night of December 4, during an entertainment, there was an alarm of fire near the palace; Min chong ik, the queen's nephew, who was recently travelling in Europe, rushed out, met some assassins, and was stabbed, with many others. The conspirators then attacked the king, who applied to the Japanese Minister for the protection of his guard. Before morning six of the Ministers were killed. On the 6th the Koreans again attacked the palace, the Chinese troops being present. A fight ensued, and the Japanese guard lost three men killed and five wounded. Being overpowered, the Japanese abandoned the palace, retiring to the Japanese Legation, the king being carried off by the Chinese. The tumult increased, and thirty Japanese residents were massacred by the Chinese. On the 7th the Korean mob attacked the Japanese Legation, which was destroyed, and the Minister with his guard forced his way out amid showers of missiles. They stormed the gates and retreated to the seaport of Chemulpo. On the following day the king sent friendly messages to the Japanese Minister.

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At a recent date the Chinese garrison consisted nominally of 3000 men, but the force has been much depleted. The Japanese numbered 120, and these were about to be withdrawn when the outbreak occurred. The situation is critical, each side accusing the other of aggression; but it is expected that the affair will be settled amicably, neither Power desiring a quarrel for the benefit of interested spectators. The Japanese may insist on steps being taken to secure their Minister for the future from such outrages. Each Power has appointed an officer to investigate the facts before deciding on a definite course. Further complications are, however, certain to arise from the anomalous position of Korea. After the Kuldja scare China perceived the supreme strategic importance of the peninsula, and that a great Power occupying it would control Chinese external policy. The Government promoted the foreign treaties in 1882 with the objects of interesting the commercial Powers in the integrity of Korea, and of obtaining a recognition of its vassalage. Later treaties, beginning with that negotiated by Sir Harry Parkes last year, assumed the independence of Korea. The exercise of Chinese sovereignty is exposing Korea to the double peril of her own troubles and of China's possible wavering at a critical moment. The Chinese and Korean interests are, in the absence of commerce, purely political, Korea's importance consisting in its commanding position.

And the Japanese shortly after tabulated the casualties as follows:—

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Seven officials killed by progressives, 7 progressives killed by Korean troops, 38 Korean soldiers killed by Japanese troops, 95 rioters killed by Japanese, 67 progressives imprisoned, 11 beheaded, with shocking barbarities at execution.

The immediate purpose of the leaders of the plot appears to have been to destroy the influence of the powerful family to which the queen belonged, and had they contented themselves with the murder of any number of that family, it was not considered likely that either king or people would have greatly deplored the crime. But the chief assassin, Kim Ok Kun, struck at the two Ministers who were the king's right hand, and who had, moreover, endeared themselves to the nation by the exceptional purity of their public life and their beneficence in times of scarcity. Execrated alike by the sovereign and his people, Kim Ok Kun sought an asylum in Japan, where he was entertained for a number of years while engaged in hatching further plots against the peace of his native land.

Naturally his presence in Japan caused umbrage to China. The King of Korea lived in terror of his machinations, for Kim had a considerable following, by whose aid he hoped to make a descent on Korea and effect a revolution in the government. The guilt of Kim Ok Kun's betrayal of his sovereign was the more heinous from his having been confidential adviser to the Crown during all the negotiations with foreigners, between whom and the king he was the constant referee. He carried into exile the innermost royal secrets. The king's resentment against Kim was naturally embittered by his impotence to avenge the treachery to which he had been a victim.

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For the preservation of peace and of friendly relations an agreement was entered into between the three Governments to the effect that Kim should not be permitted to leave Japan for any other country excepting China or the United States. On these conditions the refugee became an embarrassment to the Government of Japan, which felt bound to protect him against counterplots while preventing him from carrying out his seditious designs. Nevertheless Nemesis was on the track of the assassin, and the way in which the quarry was hunted down by the avenger of blood affords a greater insight into the nature of the tragedy than do any of the contemporary comments. It also serves to illustrate certain points in the Korean character which are decidedly not without interest to students of current history.

A member of an important Korean family named Hong had been implicated in Kim's conspiracy, and by Korean law his whole family were held guilty of the treason. The king fully exonerated the

head of the family, being convinced that no blame attached to him personally. Nevertheless, the old man was so dejected by the disgrace brought on his name, that he forthwith poisoned himself with his whole house. A young man distantly connected with the family of Hong, and bearing their surname, took upon himself the duty of avenging these deaths, and set to work in a systematic manner to compass the murder of Kim. The private vengeance of Hong-tjyong-on fitted in well with his patriotic duty, and his scheme was favoured by the Korean king. About three years after Kim's flight, Hong made his way to Japan, bearing secret letters from the king outlawing Kim and his followers and authorising their capture or assassination. Hong's plan was to ingratiate himself with Kim as a supporter of his schemes, but his recent arrival direct from Korea without any credentials from the revolutionary party in that country rendered Kim suspicious of the would-be recruit. Unable to gain the access which he required to the person of his victim, Hong saw that he would have to adopt more elaborate means to effect his purpose. He went therefore to Europe, where he must have spent five or six years at least in acquiring a European education, European manners, and a perfect knowledge of European ways. He was courteous, refined, and intelligent, a great favourite in society (especially in religious circles), and made in particular many warm friends in France. Having thoroughly shaken off Korea, he thought he might now present himself in Japan in a character that would disarm all suspicion. Accordingly he made his way thither, and succeeded in attaching himself to Kim, talked progress and revolution, and thereby insinuated himself into the confidence of the arch-conspirator, becoming gradually master of his secret plots and schemes. The arrangements of the Japanese Government for the protection of Kim's person seem to have been so efficient that, in order to accomplish his purpose, Hong perceived that it was necessary to induce Kim to leave Japan. This seemed the most difficult part of his enterprise, and a far-fetched scheme had to be contrived in order to furnish Kim with a plausible reason for proceeding to China. Between the plots which Kim may have had in his mind and those which Hong for his own purposes suggested to him, it is not possible, neither is it necessary, to distinguish. Hong's own account of the matter was, that Kim had been concerting some movement on Korea from a Russian base, but was prevented from proceeding to Vladivostock by the vigilance of the Japanese Government. The agreement between the three Powers would not, however, be violated by his proceeding to Shanghai, where he would find the means of continuing his voyage to Vladivostock, for neither of the travellers apprehended any difficulty in eluding the surveillance of the Chinese officials and taking passage in a trading steamer to the Russian port.

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Kim eventually fell in with this proposal, and left Japan with a Japanese servant, accompanied by Hong. They arrived in Shanghai on the 27th of March 1894, repaired to a Japanese hotel, and reported themselves at the Japanese consulate. The following day Hong, having first put on Korean upper garments, murdered Kim, and fled, but was captured at Wusung by the foreign municipal police of Shanghai, and by them detained in custody until claimed by the Chinese authorities under instructions from Li Hung-chang. The news of the assassination was received by the Chinese Government with a sense of relief and "sombre acquiescence," but at the Korean Court with almost a frenzy of delight. The king gave a banquet in honour of the event, to which he invited all the foreign Ministers. The Chinese Government ordered a man-of-war to convey the murderer and the remains of the victim to Korea. The former was covered with honours, while the remains of Kim were treated with savage indecency and his family put to death.

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Thus did the assassin of 1884 expiate his crime exactly ten years later.

The issue of the plot of 1884 was not agreeable to the Japanese, who were particularly affronted by the fact that the Chinese were in a position to snatch the king out of their hands and to afford him military protection against all comers. But Japan was in no humour to relinquish her own policy in Korea, which was quite incompatible with the suzerain status of China, and with the very concrete form in which it had just been manifested. One of the leading statesmen of Japan, Count Inouye, was sent to Korea to investigate the whole affair, and inquire into the relative position of China and Japan in the peninsula. The result of his inquiries was a determination to follow up by orthodox diplomacy the disintegrating effects which the risings in 1882 and 1884 had no doubt been intended to subserve. China being in the throes of a war with France, the moment was particularly favourable for preferring demands upon her. An embassy was therefore despatched to Peking, under Count Ito, in March 1885. He counted much on the friendly offices of the British Minister, Sir Harry Parkes, in smoothing the way to amicable negotiations with China, but unhappily the Japanese ambassador arrived at Peking almost on the day of Sir Harry's death. After vain attempts to deal with the Tsungli-Yamèn the Japanese mission withdrew to Tientsin, where negotiations were entered into by Li Hung-chang, extending over several weeks. Count Ito's mission was successful in concluding a treaty by which China and Japan were put on a footing of equality in the peninsula so far as regards military protection. The troops of both countries were to be withdrawn, and neither party was to send a force in future without giving written notice to the other. This arrangement was a surrender in substance of China's suzerainty over Korea, though she retained the ceremonial form in full vigour for nine years after.

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III. THE PORT HAMILTON EPISODE, 1885-1887.

Sudden occupation of Korean harbour by Great Britain—Questioned by China, Japan, and Korea—Position condemned by naval authority—Abandoned on guarantee from China against occupation by other Powers.

"In view of potentialities" the British Government on April 14, 1885, sent instructions to Vice-

Admiral Dowell to occupy Port Hamilton, an island harbour on the coast of Korea. This high-handed proceeding was justified on the plea of necessity—the necessity, as explained by Lord Granville, of anticipating the "probable occupation of the island by another Power." Naturally the measure disturbed neighbouring States, as well as the Government of Korea itself. China and Japan asked for explanations, and an agreement with the former, as suzerain of Korea, was about to be signed for the temporary use of the harbour by Great Britain, when the Russian Minister at Peking interposed with an intimation that if China consented to the occupation of Port Hamilton by Great Britain, Russia would compensate herself by the seizure of some other point of the Korean littoral. The protest of the Korean Government thus became merged in negotiations with China, but was never withdrawn. [304]

While these *pour-parlers* were going on, the position of Port Hamilton was unequivocally condemned as a naval station by a succession of three admirals commanding the China Squadron; and as the immediate occasion of the occupation of the harbour had happily passed, there remained no ostensible reason for prolonging it. Before abandoning the island, however, the British Government hoped that some arrangement might be come to for an international guarantee of the integrity of Korea, which being already a bone of contention between certain Powers, and unable to defend its own independence, constituted a constant menace to the peace of the Far East. The proposal met with no favour from the Chinese Government, for the reason probably that it would have involved an organic change in its own relations with Korea. The next proposal came from the Korean Government itself, which suggested a *modus vivendi* by opening as treaty ports both Port Hamilton and Port Lazareff, which latter was the point Russia would have seized if she had seized anything. This idea was approved of by the British Government, but nothing came of it. Eventually the evacuation was agreed to on the assurance from China that neither Port Hamilton nor any other portion of Korean territory would in future be occupied by any other Power. This pledge China was enabled to give on the strength of an equivalent guarantee which she had received from Russia, that Power being then the only one considered as likely to cherish aggressive designs on the Korean peninsula. These engagements were exchanged in November 1886, eighteen months after the occupation, and the British flag was finally hauled down on the island on February 27, 1887. [305]

The net visible result of the incident was to confirm China in her suzerainty, since the negotiations were made with her and not with Korea, and to obtain a specific pledge from Russia that she would keep her hands off Korea "under any circumstances." It was argued seven years afterwards that Russia had broken her pledge by her interferences in Korean affairs, but in 1895 a new state of circumstances had been brought about. China in that year ceased to be the suzerain of Korea, and obligations which were valid under the old *régime* necessarily lapsed. A new page of history was turned, and Korea attained the status of a nominally independent kingdom.

IV. TIBET.

Lhasa visited by Babu Sarat Chandra Das—Proposed commercial expedition—Originated by Secretary of State—Envoy sent to Peking to obtain passport—Opposition organised by Chinese and Tibetans—Mission withdrawn.

The year 1885 witnessed the first act in the ill-advised policy—as to its method, not its object—of the Indian Government of opening commercial relations with Tibet. A learned Bengali pandit, versed in Tibetan, had made two successful visits to Lhasa, where he gained the friendship of the lamas, who invited him to come again. A fair prospect of opening commercial relations by gradually disarming prejudices and apprehension was thus presented. Having duly reported his experiences to the Government of India, the babu waited their pleasure as to further developments at Darjeeling, where he occupied the post of Government schoolmaster. An English civilian, making the acquaintance of the babu in that hot-weather retreat, conceived the idea of an official mission to Lhasa, in which the services of the babu might be utilised as guide and interpreter. The Indian Government was averse from the enterprise on economical if on no other grounds, but direct pressure being brought to bear on the India Office in London, the ambitious young statesman who then presided over its counsels is said to have espoused the proposal and overruled the reluctant Government of India. [306]

Of the organisation and procedure of the mission nothing very complimentary can be said. Instead of following the line of least resistance, of driving in the thin end of the wedge, in accordance with the commonplace maxims consecrated by all human experience, the reverse process was followed in every single particular. Sarat Chandra Das had shown the way, and the entry he had effected could have been gradually widened by himself and others of his own class until the obstacles to free commercial intercourse had been overcome. The experience of a hundred years had shown to the world the invincible prejudices of the Tibetan rulers against foreign visitors. The babu had in his own person conquered these prejudices by his mastery of Buddhistic lore, as well as by his gentleness and consummate tact; but the mission, which had its origin in the information he supplied, discarded his methods and proceeded on military lines. Its *personnel* included politicals and scientists, but no commercial agent, and as Mr Gundry has well said, "The Under Secretary of State, while stating that the object of the mission was to confer with the Chinese commissioners and the Lhasa Government as to the resumption of commercial relations between India and Tibet," added in Parliament that, "looking to the delicate nature of [307]

the mission, it had not been thought advisable to appoint a special commercial representative." An armed force of some 300 men sent on a "delicate mission" which, though essentially commercial, yet had nothing commercial in its composition! Could anything be conceived more certain to arouse the sleeping suspicions of the Tibetans? It was but repeating on a larger scale the deplorable fiasco of Colonel Browne's attempted march from Burma to China in 1875.

The first act in this little drama was performed in Peking when the envoy, Macaulay, arrived with his staff for the ostensible purpose of applying for a passport for Tibet. For such a purpose there was no need to have sent a special messenger to Peking at all, as a passport could have been much more easily obtained by the British Minister there and transmitted by post in the ordinary course of business. The passport could not, of course, be refused in plain terms by the Chinese Government, but the personal demand for it gave them the opportunity of cross-examining the intended envoy as to the objects of his proposed mission. It may well be believed, from the self-contradictory explanation of the mission tendered to the British Parliament, that the envoy in Peking failed to allay the suspicions of the Chinese Government. On the contrary, his presence intensified them exceedingly. The sole effect of the preliminary expedition to Peking was, in fact, to forewarn the Chinese Government, so that they, in concert with the rulers of Tibet, should be prepared to interpose obstacles to the advance of the mission, but in such a way as not openly to compromise the good faith of the Chinese Government. The journey of the envoy to Peking, therefore, sealed the fate of his own mission, and at the same time closed Tibet against more judicious advances in the future.

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The most interesting episode in connection with this abortive effort was the appearance of the Babu Sarat Chandra Das himself in the Chinese capital. By sheer force of intellect he succeeded in a few days in obtaining the confidence of the inner circle of the lamas there. Having been brought in contact with a certain Manchu official, the pandit showed very unobtrusively a familiarity with the more recondite tenets of Buddhism which captivated the Manchu, whose heart was set on improving his knowledge of the sacred mysteries.^[24] The babu could speak no Chinese, but it was not difficult among the thousands of lamas in Peking to find a competent Tibetan interpreter. The fame of the pandit spread rapidly among the ranks of the priesthood, whose chiefs competed for the honour of sitting at the feet of the Indian Gamaliel. In expounding the doctrines, while enjoying the hospitality, of different groups of lamas, the popularity of the pandit grew from day to day, until he was at length constrained to take up his quarters at the great Yellow Temple, outside the north wall of Peking, and live with the brethren. They invested him with the yellow robe and the other ecclesiastical insignia, and treated him altogether as one of the initiated. It required all his acumen to prevent his status as a Buddhist lama from clashing with his position as a subordinate of the Indian envoy, on whom he was in attendance. He had to pay frequent visits to the British Legation, where it would have been impossible for him to appear in his religious vestments without exciting inconvenient gossip, and perhaps incurring the disapproval of his superior officer. The custom of travelling in Peking in closed carts enabled the babu to play the double part of Jekyll and Hyde with perfect success. He would leave the Temple as a lama, drive to a friend's rooms in the city, where his Indian costume was kept ready, in which he proceeded in another cab and in another character to the British Legation, returning to reassume his yellow robes and then repair to the Temple.

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During the time when the envoy designate remained in Peking a very high personage arrived from Tibet, and it was on his conferences with the Chinese Court that the success of the intended mission depended. It would be presumptuous on the part of any foreigner to attempt to divine what passed between the delegate from the Grand Lama and the Chinese Ministers; but were it possible for any one to penetrate into those secret counsels, the babu was the man to do it. There is no doubt that he did. In fact, he had positive information that the Indian mission to Tibet would be stopped at the instance of the Chinese Government, and that the issue of the passport was an empty form. Such information would naturally be unwelcome to the envoy, and the sequel seems to show that the warning was disregarded. The expedition was organised, fully equipped, ready for a march into Tibet. Had it proceeded it is highly improbable that the babu would have accompanied it as interpreter, for he could not have exonerated himself from the imputation of bad faith towards his Tibetan hosts in acting as guide to an armed force into a country where he had been received and reinvited as a private guest.

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What would have been the consequence of the mission proceeding into Tibet it is, of course, impossible to say, but the circumstances of its recall were not conducive to satisfactory relations between China and Great Britain. Mistrusting the effectiveness of the Tibetan opposition to the Indian mission—for the force could very likely have made good its passage to Lhasa—the Chinese Government resorted to diplomatic means of stopping its advance. Its never-failing emergency man, the Inspector-General of Customs, was called upon, and he intervened with the British Government with such good effect that they sent orders to India to stop the Tibetan mission. Thus the Indian Government was a second time overruled: first, in being made to organise the mission against its will; and secondly, in being forced to recall it when its recall involved immeasurable loss of influence in future dealings with China. An attempt was made to cover the retreat in a cloud of verbiage by a convention signed at Peking in 1886, which, however, only made the case worse, in that it was a retrograde step, virtually cancelling the right of visiting Tibet, which had been conferred by the Chefoo convention of ten years before. The same treaty which embodied this renunciation, perhaps the weakest to which any British representative ever set his name, also fostered the illusions which have been so detrimental to the welfare of China, by promising a continuance of the tribute missions from Burma after that country had become an integral part of the Indian Empire.

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The fruits of this diplomatic surrender were not long in showing themselves, for it was soon followed by an invasion of British Sikkim from the Tibetan side. This aggression of the lamas was of necessity resisted by the Indian Government, and an unexpected opportunity was thus offered to them of settling the whole Tibetan question by the rapid march of a small force to Lhasa. There is good reason to believe that this solution of the difficulty was the one which commended itself to the practical statesmen and soldiers of India; but their action was paralysed by the orders of the Home Government, which continued to be ruled by influences which were neither military nor political nor practical. Discussions between the Indian Government and the Chinese *amban* or Resident at Lhasa, professing to speak for the Tibetan Lama Government, were protracted year after year, and seemed interminable. At last even the Chinese themselves grew weary of the comedy, and experienced in Tibet something of the difficulty which occasionally beset them in China—that is to say, they were unable to exorcise the demon they had invoked. They had stirred up the Tibetans to the point of obstructing the Macaulay mission, but seemed really to lose control of the force after it had been set in motion. After some years of futile talk the statesmen of China would perhaps have hailed with satisfaction the advance of a British force to Lhasa to cut the Gordian knot; but they dared not, of course, give such a hint as was conveyed to Captain Fournier, "Avancez donc,"^[25] and the Indian Government, not having the wit to divine it, had to submit to a long-drawn-out and permanent humiliation, that was in no wise mended by the Calcutta convention of 1890, which, professing only to settle the existing frontiers, did not even settle them.

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V. THE CRUISE OF THE SEVENTH PRINCE, 1886.

Character and position of Prince Ch'un—Had been misunderstood by foreigners while he was in seclusion—An amiable and progressive man—His visit to Port Arthur in 1886—Intercourse with many foreigners.

The spring of 1884 witnessed a ministerial crisis of the first order in Peking. For twenty-four years Prince Kung, uncle to the deceased emperor Tungchih, had held a position equivalent to Chancellor of the empire. To the outside world he was only known as Minister for Foreign Affairs and head of the Tsungli-Yamên. During the greater part of the time he had been at feud with the empress-regent, from whom his power was derived, but, being indispensable to her, he was tolerated for want of a competent successor. The troubles in Tongking caused an agitation in the capital, and the empress seized the opportunity to dismiss Prince Kung with most of his colleagues of the Yamên and introduce a fresh set. The eminent position of the prince, however, was one difficult to fill; but the substitution was effected by a kind of *coup d'état* by which the empress brought the younger brother of Prince Kung out of his retirement and made him virtually, as far as it was possible, her coadjutor in the Government. But the peculiar status of Prince Ch'un, as father to the reigning emperor, rendered him immune from responsibility, since in China the son could not place the father under discipline. For this reason the prince could not in his own name exercise any of the great functions of the State. He was therefore obliged to keep in the background, while the executive service was performed by his nominees. Thus in foreign affairs he was efficiently represented by the Grand Secretary Li Hung-chang, and by Prince Ch'ing, a junior member of the imperial family, who was made president of the Tsungli-Yamên, and holds the office to the present day.

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Whatever the true motives may have been for recasting the Tsungli-Yamên—and it would be hazardous for any foreigner to dogmatise about such matters—a great improvement was remarked in the efficiency of that body. Prince Ch'ing, though new to public affairs, acquitted himself like a gentleman, and gained the goodwill of all the foreign Legations by his laborious efforts to learn his work and to bring justice and reason as well as courtesy into the transaction of business. The circumstances of the time were also favourable to improvement; for being at war with one great Power, China was naturally most anxious to conciliate the others. While this amenable temper lasted, business was despatched by the Tsungli-Yamên with a celerity never before known, and good use was made of the opportunity to clear off legacies of arrears that had been accumulating in the foreign legations.

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The Seventh Prince, so long as he was in seclusion, had stood in the opinion of foreigners for everything that was fanatical, obstructive, and irreconcilable, the head of the war party, and so forth. Even Sir Rutherford Alcock, in an article on Chinese Statesmen in 1871, adopted this popular estimate, calling him "violently hostile, joining with Wo in all efforts to make the anti-foreign faction predominate."

The announcement of Prince Ch'un, therefore, as the successor of Prince Kung not unnaturally aroused apprehension of a reactionary policy. His first public act, however, in so far as it was his, dispelled the misconception under which foreigners had been labouring for many years: it was to conclude a peace with France in the face of a rabid opposition. This misconception of Prince Ch'un's character and policy is only an example of how vain it is for foreigners to attempt to sound the currents of Chinese politics, more especially where palace factions are concerned.

The advent of the Seventh Prince having removed all friction between the empress-regent and the Government, it was a signal for tentative reforms and what foreigners call progress. Li Hung-chang had to a considerable extent imbued the Court with his own ideas. He assured them there was no danger in adopting foreign methods and foreign manners,—on the contrary, that to do so was the only means of safety to the empire. Within a few months of his taking the reins, the

Prince established a precedent which amounted to a small revolution in its way. He began to transact business through his agents with foreigners in the capital itself, which had been up to that time strictly preserved from all contamination of foreign trade. The two "stores" which existed were not traders by right, but were under the special protection of certain foreign Ministers, who had represented to the Government the necessity of such agencies for the supply of necessaries for the use of their Legations. This was followed in course of time by the introduction of novelties in the palace, such as electric light, toy railways and steam launches in the imperial pleasure-grounds. The telegraph wire itself was introduced into the city during the summer of 1884, it having been previously jealously kept at a distance of thirteen miles, from superstitious fears concerning the sinister influence which the electric wire might exert over the fortunes of the capital. However real such fears may be in the minds of the Chinese, and however convenient they may be as a defence against proposals from without, they invariably yield to the pressure of necessity. While the terminus of the telegraph line was at Tungchow, the inconvenience of having to send mounted messengers thirteen miles to despatch and receive messages was for some time felt almost entirely by the foreign Legations; but when the war crisis with France arose, and the Chinese Government itself was sending urgent messages requiring immediate answers to the southern provinces and to Europe, the absurdity of losing more time between the Tsungli-Yamên and the telegraph station than was occupied by the transmission of the message and its reply from Europe became so striking, that the order was given to bring the telegraph into the city. No more was heard of geomantic difficulties.

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The most important object, however, which Li Hung-chang sought to gain through the activity of the Seventh Prince, was so to interest his Highness in the scheme of national defence, which had been growing under the viceroy's initiative, that this department of the work of Government should be transformed from a provincial to an imperial concern. With this end in view an expedition on salt water was arranged for the Prince; and insignificant as the feat must appear in Western eyes, yet for a Manchu prince, who had never seen the sea, to be allowed to trust himself on the treacherous element at all, or on such a strange monster as a steamer, must be accepted as a decided proof that the old order was changing, giving place to the new. The prince was undoubtedly nervous, not knowing what should befall him on his expedition.

The first ordeal through which he had to pass was that of personal contact with foreigners, of whom he had perhaps never seen one in Peking. His introduction was carefully organised by Li Hung-chang, and it was at Tientsin that the prince first met with foreign officials, who waited upon him at separate audiences. The foreigners were as much charmed with his Highness as he expressed himself to have been with them, so that he embarked on his cruise free from anxiety. His attendants, however,—on whom and on Li Hung-chang all the responsibility of course rested,—continued to feel anxious during their passage across the Gulf. This feeling became for a moment acute when, on landing at Port Arthur, they were met by a British admiral and staff with a guard of honour. It is an actual fact that the sight of strange armed men waiting for the prince, working on oriental traditions, did suggest a trap, for the idea of capture by treachery is never wholly absent from the Chinese mind. The Government had taken the wise precaution of attaching to the prince an experienced and capable foreigner in whom he reposed perfect confidence, and Mr Detring explained foreign customs and forms of courtesy to the prince and his suite in a way which completely reassured them. Among all the dignitaries in the prince's suite, however, there was not one capable of taking in the entirely novel ideas which were presented to them. One man only, of quite subordinate rank—whether a Manchu or a Chinese by birth is unknown to the writer—a confidential agent of the Seventh Prince in business matters, seized the entire programme of foreign etiquette the moment it was explained to him, and through him the whole ceremony passed smoothly and agreeably to all parties. The name of this official was Chang Yi, who has since been taking a leading part in mining, railway, and other progressive enterprises in China.

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On his return to Peking Prince Ch'un in a memorial to the Throne reported fully the incidents of his cruise to the gulf ports. Not long after a naval board was established in Peking, with the prince at its head. As a step in the direction of centralising the naval authority, which included also the direction of the land defences, the establishment of a Board of Admiralty in the capital was certainly a progressive one; but as its members possessed neither knowledge nor experience of naval or military affairs its authority was much attenuated, almost every question having to be referred back to Li Hung-chang in Tientsin. Any chance that might have existed of Prince Ch'un himself inspiring the new Board and bringing it up to a state of efficiency was lost through his Highness falling into ill-health, from which he never recovered, but after a lingering illness died in 1890.

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VI. THE EMPEROR ASSUMES THE GOVERNMENT, 1889.

The Emperor Kwanghsu comes of age in 1889—Audience of foreign Ministers arranged—Derogatory conditions—Second audience refused by Ministers—Accepted by Austrian and British envoys.

In 1889 his Majesty Kwanghsu attained his majority and married. But his coming of age was a somewhat gradual process, with intervals between each step, as if the empress-regent, who alone determined the time and the seasons, were either mistrustful of the capacity of her nephew or reluctant to lay down the reins of authority. The emperor, kept in leading-strings, was allowed to assume some of the functions of an autocrat, but not all. This slow unfolding of the imperial

blossom had this result among others, that it procured a welcome respite from the bitter ordeal of granting an audience to the representatives of foreign States. It was well understood that the foreigners had for sixteen years been looking forward to the emperor's assumption of power as to the consummation of their diplomatic function, and that as soon as a decent interval had been allowed to the young monarch after his majority, the subject would become pressing.

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It had been discussed in whispers for nearly two years, when, to the astonishment of everybody, including even the members of the Tsungli-Yamên themselves, an imperial decree was issued in December 1890 in kindly terms ordering preparations to be made to receive the foreign Ministers after the Chinese New Year—that is, in the February following. Since nobody owned to having been in the secret, the act was set down to the emperor's gracious initiative, and was hailed with enthusiasm as the opening of a new era. The Great Wall had at last fallen; the pretensions to superiority for which the Chinese had made such great sacrifices were suddenly abandoned, and henceforth equality with foreign nations was to be the basis of their diplomatic intercourse.

The hope was shortlived, for as soon as the details of the imperial reception came to be arranged with the Tsungli-Yamên all the old difficulties appeared in an aggravated form. The foreign ministers, having pondered the question for eighteen years, had unanimously resolved that they would not accept an audience in the building used for the reception of tributary princes, where the ceremony of 1873 had taken place, but only in the imperial palace, or not at all. The whole value of the audience was the acknowledgment it signified of international equality. The idea that it would facilitate business must have been long before abandoned. The form, therefore, was everything, and the Chinese Ministers were resolved that the "tributary" form should be adhered to. They became urgent in their appeals to the reasonableness of the foreign Ministers. They had gone to expense in renovating the hall, Tz-kwang-ko; they had no other place available; the imperial decree must be obeyed, and this admitted of no postponement.

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Yielding to these arguments, the foreign Ministers agreed to a compromise. They would, for this time only, repair to the Tz-kwang-ko, but never again. The ceremony took place therefore on 5th March 1891. There were two receptions—first an audience to the various foreign Ministers separately, next a general reception of the whole of them. The diplomatic body soon felt the consequences of their retrograde step, for when they came to discuss details of the audience of the following year, the Chinese interposed a simple *non possumus* to every demand which implied the acknowledgment of equality. A reception within the palace without the *kotow* could not even be discussed. No accommodation between the opposing views being possible, there was no audience in 1892. The diplomatic body were solidly united in maintaining the dignity of their respective countries, and by ceasing to solicit, they left the onus of discovering a solution of the question on the Chinese themselves. The audience was of no practical value to the foreigners, while the withholding of it placed the Chinese so much in the wrong that they might safely have been left to their own devices.

Before, however, the pressure to extricate themselves and their sovereign from an untenable position had become too severe, a diversion in their favour was created by the flying visit of an Austrian envoy, who seemed ready to present his credentials on any terms whatever, so that the formalities were quickly got over, and he enabled to conclude his mission. The Chinese availed themselves of this unexpected opportunity, and the emperor granted an audience to M. Biegeleben in another hall or pavilion outside the palace, which thenceforth became known locally as the Palais Biegeleben.

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At the end of 1892, not long after the Biegeleben incident, a new British Minister arrived in Peking. Not apparently considering himself bound by the compact to which his predecessor was a party, he, without the knowledge of his diplomatic colleagues, accepted an audience on the same derogatory terms as the Austrian envoy had done, and the reactionary policy of the Chinese thus enjoyed a complete, if temporary, triumph. This proceeding of the British Minister was deeply resented by the diplomatic body, most of all by the Russian Minister, Count Cassini, himself a new arrival, and the circumstance did not tend to smooth the subsequent intercourse between the parties.

VII. THE VISIT OF THE CZAREVITCH, 1891.

Worthy reception in Peking impossible—Attempted substitution of provincial reception—Czarevitch visits only the Russian communities in China.

Closely connected in point of time, and possibly by a more vital link, with the imperial audience was the voyage of the Czarevitch to India, China, and Japan in 1890-91. There was no precedent in China for the reception of the member of any foreign royal family. In the days before the first audience the Duke of Edinburgh, while in command of the *Galatea*, visited Peking, but strictly *incognito*, no visits being exchanged with any Chinese. But times had changed considerably in the twenty years that had since elapsed, and with an emperor of full age on the throne things that were winked at during his minority could no longer be so lightly treated. The Chinese Government were, in fact, perfectly conscious of the responsibility which lay upon them to show courtesy to so distinguished a visitor as the heir to the throne of Russia, and they took timely measures for his reception.

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The position of the audience question convinced the Ministers that it would be impossible to receive him worthily in Peking, since to do so would be to admit equality with foreign States. The first care of the Chinese, therefore, was to induce his Imperial Highness to stay away from the capital. The Russian Government were told that Li Hung-chang, representing the Chinese Emperor, would meet the Czarevitch at Chefoo, and that his reception by other Governors of provinces would be deemed equivalent to one by the emperor in person. The Russian Government fell into the trap, and the programme of provincial receptions would have been carried out but for the eccentricity of Chang Chih-tung, the governor-general of the Hu provinces on the Yangtze. He, with the other provincials, had received the instructions about the reception of the Czarevitch, but he alone treated the order with contempt, not even deigning to answer it or to explain his reason. The order did not emanate from Peking, and he would not accept a mandate from an equal. Evidently the emperor had no hand in drawing up the programme, and this Chang had the best means of knowing, for he had a brother in the Inner Council. This action of a high authority throws full light on the difference between an imperial and a provincial transaction, as the Chinese themselves regard it. [323]

In keeping with this independent attitude of Chang was the rudeness with which he received the officer deputed by the Russian admiral to arrange details of the reception at Wuchang. In this way the intended imposture was exposed. But if the Russian Government had been too easily led into a false position, it must be admitted they extricated themselves cleverly, by simply demanding a yellow chair for the Czarevitch, a colour reserved exclusively for the emperor. As this could not be conceded the official ceremonies fell through, and the Czarevitch contented himself with visiting the Russian communities at the Chinese ports. He then proceeded to Japan, where a brilliant reception awaited him; and from Japan to Vladivostock, where he turned the first sod of the Trans-Siberian Railway, 19th May 1891.



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CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TONGKING QUARREL.

Rapid advance of French towards China proper—The Black Flags—Discussions between France and China—Attempted negotiations—Conquest of Tongking decided upon—Chinese feared attack on Canton—City defenceless—Negotiation with France recommended—Captain Fournier concludes convention with Li Hung-chang in Tientsin—Strong opposition in the capital—Collision between forces in Tongking—French make war on China—Peace concluded through customs agency, April 1885—The Li-Fournier convention ratified.

The progress of the French in the annexation of Cochin China, Annam, and Tongking was phenomenally rapid. These aggressions on her tributary States were far from agreeable to China, but no effective means of resistance was proposed. The Chinese policy, wrote Sir R. Alcock, [26] "has been one of drift, and letting things slide into irretrievable confusion and disaster for want of courage and decisive action at the right time. Between the Dupuis and Garnier expeditions, in which a handful of men were seizing towns, storming citadels, and terrorising the Annamite mandarins and king into virtual submission to any terms dictated to them, and Captain Rivière's very similar proceedings in 1883, there was abundant time and opportunity for China either to fight or to negotiate with effect, but she did neither." [325]

When, however, the advance of the French brought them within measurable distance of the southern provinces of China proper, a more serious view of the invasion was forced upon the Government. A body of irregular troops, called the Black Flags, for some time stood in the way of the French, who designated them "pirates." The status of these Black Flags was, indeed, somewhat ambiguous, as they had been virtually outlawed by the Chinese. But when it was seen that they were harassing the French, the provincial authorities recognised that they were fighting the battle of China and of her tributary. The Annamese Government had, in the first instance, invited the assistance of the Black Flags, and the Chinese Government officially encouraged them, while hoping to evade direct responsibility for doing so. The French had made the useless mistake of wounding China in a tender spot by destroying the seal granted to the Annamese sovereign by the emperor, and it was probably this insult rather than the territorial seizures which induced China to reinforce the Black Flags by a body of imperial troops, and to lay down distinctly the line which she would consider herself bound to defend.

The annexation of Annam became the subject of protracted discussions between France and China. The diplomacy of the Marquis Tsêng in Paris, and of Li Hung-chang in China—a convention had actually been concluded between the latter and the French Minister, Bourrée—failed to arrest the progress of France, and the question between the two countries reached a

burning point after the capture by the French of Sontay and Bacninh in the spring of 1884.

The Chinese envoy had declared to M. Ferry that a French advance on these places would be regarded by his Government as a *casus belli*. Seeing, however, that no action was taken by China after their actual capture, the French took fresh courage, and their programme of conquest became so much expanded that what had been the dream of a few became the definitive policy of the Republic. "The conquest of Tongking had been decided upon in principle," wrote Admiral Jaurèguiberry to Captain Rivière at the time when M. de Freycinet was declaring that there should be no policy of aggression. The taking of the two citadels sealed the policy of the admiral and falsified that of the Foreign Minister. From that point may be dated the important position which France has since assumed in claiming to direct, in conjunction with Russia, the destinies of the Chinese Empire.

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On the fall of the two cities the Chinese officials of the southern provinces were filled with consternation. They feared that the successes of the French would encourage them, if not to invade China, at least to force a settlement with her on their own terms. They had before them the brochure of Captain Rivière, commander of the French forces in Tongking, in which he advocated a quarrel with China as a preliminary to the seizure of the three southern provinces, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, and Yunnan. An obvious step towards the execution of such a design would be an attack on the provincial capital, Canton, an event which was not only anticipated by the authorities, but was thought feasible, and even probable, by disinterested onlookers. How little prepared were the Chinese to resist such an attack will be best understood by the measures they took to avert it.

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An officer of the Chinese customs service, Mr G. Detring, returning from furlough, brought with him the details of the Marquis Tsêng's abortive negotiations in Paris. He arrived in China immediately after the capture of the two strongholds of Sontay and Bacninh. In proceeding from Hongkong to take up his official post at Canton he accepted a passage in the French *aviso* Volta, which conveyed Rear-Admiral Lespès to the latter city. She was commanded by Commandant Fournier, with whom Mr Detring had been some years before on terms of intimacy in the north of China. The principal topic discussed on the passage was naturally Tongking, and, judging from subsequent developments, it is reasonable to suppose that the seeds of the settlement eventually concluded between China and France were sown during that short but interesting voyage. When Mr Detring reported himself to the provincial authorities they evinced the greatest anxiety as to what they conceived to be the threatening attitude of the French against Canton. Asked if their river defences were in a position to resist attack, they frankly avowed that they were not; but yet, being personally responsible for the defence, they dared not confess the true state of affairs to the Imperial Government. The viceroy of Canton and the governor of Yunnan were already under censure, and the military commanders in Tongking were even threatened with decapitation "pour encourager les autres." The Canton authorities were thus, in fact, in the dilemma in which Chinese provincial officials have so frequently found themselves in dealing with foreign exigencies—responsible yet helpless. Since they were avowedly incapable of resistance, the viceroy and governor were advised at once to open negotiations with the French, and, as a first step, to report the actual position frankly to the Central Government,—in other words, to Li Hung-chang, who in this, as in all other crises, had to bear the burden of every initiative. Having had experience of the capacity of Mr Detring, first in the negotiating of the Chefoo convention, and subsequently during several years of official intercourse at Tientsin, Li Hung-chang moved the Central Government to summon the Canton commissioner of customs to Tientsin for consultation.

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The way being thus partially opened to negotiation, Rear-Admiral Lespès held himself in readiness to proceed to Tientsin in response to any invitation that might be conveyed to him. Captain Fournier was sent on in advance to the rendezvous at Chefoo, where he was to remain until the real views of the Chinese Government respecting a settlement of the Tongking dispute had been ascertained. The French having set their hearts on extorting a large indemnity, it was emphatically declared to them that China would never pay one farthing. Any negotiation, therefore, would be futile unless this question was first eliminated. Having paved the way with Li Hung-chang, Mr Detring next proceeded to Chefoo to invite Captain Fournier to Tientsin. From previous good relations he was *persona grata* with Li, and on that account was thought a not unfit agent with whom to discuss preliminaries in anticipation of the arrival of his admiral. But that there should be no mistake about the indemnity, Captain Fournier was once more told that unless it were dropped it would be useless his proceeding to Tientsin. His doing so, therefore, was a tacit withdrawal of that important item in the French demands. Both parties being equally desirous of a settlement, all official technical difficulties were promptly overcome, and Captain Fournier, from a mere herald of the French admiral, was by telegraphic instructions from Paris at once promoted to the rank of plenipotentiary for France, and this notwithstanding that there was an accredited representative of the Republic eighty miles off in Peking. The two negotiators, in short, fell into each other's arms, and the convention of May 11, 1884, was the result.

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The peace so suddenly and irregularly patched up was not, however, destined to endure. Li Hung-chang, knowing better than any of his peers the risks of a war with France, had stretched his authority to the uttermost in concluding a treaty which practically ceded Annam and Tongking to that Power. For though in this as in all his other acts he carried with him the approval of the empress-dowager, he knew that he had to brave the ferocious opposition of the ignorant fanatics of the capital, which he himself described as the "howling of dogs." The moment the announcement was made, indeed, the furies were let loose upon him, and he had practically

no support but that of the empress-dowager; for the Tsungli-Yamên, so far as they were not opposed to the treaty, were invertebrate. It is necessary to bear in mind this critical position of Li Hung-chang in order to understand the series of blunders, misunderstandings, recriminations, and actual war which ensued.

After the ratification of the treaty, arrangements had to be made for the withdrawal of the Chinese forces from the territory which had been ceded to France. Captain Fournier, in an interview with Li Hung-chang, presented a memorandum fixing the dates on which the troops were to evacuate the several positions specified. A long discussion appears to have taken place, in which it is not difficult, from the circumstances above referred to, to divine what the viceroy's attitude must have been. He wished to avoid the invidious responsibility of asking the Central Government to order the withdrawal of the troops from Langson, as to do so would obviously add fuel to the fire of those powerful functionaries who were clamouring for the repudiation of the treaty, and for the negotiator's head. In vain endeavouring to obtain from Fournier an indefinite delay in carrying out the stipulation for the retirement of the Chinese troops, Li perhaps trusted that the French commanders in Tongking would themselves cut the knot by marching forward with an adequate force and brushing away the Chinese troops opposing them. The accomplished fact would then have settled everything.

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It has been said that the clever interpreter, instead of translating all the viceroy's arguments and explaining his difficulties, summed the whole up to Captain Fournier in two words, "Avancez donc"—advice which would no doubt have been sufficient if only the French military commander, Colonel Dugenne, had marched with a reasonable force, or even if he had carried with him a competent interpreter, through whom he might have communicated with the Chinese commander. The latter officer, however, when called upon to evacuate the post, pleaded that he had received no instructions to that effect, and asked for time to communicate with Peking. The letter to the French commander containing these reasonable pleas for delay was either wrongly translated or left untranslated for months. In the meantime Colonel Dugenne advanced with a small party, and was forced to retreat with loss, for which he was not unjustly recalled by his own authorities; and thereupon ensued the Franco-Chinese war.

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This was not, however, the only *contretemps* in connection with this lamentable outbreak. The Chinese commander had actually telegraphed to Li Hung-chang for instructions; but, still unwilling to face the responsibility, the latter left the reply to his council, among whom there happened to be for the moment his evil genius, Chang Pei-lun, a fire-eating member of the Tsungli-Yamên, who was on his way to take up the post of governor of Fukien province and Imperial Commissioner of the Foochow arsenal.

Laudable efforts were made to repair the mischief, and in the conferences which followed in Paris peace was more than once all but assured; but owing to a series of accidents and misunderstandings, in which the authorities at Peking, the French representative there, the French commanders on the Chinese coast, and the telegraph were all implicated, the die was cast in August 1884, and the war was continued till the following April.

For reasons of their own the French Government were averse to calling the hostilities "war," preferring reprisals and "intelligent destruction." By whatever name it may be called, the French did not distinguish themselves greatly in the conduct of the operations. Their only feat of arms was the destruction, at their anchorage in the river Min, of the Chinese ships belonging to the Foochow squadron, and of the arsenal, which, as Li Hung-chang bitterly reflected, had been erected by "French genius." Admiral Courbet found his destructive work easy, having entered the river and taken up a position in the rear of the batteries during time of peace. The subsequent operations in Formosa were without result; and the French Government refused permission to Admiral Courbet to attack Port Arthur, on the non-military ground of wishing to save the prestige of "notre ami Li Hung-chang." So far as the naval operations were concerned, even when most successful in intelligent destruction, they were quite ineffective towards ending the war until the method which has never failed to bring the Chinese Government to terms was resorted to—the stoppage of the grain-supply to the capital. This was accomplished by a patrol of the coast for the purpose of intercepting vessels carrying rice to Tientsin. The work performed during the winter and spring of 1885 by the French cruisers, in keeping the sea without any base and performing their patrol duties in all weathers, excited the admiration of seamen. It should be mentioned that they were precluded from acting offensively against the Yangtze by tacit understanding with Great Britain and other Powers.

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If the breach of the peace between France and China was a historical curiosity, the eventual settlement of the dispute resembled a dramatic extravaganza. The final incident of the war in Tongking was the defeat of the French, followed by a panic, caused apparently by General Négrier being wounded. The force then made a disorderly retreat before imaginary pursuers. In the meantime the empress-dowager had given positive orders that peace should be made on any terms. Both parties had thus come round to the *status quo ante bellum*—that is to say, they were both equally urgent to obtain peace, as they had been in May 1884. The agent in bringing this about was Sir Robert Hart; and it was effected, as great things usually are, by the adroit use of very simple means. During the blockade of Formosa a small Chinese lighthouse tender was captured by the French admiral and detained. As she was essentially non-combatant, and was serving the interests of humanity in supplying the numerous lighthouses on the coast of China for the benefit of the commerce of all nations, Sir Robert Hart instructed his very capable London agent, Mr Duncan Campbell, to go to Paris and represent the case to the French Ministers, with a view to obtaining the release of so useful and harmless a vessel. In this manner the door was

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opened to the larger negotiation. Mr Campbell executed his delicate mission with so much tact, that in the amicable conversations which ensued between him and certain French officials the idea of putting an end to a war of which both parties were tired, and which, moreover, seemed objectless, was ventilated; and in a few days authority was telegraphed from Peking to Mr Campbell to sign a protocol.

This was done before the news of the French reverse at Langson reached Paris. After such a military success M. Jules Ferry could not imagine that the Chinese Government would adhere to the terms of the protocol, and therefore he kept the whole negotiation secret from the Chambers. [334] In the meanwhile the mishap to the French troops, being greatly exaggerated, excited such intense feeling in France that M. Ferry, *le Tonkinois*, was obliged to resign, with the treaty which might have saved him in his pocket. As for the empress-dowager, she recked nothing of the success of her brave troops on the outskirts of the empire, but thought only of the enormous expense of the war, which had been unpleasantly brought home to her, and of matters affecting her own convenience. She therefore had no thought of going back on the treaty, but was even more urgent than before to have it promptly signed and ratified. The honours of the peace thus fell in a few days to M. Ferry's successor.

And what was the outcome of a year's fighting which cost China 100,000,000 taels and France some proportionate amount? A simple reaffirmation of the Li-Fournier convention of May 1884! The convention itself was short and simple—one clause only exciting much interest during the negotiations, and that provoked a hot discussion, not on the substance, but on the verbal form. It was a stipulation by which the two contracting parties consciously meant different things, and each fought hard for a phrase sufficiently subtle to allow each to interpret it in his own way when the time came for the fulfilment of the treaty provisions. The French were most desirous of binding the Chinese to employ French industries in all their new undertakings. China was equally resolute in avoiding any such obligation. In the end each was satisfied that he could read the treaty clause in his own favour. But the final victory in the struggle would go to the side that was [335] most persistent in forcing its meaning into practice. The French Ministry had announced to the Chambers a great victory for French manufacturing industries, which were represented as having by it obtained a monopoly in China. The text of the treaty, even in the French version, did not, indeed, bear this out; but the French had the *primâ facie* argument on their side, that the introduction of a clause in a treaty referring to the Chinese patronage of French industries, however worded, must have meant something more than merely to register the common fact that China was at liberty to deal with whom she pleased. In the end a compromise was effected by China's giving to a French syndicate the contract for excavating the basin and dock at Port Arthur and certain orders for material, among which was a famous military balloon, wonderfully symbolic of the whole proceeding.



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CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FRENCH PROTECTORATE OF CHRISTIANS.

Alliance with Church the corner-stone of French conquest—Persistence of French ambitions in the Far East—Protectorate of native Christians—Its abuse by the propaganda—Forcible erection of cathedrals in Peking—Imperial family aggrieved thereby—Negotiations for removal of church from palace grounds—Mr Dunn's mission to Rome—Vatican to send a nuncio—French Government vetos—French minister vetos transfer of cathedral—Unless transaction placed in his hands.

The claim of France to protect Christians against the native authorities in the Far East constitutes the basis and the origin of her present political position in those countries. The propagation of the faith was, indeed, a recognised element in the adventures of other countries besides France; but she has, since the eclipse of Portugal and Spain, enjoyed the distinction of a working alliance with the Church in furthering the foreign domination of both. "Church and State, linked in alliance close and potential, played faithfully into each other's hands," says Parkman ('Jesuits in North America'). In the reign of Louis XIV. the kingdom of Siam was the object of their joint attention. A missionary bishop persuaded the most Christian king that to establish the Church in Siam and convert king and country to the Catholic faith would open an effectual door for the extension of French commerce. A century later another bishop persuaded another Louis to interfere in the affairs of Annam, and only the events of 1789 cut short an expedition that was being prepared of politico-ecclesiastical propagandism. Napoleon III. took up the cause, and actually effected the conquest of Cochin China; and Gambetta was so enthusiastic [337]

on the subject that, while persecuting the Catholics in France, he was ready to expend the forces of the Republic in protecting them in distant countries.

There is here, therefore, irrespective of persons or forms of government, an unbroken tradition, which furnishes a key to the successive operations of France in the Far East. Thus when she resolved to join England in hostilities against China in 1857 a pretext was ready to hand in the murder of a Catholic priest in the interior of the country, his presence there being a defiance of the laws of the empire. There has been flux and reflux in French policy, but no change in its direction; and though prudence has from time to time set limits to its full expression, the claim to a special representation of Chinese Christians has been consistently pursued as a cardinal object of the French military, naval, and diplomatic forces in the Far East.

The treaties of 1858 for the first time authorised travelling into the interior, and placed French subjects, whether missionary or not, who availed themselves of the permission, under the protection of their own country. But ever since the convention of Peking in 1860 it has been sought by indirect and unobtrusive means to assume the protectorate over native Christians as well. The interpolated clause in the Chinese, which was no part of the authentic French version of the convention, lent a certain colour to the pretension by seeming to recognise communities of Chinese Christians as legal units and fit subjects of international agreement between China and France. Nevertheless, "French interference between the Chinese authorities and the subjects of the empire of China has never had any treaty warrant or justification by the law of nations," wrote Sir Rutherford Alcock in the 'Nineteenth Century,' November 1886; and he added, "China has the remedy in her own hands, to a certain extent, by refusing to admit the pretension." The Chinese Government had long been alive to the danger, as its elaborate appeal to the reason of the Powers in 1871 amply testified, but its eyes were opened still wider by the lesson of the Tongking war. A disposition was thereafter evinced to withstand the claim of the French, and the action of Germany afforded sufficient support to the Chinese position, had the Government only had the courage and perspicacity to lean upon it. For in the Catholic propaganda were missionaries of German origin, who were not permitted to divest themselves of their nationality, but were made to apply for their passports into the interior not to the French, but the German, Legation in Peking. Had Italy and Spain been equally independent, the question of the French, or any other protectorate, could scarcely have been entertained without introducing the element of separate foreign nationalism into the constitution of the Christian communities in China, which would not, perhaps, have been agreeable to the views of the Catholic propagandists, for they naturally aspired to maintain their independence as a compact ecclesiastical organisation.

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The dread of the French protectorate was much accentuated by the enforced restitution of ancient buildings, the most conspicuous examples of which occurred in the city of Peking itself, and even within the area of the imperial palace. The sites of three ancient churches being claimed by the French Minister, the emperor's Government was compelled to violate its sense of justice by evicting the existing owners. The original building of one of the three was found practically intact, though hidden by the houses built round and against its walls. These of course had to be cleared away, regardless of the rights of their occupants. The interior fittings and decorations of the church had disappeared, but, strange to say, much of the wood carving and other ornaments were gradually recovered from the old-curiosity shops, where the parts not destroyed had, by the instinct of the Wardour Street craft, been preserved, begrimed with the dust of a hundred years and hopelessly unsaleable. By patiently collecting these disjointed fragments and piecing them together like a Chinese puzzle, the Fathers were able gradually to restore the church to something like its original state, so that it became itself an interesting relic of the golden age of the Jesuits in Peking.

The other two churches had been demolished, and the sites converted to secular uses, requiring some ingenuity to identify. When these sites were, under the new dispensation, cleared of superincumbent buildings, churches were erected as much exceeding the original as the glory of the Jewish temple, rebuilt after the Captivity, excelled that of the former house. The restrictions imposed by the Government on the style of the buildings, the last vestige of power which they dared assert, bore lightly on the astute constructors of the new churches. In deference to a common Chinese objection, perhaps partly superstitious, to lofty structures overlooking them, a limit was set to the height of the new buildings. But remonstrances after completion were easily disposed of by the pious Fathers inviting the objectors to go and measure the towers! The Chinese seem to have the same constitutional dislike of a demonstration that they have to a straight line or a right angle, and a challenge like this never failed to put them to silence. As to their neglect to exercise their right of supervision during construction, the shortest way to characterise it is merely to say it was Chinese. The same kind of negligence also allowed roofs of cathedrals, not in the capital alone, but in distant provinces, to be covered with yellow tiles, a colour reserved exclusively for imperial use. It is true the process was disguised, for the benefit of those who chose to be blind, by the tiles being whitewashed before being sent aloft, leaving to the slow action of the weather the gradual revelation of the imperial colour, which might then, indeed, be represented as the act of Heaven. Nothing is too transparent to deceive those who are willing to be deceived.

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**PEI-T'ANG CATHEDRAL IN PEKING, PURCHASED BY
CHINESE GOVERNMENT.**

The cathedral around which the greatest interest centred, however, was the one which was erected within the palace grounds. The site had been granted by the great Emperor Kanghsi, the most imperial of the Manchu line, to the learned fathers who cured his fever by administering Jesuits' bark, then a new discovery, and whom he reckoned on attaching to his house by the favours bestowed on them. The new building was presumably erected on or near the site of the old, against the most urgent protests of the Court. Every inducement was offered to the French—larger and better sites, perhaps other compensations as well—if they would forego their demand for the resumption of the ground; but the French Government being set upon marking its ascendancy by a permanent sign, compelled the erection of the Pei-t'ang Cathedral on the spot indicated. The Lazarists, who had succeeded to the Jesuits in North China, had a kindly bishop at their head, who conceded much in the structure of the new building to soothe the feelings of the imperial family. Nevertheless, stunted as they were, from the point of view of architectural symmetry, the double towers of the cathedral were visible from the palace, and the two belfries commanded a view over a large part of the precincts. The building was therefore an eyesore to the inmates for twenty years, on the common ground on which it would have been offensive even to a provincial population, but still more as a staring monument of the deepest humiliation the dynasty had endured.^[27] The empress-dowager bore the grievance, but not with resignation, for soon after the affairs of the empire assumed a settled aspect she urged her Ministers to find a way to get rid of the obnoxious building.

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Monseigneur Delaplace had, in his former diocese of Chêkiang, rendered good service to the Government in opposing the rebels, for which he was granted high Chinese rank. Being dissatisfied with the action of France after the Tientsin massacre of 1870, he extricated his mission from the control of the French Legation in Peking, and from that date till his death in 1882 conducted its affairs in direct communication with the Tsungli-Yamên. Fully recognising how hateful his cathedral was to the Chinese, he co-operated with Prince Kung and Wênsiang in their efforts to remove it, and in 1874 he actually concluded an agreement with them to that effect. But the contract was vetoed by the French Government. The sore was thus reopened and continued to fester until 1881, when there was so much excitement in the capital that the Church and mission were thought to be in great danger. During the Tongking troubles the question of the cathedral was allowed to rest, but no sooner was peace assured than the Court again became restless, and with renewed urgency sought a remedy for its grievance.

The negotiations, which proved successful, were entered upon in an irregular manner, such as has characterised so many of the Chinese official acts. An Englishman in Peking, who had had business dealings with the Government, was asked one day by the confidential factotum of Prince Ch'un whether he could render assistance in the matter of the Pei-t'ang. The case was explained at length, and the foreigner, not being then aware of the negotiations of 1874, suggested, as the most obvious course, trying to make an arrangement with the Lazarist mission. The Manchu shook his head, to signify the futility of that proceeding. The enterprise thus seemed desperate, unless the Imperial Government should exercise its sovereign right of expropriation,—much too drastic a measure for any Chinese Government to attempt.

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One hope only seemed to remain, a direct appeal to the Vatican. This led to a long conversation on the Papacy, and the Manchu official,^[28] being a pious and even a learned Buddhist, became intensely interested in hearing much that was new to him respecting the position and prerogatives of the European Dalai Lama. Nor did the "great Western Saint," whose vicegerent the Pope claims to be, fail to evoke the deep reverence of both the Manchu and the Chinese who were present, so that one might be almost justified in appropriating words uttered on a different

occasion,—they were "not very far from the kingdom" ruled by "the Western Saint."

But the interesting question was, How was the Vatican to be approached? By a qualified secret agent intrusted with the full confidence of the Chinese Court. The mission would be by no means easy, for should its object become known, it would be thwarted in advance from mere jealousy, if from no other motive, by Lazarist and perhaps other Catholic missions, so that access to the Supreme Pontiff would be blocked at the outset. The mission would also be certain to arouse the strenuous hostility of the French Government. After discussing the problem from all sides for three hours, the Manchu cut it short by the abrupt question, "Will you go?" "No," said the foreigner; "such an undertaking requires quite other qualities than any I possess. But," he added, after considering the matter, "I think I know the man who might carry it through." "Where is he? in Peking? Bring him here," were rapped out like musketry-fire, showing how urgent was the subject. The agent recommended to him was Mr J. G. Dunn, a man of genius and of varied accomplishments, a Catholic, and having an extensive personal acquaintance with the propaganda. He was at once invited to Peking, when another long conference ensued, and Mr Dunn was requested to draw up a memorandum on the whole scheme for the information of Prince Ch'un. After waiting some time for a response Mr Dunn left the capital, decidedly disappointed, for he was eager for a service so congenial to his character and feelings. Indeed had the mission been created for the man, or the man for the mission, the harmony between means and ends could hardly have been closer. [344]

Several months elapsed before the question emerged again from official obscurity, and the manner of it is worth relating if only for the side-light it throws on Chinese methods. Li Hung-chang paid a visit to the capital in 1885, and soon after his return to Tientsin he requested his secretaries to find out where Mr Dunn was and to invite him by telegraph to come to see the viceroy. Not knowing why he was sent for, any more than Gordon did when summoned from India five years before, Mr Dunn came, and Li at once entered on the Pei-t'ang question, showing him his own memorandum on the subject. The affair having been placed by Prince Ch'un in the hands of Li Hung-chang to be carried through, Mr Dunn was promptly commissioned, and in concert with the viceroy's secretary, the very capable officer who now represents China at Washington, the emissary's instructions and credentials were drawn up. There were two separate instructions, and no little confusion was caused thereby. [345]

On leaving China for Rome, Mr Dunn stipulated that a competent intermediary should be appointed to interpret his correspondence to Li Hung-chang, a duty which was intrusted to the commissioner of customs in Tientsin. The utility of this provision was soon made manifest, for when telegrams began to arrive from Rome, their purport was unintelligible, as they seemed irrelevant to the expropriation of the cathedral, which was Mr Dunn's special mission. Irritated by this apparent aberration, the viceroy's idea was to recall the emissary. But when it was suggested that the copies of his credentials should be first carefully examined the position became clearer. One part of his instructions was then found to be directed towards the question of the Christian protectorate, and Mr Dunn was, in fact, diplomatising with the Pope with a view to his appointing a nuncio or apostolic delegate to China to represent all the Catholic missions. The Chinese had not fully mastered this idea, and even Li Hung-chang, who has a wonderful memory, had forgotten the existence of the second section of his instructions, which no doubt Mr Dunn had drawn up himself. The Tsungli-Yamên, languid and bemused, hesitated to express any opinion, and assumed their habitual passive attitude. One person alone really grasped the importance of having the Church in China represented by the delegate of a Power "which has no armies or fleets wherewith to threaten or attack." The empress-dowager, when the nomination of Mgr. Agliardi was announced, and his coming depended on formal imperial invitation, sent the urgent message to the Yamên, "Get that man here; lose no time." [346]

Mr Dunn's negotiations with the Vatican of course soon leaked out; notices appeared in the press; Mr Punch had his little joke that though there was evidently a good deal *doing*, the question was, Who was *Dunn*? The French Government took the matter up energetically through their Minister in Rome, and their diplomatic efforts having failed, they presented an ultimatum to the Pope which compelled him to cancel the appointment of his nuncio. France threatening to terminate the concordat, withdraw the subvention to the Church in France, and sequester its ministers, the Holy Father had no option but to submit. With tears in his eyes he deplored his impotence to respond to the invitation of China under such a truculent menace to "his children in France."

While these things were going on in Rome the transference of the Pei-t'ang Cathedral, which had been settled in principle through Mr Dunn, was then taken up by the Lazarist Mission, and the popular Père Favier was deputed by the Bishop of Peking to proceed to Rome and to Paris to obtain from the Vatican and the General of the Lazarist Order the specific authority to negotiate the transfer. Having brought back the necessary powers, a convention was shortly concluded between Bishop Tagliabue and Li Hung-chang. The Church made an excellent bargain, as it generally does: a new site of about thrice the area was granted close to the old on the opposite side of the broad roadway, and a bountiful compensation in money was made for the trouble and cost of removal. But after the agreement was signed the French Government interposed its veto so far as to insist on being the intermediary through whose hands the transaction should pass. France also, it was said, had previously essayed to *marchander* with China for her consent, but withdrew when it became clear that further obstruction might entail untoward consequences. To mark its satisfaction at the final solution of this question, the Chinese Government eulogised all those who had helped to bring it about, and bestowed high rank on Bishop Tagliabue and the [347]

This transaction supplied a crucial test of French policy and pretensions in China, the first concrete expression of both that had been obtained since the forcible restitution of Church property immediately after the capture of Peking. The coercion, indeed, was applied on this occasion to the Roman Pontiff and the Catholic Church rather than to the Chinese Government; but the latter were not so dull as not to see to what ulterior objects the French scheme might be extended, given convenient circumstances. They were, in fact, really alarmed, and the question was discussed with some warmth in the Chinese as well as in the European press. "The end is not yet," wrote Sir Rutherford Alcock; "China may be less open to intimidation than heretofore, and assert her undoubted right to refuse the recognition of an assumed protectorate over Roman missions, irrespective of the nationality of their members." The French press espoused the cause of the protectorate warmly, treating it as a most valuable national asset. The Chinese press took up the question in reply. Their view of the position was comprehensively summed up in a native newspaper in October 1886 in the following terms:—

It has been said by them of old time that when a man is found acting injuriously to his own family but benevolently to strangers his behaviour is unnatural, and there is something hidden under the cloak of outward kindness.

We have from time to time printed translations from various foreign newspapers on the subject of the relations between the Chinese Government and the Pope. Some days ago we reproduced an article on the same subject from the 'Temps,' a French newspaper of the highest authority. These articles all indicate that the French Government is greatly troubled at the prospect of losing what is called the right to protect Christians in China. This is a question which has not hitherto been much considered by Chinese statesmen. Those of them who have been in Europe, or who have studied political affairs there, know something of the importance of the issues which are covered up in that apparently harmless word "protection"; but it is hardly to be expected that the Ministers and statesmen who have scarcely travelled beyond the walls of Peking can realise the full significance of the phrase. Nothing is better calculated to quicken the apprehension of the Government on this point than the extraordinary excitement of the French Government, which insists on protecting the Christians in China whether they desire this protection or not. For now that the French have so plainly shown their secret designs, it would be impossible for China to acquiesce, by word or deed, in the pretensions which France sets up. It is rather suspicious that the French Government, the greatest enemy of Christianity, which is constantly oppressing the priests and confiscating their property in France, should be so intensely desirous of protecting Christians in China, where this protection is not required. A leading French statesman, Gambetta, who died a few years ago, left as a legacy to his followers the doctrine that the Church should be suppressed in France but supported in all foreign countries. Gambetta was a man who had no reverence for Heaven, and no religion, and seems to have regarded Christianity as a disease which he wished his own country to be rid of, but was not sorry to see it spreading elsewhere. It is necessary to keep these ideas in mind in order to understand the action of the French Government to-day.

It would be out of place here to discuss what Christianity is. Like Buddhism, it had a very pure origin, and the living principles of both are mercy, benevolence, and peace. But both religions have in course of ages been overlaid with doctrines and practices which have obscured the simplicity of their origin, and even changed their character. But the greatest misfortune to Christianity is that it has been made use of by princes as a pretext for wars of aggression. In fact, nearly all the wars of Europe for the last thousand years have been in some way connected with religion. This is sometimes made a reproach against Christianity, which professes to be founded on peace and self-sacrifice, but the reproach is scarcely just. Rather it is the peaceful character of Christianity which has induced ambitious statesmen to make use of it to work out their own designs, just as in private life unscrupulous men are sometimes enabled to carry out questionable plans by using the names of men of blameless character. We are only now concerned with the political aspect of Christianity, not its merits as a religion. The modern history of Turkey affords the best illustration of the danger of allowing foreign Powers to interfere in matters of religion. During the last hundred years Russia has several times made war on Turkey, always on the pretext of protecting Christians, and it is this which is fast breaking up the Turkish empire. It is interesting to observe that Russia and France follow the same policy in this matter. When the French Legation withdrew from Peking on the 2nd day of the 7th moon of the 10th year of Kwanghsu (22nd August 1884), the affairs of the Christians were transferred to the Russian Legation. The Ministers of the Tsungli-Yamèn remember very well how eagerly the Russian Minister assumed the office of protector of Christians, going to even greater lengths in the way of protection than the French themselves had done. The reason for this is plain. Russia, although she has none now, expects to have by-and-by many Christians in Mongolia and Manchuria who may be extremely useful to her in her aggressive designs on China. Therefore the Russian officials, always looking very far ahead, were most anxious to establish a right of interference for the protection of Christians. And they could do this without reproach when they were acting not for themselves but for France during war-time; well knowing that, whatever position she succeeded in establishing for France, Russia could claim for herself when the proper time came. But the more anxious Russia and France are to assert the right of interfering with Chinese Christians, the more resolute China should be in resisting all such interference. The only safety for China is to treat Christians, whether Chinese or foreign, exactly as all other people are treated—to make no distinctions. Foreign missionaries have the right to travel and reside in the interior; they can exercise this right without getting passports from the French Minister. The Catholic missions are composed of men of all nations, but they all have Ministers in Peking to whom they can apply for passports. Let the Germans get their passports from the German Legation, the Spaniards from the Spanish, Italians, Belgians, and Hollanders from their respective Legations, but no European State has any right to arrogate to itself the position of protector of missionaries in general.

It is satisfactory to learn that the head of the Catholic Church is of this opinion, and although grateful to France for what she has done in the past, is now desirous of being free from French protection in the future. To carry out these views, the Pope is about to send to China a very high official to reside in Peking and perform the functions of a Minister. As the Pope has no troops and no territory, but is merely a kind of Dalai Lama, there is no danger to China from opening direct relations with him. The affairs of the missionaries can then be dealt with in an open and straightforward manner, as no fear of political traps will lurk behind. The Christians when they know they are no longer protected by a military State will understand that their security will depend on their own wisdom in avoiding offence. And the officials and people, on the other hand, will gradually learn that the Christians are only anxious to lead virtuous lives, without any political ambition, and they will respect them. The Imperial Government will then also be able to extend its favour to all Christians and missionaries without the fear of nursing traitors in its bosom. The missionaries have among them men of great learning and much skill in sciences, which the Emperor Kanghsi—who must always stand as the model for Chinese rulers—knew very well how to utilise. The present generation possesses men no less capable of rendering good services to China, and there would be no reason for not using them if the suspicion of their being agents of the French Government were once cleared away.

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Notwithstanding so much clear thinking, however, the action of the Chinese continued, as before, nebulous. They seemed never able to seize the bull by the horns, but drifted on, allowing themselves constantly to be put in the wrong, hoping perhaps to accomplish by illegitimate means what was within their legal competence. Afraid or unwilling to control the provincial authorities, they allowed outrages to be perpetrated for which they refused redress until coercion was applied, thus affording to foreign Powers a not in all cases unwelcome pretext for extending their protection even to Chinese Christians. Within a month of the consummation of the transfer of the Pei-t'ang Cathedral, and after the Marquis Tsêng, fresh from Europe, had taken his seat at the Board, the Tsungli-Yamên had fallen into its chronic apathy with regard to Christians. A missionary named Bodinier arrived in Peking from distant Kweichow for the purpose of soliciting the intervention or intercession of the French Legation in favour of the persecuted Christians in that province. While he was on his journey the Catholics of Chungking in Szechuan were being similarly maltreated. Certain disturbances in that great commercial mart culminated in the attack on the house of a wealthy Christian family, which resisted the assailants, several of whom were killed in the affray. The magistrates, who had been supine during the time when the mischief was brewing, thereupon arrested the head of the Lo family and condemned him to death,—an exercise of authority which was held to be arbitrary, and invidiously directed against Christians. Here was an occasion when the Central Government should have taken prompt action, and so deprived the French Government of any pretext for interference. It was a moment when that Government was less apt than usual to put forth its power in the Christian cause. M. Constans was Minister in China, and he was personally not at all disposed to assume the protection of Chinese Christians. Nevertheless, the case being urgent, and the Tsungli-Yamên either cowardly or indifferent, M. Constans broke through the rule he had laid down for himself so far as to telegraph to Paris for instructions. The reply was prompt, doubtless inspired by the propaganda at home, to the effect that he should take up the case of Mr Lo. Thus the Chinese threw away a golden opportunity of showing to the world that the Chinese Christians did not stand in need of any foreign aid. An impartial investigation might have shown, indeed, that the Christians were the aggressors, and the local Chinese officials might have been vindicated from the charges made against them. But the Government's inaction constantly puts it in the wrong even when it may be substantially in the right. The same fatal course has been regularly pursued even to our day, with results patent to all.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

BRITISH SERVICES: DIPLOMATIC, CONSULAR, AND JUDICIAL.

Necessity for administrative and judicial control over British subjects—Consular courts—Supreme court for China and Japan—*Personnel* of the consular service—Functions of the diplomatic representatives—Absence of distinction explained by apathy of Home Government—Need of reform.

The frequent references throughout this work to the part played by British agents in the development of intercourse with China seem to call for a short account of the character and status of the official machinery which served for so many years as the principal working joint between the two opposed systems of civilisation.

The relations between Great Britain and China were necessarily at first experimental. The consuls appointed to the five ports were selected with no special training, and the chief superintendent, to whom they looked for guidance, was scarcely better furnished than themselves. Yet, as has been shown, the remoteness of the consuls from their chief, and of both from the Government they served, threw them much upon their own resources. How the demand for independent initiative was responded to by some of the individuals concerned has been incidentally noticed in previous chapters.

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From the time when it assumed direct relations with China, the need of an effective control over British subjects resorting to that country weighed heavily on the British Government; for in exempting them from native jurisdiction the Government took on itself the responsibility for the

good behaviour of its people. The exercise of this control was necessarily tentative, proceeding step by step as occasions arose. The unceasing solicitude of the Government for the orderly conduct of its subjects in China is testified by a long series of Orders in Council conferring on the consuls and their superintendent an almost despotic authority over the persons of the British residents. The operation of this arbitrary system was more satisfactory than could have been expected, thanks to the high character of the parties concerned and the common-sense which governed their mutual relations. In their double capacity, however, of protectors of Chinese and foreigners against the inroads of British subjects, and of the latter against the inroads of the Chinese, the consuls soon discovered that the one part of their duty was easy and the other difficult; and it is no matter for wonder, therefore, if, following the line of least resistance, some of them should have leaned to the side of repression rather than to that of the encouragement of their countrymen. This was noticeable even in judicial proceedings, where the consul was supreme over his own nationals, but had no authority over their opponents. Some check on the consequences of consular idiosyncrasies and defective legal knowledge was maintained by a supreme court in Hongkong, independent alike of the superintendent of trade and of the governor of the colony, to which court appeals lay from consular decisions. This prerogative of the colonial court was not unnaturally irksome to the diplomatic and consular servants of the Foreign Office, and was doubtless one cause of the coolness, not to say antipathy, with which the colony has generally been regarded by them. [355]

The treaties of 1858 and 1860 were followed by a great development in all three services—diplomatic, consular, and judicial. Some years previously the China consular service began to be treated as a career for which special preparation was required, the entry being by competitive examination, through which a certain number of students were annually sent out to China, there to complete their education and then take their part in executive work. When additional ports were opened, therefore, making about twenty in all, in 1861, there was the full complement of qualified men ready to occupy the new consular posts, each of them competent to be his own interpreter. Diplomatic functions were at the same time withdrawn from Hongkong, where they had been merely nominal for eighteen years, and became centred in the Chinese capital. A few years later the judicial authority, so far as it related to the communities at the Chinese ports, was also withdrawn from Hongkong, and was conferred upon the Supreme Court for China and Japan, having its headquarters in Shanghai, established by the Queen's Order in Council of 1864. The new court was inaugurated by Sir Edmund Hornby, who brought to the work practical experience gained in the Levant, the assistant judge being Mr C. W. Goodwin, Barrister of the Inner Temple. This establishment has furnished a solvent for many of the difficulties connected with British residence in the Far East. Adapted with judgment to local circumstances, the court has proved of immense assistance to the consuls, who, subordinated judicially to the chief judge, could now obtain from him proper guidance in their difficulties, a facility of which they availed themselves freely. [356]

Although a great advance on what preceded it, the Supreme Court could not of course escape from all the drawbacks which affected the consular courts. As between British subjects, it enjoyed the full powers of law courts in the mother country; but as between British subjects on the one hand, and the natives of the country, or non-British residents, on the other, the authority of the British court could only be exercised over the former. This one-sided action has been to some extent compensated in later times by the judicial qualifications of consuls representing other Western nationalities, who administer their own laws with the same impartiality as the British courts do theirs. But as regards the Chinese no such compensation operates, for although the treaties make provision for the judicial action of the Chinese authorities, their conceptions of equity and forms of procedure being wholly alien to those of the Western nations, their decisions seldom satisfy the foreign litigant. An attempt to supply a connecting-link between two radically different juridical ideals was made in the setting up of mixed courts for the purpose of dealing with petty cases between natives and foreigners within the settlements of Shanghai. These courts have been occasionally presided over by honest and competent judges, assisted by able foreign assessors; but as the native magistrates, being men of low rank, could always be overruled by the local executive, they lacked the power to make their decisions effective. [357]

As it was impossible to set up a separate judicial establishment at each treaty port where there was but a handful of residents, the consuls had to continue to perform magisterial duty with all the inconveniences attending their double function. Efforts were made by the Home Government to minimise these disadvantages by infusing a modicum of legal knowledge into the service, for which purpose they offered inducements to consular officials who should qualify as barristers. Notwithstanding all this, however, the simple fact that a consul is bound in his administrative capacity to take a part in matters which may afterwards come before him as a judge perpetuates an element of incongruity demanding an uncommon degree of tact on the part of the official. Some of the worst consequences to be apprehended from this state of things are partially obviated by the judge or assistant judge of the Supreme Court going on circuit, when important cases in the consular districts require it; but that expedient is only possible at rare intervals.

The wisdom with which the Supreme Court has been directed is attested by the absence of incident in its history, and by the universal tacit approval of its proceedings. Its success, indeed, soon came to be accepted so much as a matter of course that the true source of it was forgotten. It was, however, recalled vividly to the public memory by a certain retrograde movement. After a quarter of a century of satisfactory working her Majesty's Government took a step which was equivalent to pulling out the corner-stone of the edifice—the absolute independence of the bench. In order to effect an economy in salaries, it was ordained that the two incompatible offices—the [358]

judicial and political—should be merged into one, making the chief judge consul-general, and the assistant judge consul for Shanghai. By this move the judges became subordinate to the Legation in Peking, and the Supreme Court itself was subjected to all the evils of the dual function under which the consuls had been labouring. Thanks to the exceptional qualities of the holders of the double office, no glaring scandal arose out of the unnatural combination; but the protests of the community, and of the incumbent of the two offices himself, were strong enough to induce the Foreign Office, after a few years' trial, to retrace their false step and restore the judge to his independence.

The twenty consular establishments in China on which the Select Committee of the House of Commons reported in 1872 were manned by forty "effectives on duty," besides a considerable contingent on furlough. The ten posts subsequently created employ on an average twenty more. Two complete generations of officials have passed through the consular mill in fifty years, which may be moderately reckoned at two hundred men, all of them selected by a competitive examination only one degree less stringent than that for the Indian Civil Service, and nearly all of them men of varied accomplishments. They have been placed in every part of the wide empire of China, and during their career have been shifted about so that every one has had chances of interesting himself in localities strongly contrasted with each other, both as regards official labour and personal recreation and study. From a body of highly educated men so situated, it was naturally to be expected that much enlightenment would be obtained concerning China and its people, and considerable progress made in the promotion of amiable intercourse between them and foreigners. These expectations have not been disappointed. In the period immediately following the peace of 1860 remarkable activity was shown by British consular officers. The names of Meadows, Markham, Alabaster, Oxenham, recall many exploits of exploration in the interior during very troublous times. Swinhoe, Baber, Hosie, Bourne, Spence, Davenport, Parker, have continued the work and greatly extended its area. Others have distinguished themselves in the held of literary research, and some have found their appropriate reward in honourable appointments in English universities. On the whole, there has been lack of neither energy nor capacity in the British consular service; and yet it is a matter of common remark, even by its members themselves, that in their primary duty of promoting and defending the interests of British commerce they have been unsuccessful. Treaty rights, they admit, have not been safeguarded at the Chinese ports, and this in spite of every apparent incentive to exertion in their defence. A distinction, however, must be drawn between an apparent incentive which is general and remote, such as the patriotic desire for the advancement of their country's interests, and those influences which are nearer and more personal. The attitude of the China consuls can only be fairly estimated in its relation to that of their chief, and his again in relation to that of the Home Government. "Like master, like man," is an adage which fits the case, and it is to Peking and to London we must look for the key to the character of the consular rank and file. [359]

The British Ministers at Peking have been selected without any fixed rule. The first of the series was taken from the diplomatic circle. The succeeding three, whose term of office covered a period of twenty years, were chosen from among the veterans of the consular service. The next two were taken from the junior ranks of diplomacy, and the seventh was a military officer from Africa. The appointment of Sir Robert Hart in 1885, which was cancelled by his wish, afforded further illustration of the extreme catholicity of the Government's elective faculty. [360]

The witnesses examined before the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1872 were unanimous in insisting on the necessity for long and special training for the office of consul in China, and this principle has been strictly followed by the Government. But for the higher post of superintendent of all the consuls the Government has, at least since 1885, acted on the theory that no such qualification is necessary. But the task of a Minister to China is by no means an easy one. It may be left undone, or it may be done so badly that it were better not to be done at all, but to discharge the duties of the office in a creditable manner requires not only high training but large capacity. The Minister has to conduct his own diplomatic duties in the capital, in which not the Chinese alone but all or nearly all his foreign colleagues are openly or secretly thwarting him. He has at the same time to direct the proceedings of twenty or thirty officers placed at great distances, whom he has never seen, and every one of whom is superior to himself in the knowledge of the conditions to be dealt with. For such a duty it is obvious that an officer sent from Europe must be incompetent, the circumstances of the service in China differing essentially from those prevailing elsewhere. The new incumbent, unless he were a born genius, could never get beyond the elementary lessons of experience before, overtaken by promotion, he shakes the Chinese dust off his feet for ever. Much might of course be learned by personal observation at the consular ports and conference with local officials and people in the provinces, but it is somewhat singular that this obvious source of intelligence has been taken advantage of almost exclusively by those of the British Ministers who stood the least in need of it. Indeed the only one of them who made it a rule to visit the treaty ports at intervals was Sir Rutherford Alcock, whose long experience convinced him of the necessity of constantly refreshing and extending his knowledge of local circumstances and people. [361]

A service dispersed over such a large area as the Chinese empire, carried on by despatches between parties who were strangers to each other, and one of whom at least had no personal knowledge of the subjects treated, must have been characterised by an absence of reality, and must have tended more and more towards a perfunctory routine. For this, however, the system of appointing Ministers who were strangers to the country was not wholly responsible. Long before [362]

the Ministers were so selected the secretaries began to be sent from European schools, and thus the consular service, disheartened by inadequate pay and a constant menace of further diminution, saw the few prizes of their profession withdrawn from their reach. To serve his time quietly, therefore, to earn his pension and retire without a stain on his character, became more or less the consular ideal. Ambition was starved among those who had to bear the burden and heat of a thirty years' residence in China, when they saw good posts thrown away upon men imported for two or three years, who were almost useless, and who themselves deplored their enforced idleness. The disadvantages attending these exotic importations have been often insisted upon. An old member of the consul staff comments upon it in the following practical manner:—

In every country administered by the British Crown, or at every Court at which there is a British representative, the administrator or envoy has from the moment of his entering on the duties of his office the assistance of an experienced staff, well versed in the local history and traditions, or finds himself in the midst of a society the language and usages of which are familiar to him. In China, where we have been fighting and negotiating for over fifty years, we are not so fortunate. A Minister proceeds there, and on his arrival finds himself in a new and to him unknown country, the staff which he may bring with him being like himself utterly unacquainted with the East and its peoples. The Minister is obliged either to grope his way unassisted, or to rely on the aids and advice of experienced (but not always disinterested) outsiders. Under these circumstances his only wise course is to put himself entirely in the hands of the permanent local staff, which, for this purpose, means the Chinese Secretary. That officer, the real motive force of the Legation, occupies a position of greater importance than that of the nominal head of the mission, but, with an irony which is not uncommon in Government administration, he is the least appreciated member of the staff. His salary is that of the junior ranks in the consular service, and yet it is to him that the seniors in that service look for instructions which he is incompetent to give them: the result may be imagined. Why should these things be? The Indian Government has in its service many men of brilliant attainments, and of knowledge gained in long years of service in the East, who might be called upon to fill the post of Minister which would be suitable and congenial to them. And there is an abundance of choice of junior Legation officers in the well-trained consular service. Would it not be very advantageous if the working hands in the Legation were chosen from the most competent Chinese scholars in the consular service?

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Considering their initial qualifications, their social standing, and their great opportunities, it must be admitted that the men of distinction who have emerged from the consular service during the last fifty years seems disproportionately small. It is perhaps invidious to mention names in this connection, but in response to inquiries addressed to veterans in the service, four men only are placed in the first rank as the best representatives of the consular training school. These are Sir Harry Parkes, Mr T. T. Meadows, Mr H. N. Lay, and Mr W. F. Mayers. Sir Robert Hart, it should be mentioned, left the service so early, and Sir Rutherford Alcock joined it so late, in life, that their distinguished careers can scarcely be claimed as the product of the consular nursery.

It is impossible to look back over the forty years which have elapsed since the new relations were established in China without being struck by a certain change which passed over the character of the diplomatic and consular services between the first decade of that period and the second. The anxious years of the rebellion evoked much active energy on the part of British officials. The serious opposition to the operation of the treaties was met by very vigorous action on the part of the consuls at the ports and of the Minister at the capital. The years 1868 and 1869 may be considered to have marked the culminating-point of the British official effort to enforce observance of the treaties in letter and spirit, and to protect all commercial interests. The change which came over the diplomatic and consular services at the end of the first decade of diplomatic relations may be likened to the rising followed by the receding of a tide. Up till the years we have specified, whatever the difficulties which beset their office, the consuls showed earnestness in the defence of the interests confided to them, and acted on the conviction that their exertions were pleasing to those who were set in authority over them. Their sense of duty was sustained by the hope of distinction. After 1869 the discovery was made that the situation had been undergoing a change of which the service had been unaware. What was formerly deemed a merit had become a demerit in consular officers, and on this discovery zeal naturally fell to a discount. It was but a reflex of the change that had crept over the spirit of the British Foreign Office, a change which also had escaped notice until circumstances forced it into publicity. This seems to have originated with the removal from the scene of Lord Palmerston, the statesman who for forty years had stood in a general way for what was manly and straightforward in the British national character. Though he left a tried and trusted colleague, Lord Clarendon, in charge of the Foreign Office, and a sturdy permanent Under-Secretary, perhaps the last custodian of the Palmerstonian tradition, and who remained at his post for five years longer, yet it was made evident by results that the spirit which had animated that great department of State had vanished. The Foreign Office became nerveless and invertebrate, sentimental and unstable. Those who had to do with it in the time of Palmerston, Layard, and Hammond know that since their time the officials bearing the same titles have been of quite another calibre, have been swayed by different influences, and above all have exhibited no such knowledge of the affairs with which they had to deal as their predecessors of the Palmerstonian era. Many explanations may be given for the new departure without disparagement of the capacities of the individuals concerned. Such explanations interest those who may desire to promote reform in the constitution and the inspiration of the Foreign Office. It suffices us merely to note the fact by way of accounting for some of the shortcomings which have been laid to the charge of our representation in China. We have seen how easily one Foreign Secretary yielded to the meretricious solicitations of the envoy Burlingame, and how

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another allowed himself to be cajoled by the Marquis Tsêng. After these, and sundry other such, exhibitions it was impossible for any Minister serving the country in the Far East to place the old reliance on the support of his Government. With John Bright, the implacable opponent of Palmerston and his works, installed at the Board of Trade, whose word was law on such matters as Chinese commercial treaties, and apparently more anxious to undo the work of Palmerston than to promote a trade which both he and his department unaffectedly despised, it was not likely that the commercial communities trading with China should cherish any hope of redress of grievances from a Government whose face seemed set against them. Apathy, therefore, became the principle, to keep the peace at all sacrifices the avowed policy of British diplomacy in China. The apparent exception to this rule in the attempted reclamations in connection with the Margary murder in 1875 afforded in its abortive ending a new corroboration of the rule. The diplomatic and consular establishments went on grinding out routine despatches and publishing statistical reports, but with the tacit understanding that whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Under such conditions it was of little consequence how the Peking representation might be filled, since it has not for thirty years risen above the level of comedy, the term applied to it by those who have grown old in its service. [366]

Such was the situation of affairs when the greatest crisis in the history of China, or of foreign relations with that country, was sprung upon the world in 1894. A Legation equal only to clerical routine suddenly called upon to play a part in a commotion which unhinged the policy of the world was totally inadequate to the strain, and as a consequence of the impotence of the Foreign Office and its agent in China, the interests of Great Britain and, what was only second in importance, the interests of the Chinese empire were allowed to go by default. The Chinese were, and perhaps even still remain, unconscious of the reasons of the collapse of their empire. [367] Perhaps something of the same kind might be said of the British Foreign Office in regard to the interests of Great Britain in China. Certainly there is as yet little sign of a determination to reform the mechanism of the country's representation, and this, perhaps, because the preliminary step thereto would be the reform of the Foreign Office itself. And so the Legation goes on under the nominal headship of a Minister who must be guided entirely by his Chinese Secretary, an official of inferior rank and position to the body of consuls whom he has to control, and for whose authority they can never have genuine respect.

The recent upheaval has offered many new opportunities of distinction for the consuls, especially in the interior of China. That these openings have infused new life into the consular ranks has been shown in many ways during the last few years; and if natural selection be allowed to operate freely and the best men be not discouraged in their efforts for their country's benefit by undue interferences from Peking, where there is neither knowledge nor capacity to guide them, it is still possible that the consular service may play a valuable part in the reconstruction of the foreign relations of China. [368]

CHAPTER XXIX.

CHINA AND HER RULERS.

Longevity of the State—Government by prestige—Necessity of adaptation to European ideas—The Empress-dowager—Prince Kung—Wên-siang—Hu Lin-yi—Tsêng Kwo-fan—Tso Tsung-tang—Chang Chih-tung—Li Hung-chang—His long and consistent career—Efforts at reorganising national forces.

The long continuance of a State more populous than any other on record is a phenomenon which to thoughtful minds can hardly fail to evoke a feeling akin to reverence. De Quincey declared if he met a Chinaman he would make obeisance to him, saying, "There goes a man 2000 years old." Be the causes of this national longevity what they may, the fact should make us pause to consider on what foundation does this great vital national system rest? The most realistic word-painter of China represents the country as a collection of villages, each being a unit of self-government, [29] and in describing "village life" in minute detail, seems to depict the great empire, of which each village is a pattern in miniature. Dynasties may come and dynasties may go, but the Chinese families, their industries and their customs, go on for ever. It is remarkable with what ease the people adapt themselves to changes in their ruling powers, regardless of race or origin; indeed it is a noteworthy fact that the rulers have for many centuries been more often foreign than native. [30] Foreign, however, not quite in the sense in which the word is so easily translated "barbarian" by the Chinese, and applied by them to the hated Aryans of the West. The rulers of China have been of cognate races, more or less imbued with the same generic ideas as the Chinese themselves, and with tastes akin to theirs. How this succession of dynasties, each established by violence, has coexisted with the continuity of the grand national idea of the emperor being the Son of Heaven can only be explained by the very practical character of the race, who accept the usurper as divinely appointed from the moment he has proved himself successful. What holds, and has held together from ancient times, this great aggregate of mankind in common usages and ideas is naturally a mystery to Occidentals, the cohesive principle not being perceptible to them. China occupies the unique position of a State resting on moral force, [31] a conception almost as alien to the Western mind as material progress is to the Eastern, hence the proposition [369]

is apt to be received with amused contempt. Yet a State administered without police, and ruled without an army, is a something which cannot be explained away. Government by prestige is, other things being equal, surely the most economical as well as the most humane of all species of government; but an obvious consequence is that in emergencies the Government is beholden to volunteers, and is often driven to enlist the services of banditti and other forces proscribed by the law. Imperial prestige, which embraces the relations of the surrounding tributaries, is but an expansion of the authority of the head of the family and of the elders of the village, which rests on moral sanction only. The first collision, however, with the material forces of Christendom proved that in the system of the modern world the Chinese principle of government was an anachronism, and that moral must succumb to physical force. Yet in the midst of the world's triumph in the pricking of the great Chinese bubble, it had been well to reflect what the kind of bubble was that was being pricked. China with her self-contained, self-secreted knowledge, could not be expected to foresee how the impact of the West was likely to affect her ancient polity. She had nothing wherewith to compare herself, and no criterion of good or evil except her own isolated experience; nor did she know aught of human development except what was, so to speak, forcibly injected into her, but never assimilated. What, then, could she do to be saved but to take herself entirely to pieces like a house that has to be rebuilt on a new plan, and so fit herself for the companionship and competition of the worldly Powers, from whose pressure she could by no means escape? She had to put away the wisdom of ages, the traditions of a civilisation unbroken for thousands of years, and convert herself into a mechanical, scientific, and military Power. Something more radical than reform is involved in such a root-and-branch change: it was not improvement but transformation that was demanded. [371]

That some such essential changes are necessary to the preservation of the Chinese empire is probably recognised by all who interest themselves in the subject—including a large ever-increasing number of the Chinese themselves; but the gravity of the revolution may well cause misgivings both as to its possibility and its incalculable effects. Who among the Chinese rulers is sufficient for such things?

It is not always possible to locate the nervous centre of any Government in the West, whether its form be autocratic or representative. With regard to that of China we may safely say it is never possible—at least for any foreigner. The attempts which have been from time to time made to assign acts of Government to the will or influence of certain individuals have in general proved in the sequel to have been far from hitting the mark. The monarch under whose authority the whole machine moves is not necessarily the directing will: indeed he is very often little better than a puppet. "The eunuchs, concubines, and play-actors, who constituted the Court of the late Emperor Hsien-fêng, the father of the present young emperor, had more influence probably in bringing on the war that led the Allies to Peking than any of the high officers or Ministers," wrote Sir Rutherford Alcock in 1871. Another writer put it in a more paradoxical form: "There is in China something more powerful than the Emperor, and that is the Viceroy; more powerful than the Viceroy, and that is the Taotai; more powerful than the Taotai, and that is the Weiyuen," meaning that the power of obstruction, extending through every grade of officialdom, is most widely diffused at the base. Official responsibility and moral responsibility do not therefore coincide—men in highest positions being unable to do the things they would, while the things they would not they are often obliged to do. The Government is consequently carried on by continual compromise beyond the limits to which we are accustomed in Western Governments, because it is not confronted with outspoken opposition with which it can reason, but with a network of secret machinations which can only be met by correlative tactics. But though Government in China may seem by this state of things to be reduced to an almost passive condition, yet the individuality of statesmen is not altogether destroyed. In some respects, indeed, the circumstances we have noted rather favour the influence of men of mark; for where the complicated machine is held in a state of equilibrium by innumerable neutralising checks, it would appear that any determined will could set it in motion in a given direction. The character of Chinese statesmen, therefore, is not a factor to be ignored in considering either the present or the future of China, although the very partial knowledge of them which is accessible to Europeans must constantly lead to erroneous conclusions. [372] [373]

Of the statesmen who have appeared since the opening of Peking in 1860, it would probably be fair to consider the two emperors as negligible quantities. The potent personage in the empire during that period is no doubt the Empress-dowager, who has, in so far as any one can be said to have done so, ruled China for forty years. Apart from ethical considerations, which have less to do with matters of government than could be wished, the empress's characteristics are clearness of purpose, strength of will, a ready accommodation of means to ends, and frank acceptance of the inevitable. There are no signs of the bigot or the doctrinaire about her. Mundane in her objects, she is practical in seeking them; and if to hold an entirely anomalous position of authority opposed to legitimacy and the traditions of the dynasty and the empire be evidence of success, then the empress-dowager must be admitted to be a successful woman. In the position she has occupied, and still occupies, she would appear to be the principal force in the State. Whatever may be her power of initiative, which is so attenuated in the high State functionaries, her power of veto probably stands pre-eminent.

The anomalous relations which have subsisted between the empress-dowager and her imperial nephew are too intricate for us to attempt to unravel them. But the facts resulting from them, which are patent to the world, point to conditions which are not without danger to the empire. Indeed the Emperor himself constituted such a danger from the moment when as an infant he [374]

was placed on the Dragon Throne by usurped authority. His personal imperfections added materially to that danger, and his final efforts to free himself from the leading-strings of his patroness have indefinitely enhanced the evil by destroying the personal prestige of the sovereign. For what can be thought of a Son of Heaven who has his prerogatives doled out to him and again withdrawn by the will of another, and where is the force to meet the crisis in the State which may yet result from the illegitimacy of the emperors succession? The worship accorded throughout the empire to the Son of Heaven may indeed be transferred unimpaired to a new possessor of that dignity. But a reigning emperor shorn of his governing faculty must, one would think, put the allegiance of the people to a severe strain. How far such considerations may go in weakening the ties of loyalty in the provinces and in letting loose the spectre of rebellion cannot be known, but it may be guessed and feared.

Leaving out the Camarilla of the Court, of whom nothing certain can be predicated, the executive statesmen who have to outward appearance directed the public affairs of the Chinese empire for forty years may almost be counted on the fingers of one hand. Prince Kung, the highest in station and nearest to the throne, was rather a moderating than an active force in the State, and his attention was very much divided between public affairs and those of more personal concern. His colleague, Wênsiang, was a more energetic character. By common consent he was the most conscientious as well as the most liberal-minded statesman that China has produced during the sixty years of foreign intercourse. Mr Adkins, who knew him intimately in the early days, says: "He was courteous in manner and a lively conversationalist. He once told me over the teacups that, if he could have his will, every brick and stone of Hongkong city should be torn down and thrown into the sea." This was not the kind of language he held at a later period; for, in a private interview with Sir Rutherford Alcock in 1869, while admitting the hostility of his class and that he himself had originally shared all their prejudices, he declared that his long and intimate relations with the foreign Legations had opened his eyes to the favourable side of the foreign character and progressive policy. Perhaps the best account of this Manchu statesman is that given by Sir Rutherford Alcock himself in an article in 'Fraser's Magazine,' 1871:—

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Wênsiang is by far the most distinguished, both from his superior knowledge and his intellectual grasp of the position occupied by China in its relations with foreign States.... As a member of the Grand Secretariat, and vested with other high functions, his influence is very great, both personal and official—subject, nevertheless, to such attenuation as the active hostility of a very powerful party of anti-foreign functionaries within and without the palace can effect. This party, if party that can properly be called which is composed of nearly the whole of the educated classes of the empire—officials, literati, and gentry—are unceasing in their opposition to all progressive measures, whether emanating from the Foreign Board or elsewhere. But Wênsiang is held in especial hatred as the known advocate of a policy of progressive improvement with foreign aid and appliances. The failure of the Lay-Osborn fleet very nearly effected his ruin, and that of his patron the prince [Kung] also, and has ever since told against his influence. The cost and humiliation of that most disastrous experiment were all visited on his head, and it has no doubt tended not solely to impair his power, but also to render him more timid and less disposed to make any further venture in the same direction. He has the reputation among his own people of being honest, and foreigners know him to be patriotic and earnest in what he believes to be for the good of his country, while far in advance of all his contemporaries in enlightened views as to how in the actual situation of affairs that end may best be served. Upon occasions he can be both bitter and sarcastic, and speaks out his mind plainly enough against the pretensions of foreigners to shape everything to their own ends in China. He nevertheless gets little credit from the opposite faction for patriotism or a disinterested love of his country, and of late there has been remarked, with failing health, an expression of weariness, as if he were losing heart and hope, and began to feel unequal to any further struggle. With the ever-increasing demands for better execution of treaties—in things often materially and legally impossible in the present state of affairs, for larger facilities and increased privileges on the foreign side, and the gathering of hostile elements in front and all round him proceeding from the Chinese national party, who would refuse everything, and, if left to themselves, precipitate the country into another war with the Western Powers, he may well feel weary.

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Wênsiang, in short, suffered the fate of those who are too liberal and too far advanced for their surroundings, and became a martyr to his own disappointment. Old before his time, and overwhelmed with difficulties which he was unable to surmount, his mind became depressed, and his death in 1876 cost China the ablest, the best, and most devoted of her public men. No doubt there have been good and well-meaning men since his time, both in the Tsungli-Yamên, the Great Council, and in the provincial governments; but none of them has shown any quality of leadership, and all have for the most part been content with the maxim, "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

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The comparatively early death of Hu Lin-yi, a Hunanese, Governor of the province of Hupei, who, in conjunction with Kuanwen, the Governor-General of the Hu provinces, originated the scheme for repressing the Taiping rebellion, prevented him from receiving the credit of that notable achievement. The institutions of the country paralysed its defence, for a provincial army was an object of dread to the Manchu rulers, while they possessed no imperial organisation to cope with the calamity. No attempt, therefore, could be made to organise a force to resist the rebellion, and so the devastation was allowed to spread from province to province without check. Hu Lin-yi set himself to overcome this difficulty, and thought out a scheme by which the rebellion might be overcome. Before taking any action, however, it was necessary that he should bring the Peking Government to his views, which he accomplished by first converting the Governor-General, who was a Manchu. The two thereupon joined in a memorial to the throne, praying that they might be

permitted to raise in the Central Provinces a mobile military force to repel the invasion of the insurgents.

The nucleus of this force already existed in the province of Hunan, where volunteer levies under the leadership of Tsêng Kwo-fan, the father of the late Marquis Tsêng, Minister to Great Britain, had done good service in several small engagements with the rebels. The execution of the general scheme of defence against the rebels fell naturally, therefore, to the lot of Tsêng, who during his subsequent governor-generalship of the Lower Yangtze had the honour of putting an end to the ravages of the Taipings. No man was held in higher esteem among the counsellors of the Chinese empire than this sagacious statesman. At once moderate and resolute, he perceived the need of accommodation to the exigencies of the new time, and though he would have resisted the ingress of foreigners to the uttermost, he had the wisdom to see that this was no longer possible, and the advice tendered to his sovereign, while tempered to the susceptibilities of the Court, was distinctly in favour of respecting the treaties and avoiding conflict with foreign nations.

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A contemporary of Tsêng Kwo-fan, and his equal in rank and authority, was Tso Tsung-tang, best known as the Conqueror of Kashgar, where he was credited with military exploits which history will scarcely ratify. He was a thoroughgoing man, blunt in manner, but straightforward, and loyal to his engagements. He was somewhat rash and uncompromising, seeking the end sometimes without considering the means, and his opinion on matters of State would have carried no weight but for his reputation for exemption from the prevailing vice of his class—financial corruption. This character obtained him toleration for many originalities. On one occasion he camped outside the walls of Peking for several days because he refused to pay the customary exactions of the officials in charge of the gates, so that his audience of the emperor seemed likely to be indefinitely postponed. But high officials in China of austere views have usually a man of business in attendance who oils the wheels while saving the face of their master. Tso's money matters were in the hands of a very politic gentleman of this class, and so the Grand Secretary's entry into the city was duly arranged. Tso had a lofty idea of the dignity of his country, and of the necessity for its defending itself against all enemies. To this end he threw his energies into the development of the arsenal and shipbuilding-yard at the Pagoda anchorage in the Foochow river. He was generally considered an opponent of his younger contemporary, Li Hung-chang, the one being held to stand for the old conservatism of China, and the other for its liberalisation. They were for many years the two chief provincials, the one being Imperial Commissioner for the southern and the other for the northern ports of China. It was customary for the emperor to refer important questions connected with foreign affairs to these two advisers, whose opinions must very often have neutralised each other. In the end Tso recognised the necessity for a change of policy for the preservation of the empire, but being himself too old to change he recommended his rival, Li Hung-chang, to the Throne as the fitting man to introduce needed innovations. If the records are to be implicitly trusted Tso would appear to have undergone a sort of death-bed repentance, for in his political testament, a document which is regarded with a kind of sacred authority in China, he recommended to the throne the improvements he had steadfastly opposed, including even the introduction of railways into the country.

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Although out of the chronological order, we may mention here another eminent official, distinguished by many of the characteristics of Tso Tsung-tang, who has been Governor of the province of Shansi, Governor-General of the Canton provinces, and is now Governor-General of the central provinces. Wherever he has been, Chang Chih-tung has proved himself bold and original. His open mind has led him to take up schemes warmly without counting the cost, and under his inspiration immense sums have been spent in both his vicerealties for which but little return was obtained, and of which indeed it was scarcely possible to render a clear account. His reputation for purity, however, has saved him from the consequences of his recklessness, both in the eyes of the people and of the Government, and enabled him to hold office long enough to show some results of his expensive enterprises. The great ironworks which he set up in Hanyang, with very little consideration as to how they were to become effective, have at last produced iron of a quality sufficient to make inferior rails, thus giving an earnest of the ultimate realisation of his dream of rendering China independent of foreign countries. Chang's literary power is of a very high order, his style is terse and incisive, and this is a weapon which renders him formidable in a country which cultivates literature as a religion. To say that Chang Chih-tung is the opponent of foreigners is merely to credit him with the ordinary patriotism of his countrymen. But though he often treats strangers with the studied discourtesy which characterised the older generation of Chinese officials, he has never allowed his prejudices to stand in the way of free intercourse with any foreigner whom he thought he could make subservient to some purpose of his own. As a statesman Chang Chih-tung has failed through intensity and want of comprehensiveness. In fact he is not a statesman, but a sciolist, and a trenchant essayist, unaccustomed to accommodate his ideas to the circumstances of actual life. He, too, has been a bitter opponent of Li Hung-chang, which, however, did not hinder him from composing a most fulsome panegyric on that statesman on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, in which he was credited with all the attributes of all the heroes of Chinese mythology. The many fantastic schemes which Chang has originated would in any Western country have relegated their author to the custody of the Commissioners of Lunacy. One of these was to prevent foreign ships entering the Gulf of Pecheli by sinking tiers of junks between Shantung and Talién-wan; another was to catch the Japanese soldiers in a gigantic locust-trap, consisting of a deep trench to be dug at their supposed landing-place near Shanhai-kwan, and the fact of this proposal being seriously adopted and some miles of the trench actually dug by the Chinese soldiers reveals more of the military impotence of China than the most voluminous dissertations.

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Without carrying the exhaustive process further, it is safe to say that whatever concrete statesmanship there has been in China during the past generation has been embodied in the person of Li Hung-chang. He alone has a continuous record, has followed a definite line, and kept his ideals, like a captive balloon, strictly attached to the earth on which he had to work. He also was a literate of distinction, having taken the highest degree, that of the Hanlin College. But though his literary tastes have not been left wholly uncultivated, they have never intruded themselves into his conduct of affairs, so that an estimate of his position cannot be based upon his writings, but only on his actions. He indulged in no speculations, propounded no theories, but was eminently a man of fact. Contrary to all Chinese tradition he laid himself out for personal intercourse with foreigners, from whom he was never weary of learning, and in doing so he braved the odium of his peers, and incurred the charge of treason as a truckler to barbarians. Living in the eyes of the world, both of his own and foreign countries, for a period of nearly forty years, he has been the one familiar figure in modern China. His accessibility has afforded to travellers and visitors endless opportunities of delineation, so that if ever a Chinese of rank was known throughout the world it must be Li Hung-chang. [382]

The interest attaching to this statesman consists in his having in his own person, and without a party, stood between the Old World and the New, having devoted his life to working out in practice a *modus vivendi* between them. His methods have been wholly empirical and opportunist, and hence no synthesis of his plan of operations is available, except such as we may compose out of the facts themselves. A few cardinal principles, nevertheless, stand out clearly in the life-work of this statesman. One is that of reorganising the defensive forces of the empire in accordance with the lessons learned from foreign raids; a second has been so to observe the treaties made with foreigners as to afford them no ground for complaint; and a third, when causes of difference arose, whether by inadvertence or by design, to agree with the adversary quickly. The following out of the first two might very well have entailed upon Li the reproach of favouring foreigners; the following out of the third may with greater justice have earned for him the character of a peace-at-any-price man. So consistently did he follow the line of action dictated by these principles, that no attacks on foreigners or on Christian missions have ever been tolerated within his jurisdiction. During the twenty-four years of his governor-generalship of Chihli, whose population is one of the most turbulent in the empire, there was not a single missionary outrage, his instructions to his district officials being peremptory, that, right or wrong, they must have no questions with foreigners. Had the other viceroys been similarly minded and equally resolute, no attacks on missionaries would have been recorded throughout the Chinese Empire. Though Li Hung-chang was as much anti-foreign at heart as every true Chinaman must be, he endeavoured, crudely following the example of the Japanese, to employ foreign men and appliances in order the more effectually to resist them. His pacific tendencies were no proof of pusillanimity, but rather of a deep consciousness, derived from personal experience, of the incapacity of China to resist foreign attack. Li Hung-chang's external policy, therefore, may be defined as the strengthening of the country to meet invasion, and the avoidance, while such preparations were being made, of every cause of collision with foreigners. These cardinal points had to be kept in view, like guiding stars, amid the exigencies of daily affairs, which alone were sufficient to fill up the measure of one man's capacity. The administration of two populous provinces, the superintendency of the maritime trade of half the empire, and incessant consultations concerning imperial affairs generally, constituted a burden which no one man could bear. While to these were added the whole details of national defence, naval and military reorganisation, the construction of a navy on foreign lines, the whole of which was undertaken by Li Hung-chang, working not only without a party but practically without a staff, and at the mercy of technical advisers who owed him no allegiance. The briefest recapitulation of the duties so undertaken would be enough to stagger the credulity of the most active administrator of the West; the recital would suffice, without any proof from experience, to show that these labours of Hercules could never, in fact, be performed. But the difference between performance and non-performance marks the chasm which divides the Chinese from the Western world, and distinguishes the order of ideas and practice which make for the preservation, from those which tend to the disintegration, of the Chinese empire itself. The task from which the mass of Chinese statesmen have recoiled, and which has only been attempted in a persistent manner by Li Hung-chang himself, was probably beyond the power of any man and of any party. [383]

But here the inquiry suggests itself, why a strong-headed and practical-minded man should have devoted a lifetime to impossible achievements, and why in a nation of great intellects the task should have been virtually relegated to one man? The Chinese are not fools; their mental capacity is second to that of no other race. Their culture is excessive, though narrow; and if we find them exhibiting in great national affairs no more intelligence than that shown by children in building castles of sand, it is natural to conclude that there is some fundamental misconception either on their part or on ours of the problem before them. But if we consider the Chinese as belonging to the world of moral force, then their misconception of all that belongs to the world of physical force is not only explicable, but it is inevitable; for between the two there is no common ground on which even a compromise might be effected, and the one must eternally misunderstand the other. [384]

The burden of the memorials of the Chinese high functionaries on this subject have been that the Middle Kingdom being overcome by the brute force of the rebellious barbarians, the obvious way to restore the lapsed authority of the empire was to acquire the instruments of foreign strength. This they diligently set themselves to do, but apparently without the slightest comprehension of [385]

the secret of the strength of the foreigners. The Chinese being what they were, could no more win the secret of the Western power by buying its weapons than a musical tyro could hope to rival the greatest artistes by possessing himself of a Stradivarius. Guns, ships, explosives of the latest type, are worse than dummies without the organised human force that gives them life. The element which would have infused vitality into the new organisation was the one thing beyond their imagination, and so far as they did comprehend it, it inspired them with aversion and awe, for it meant in their eyes delivering the keys of power into the hands of strangers. What was needed to regenerate the army, to create a navy, to reform the finances, was the liberal importation of men. This necessity was no doubt partially perceived by Li Hung-chang and his like, but never entirely even by him; for he remained throughout the one-eyed man among the blind, groping after something which he could only guess at. Teachers from Europe and America were employed in the country, and natives were sent to foreign countries to be instructed; but the spirit of the new instruction was never allowed to vitalise the organisation, and consequently all the knowledge that was acquired by both methods remained barren and unfruitful. Thus Li Hung-chang's efforts fell short of their object, and China continued to be the land of moral force for the iron-shod physical forces to trample on.

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From the earliest period of his career Li Hung-chang stood out far in advance of his fellows, and in all the troubles which have beset the empire during his time, it is he who has been thrust into the breach and made to bear the brunt of its misfortunes. Being the only man who did anything, he was naturally made responsible for all, and critics, both foreign and native, have had an easy task in laying bare his failures, which his contemporaries have escaped by confining themselves to official routine and playing for their own safety. Though the burden of the State has fallen upon the shoulders of Li Hung-chang more than upon any other individual, he has never flinched from the responsibility. The occurrences of 1894 and subsequently threw him into greater prominence than ever before. Forced to carry on the war with Japan, during which the defences of the empire for which he was responsible completely broke down, he was next also forced to make peace with that Power on very humiliating conditions. Seldom was a more pathetic scene witnessed than the virtual controller of the Chinese empire lying at the feet of a victorious enemy in a foreign country, with the bullet of an assassin in his cheek. More tragic still was his return to the capital with the treaty of Shimonoseki. An intense feeling against Li had been roused throughout the country. The provincial officials with singular unanimity denounced his treachery as they considered it, for the treaty was in their eyes no less disgraceful than the conduct of the war, for both of which Li alone was deemed responsible. The sentiment of the provinces was echoed in Peking, where his enemies in high places had almost secured the capital punishment of the negotiator, and failing that, his assassination, from which fate he was only saved by the veto of Prince Kung and the subsequent protection of the empress-dowager. He was also in an important sense under the protection of Russia, that Power having undertaken to hold him harmless from the consequences of his surrender to the Japanese. In order to take him out of the way of the conspiracies in Peking, Russia requested that an Imperial prince might be sent to the coronation ceremony in 1896. That being impossible by the laws of the empire, which Russia very well knew, a substitute of the highest rank had to be found, and thus Li Hung-chang was designated, by the approval of the empress-dowager and by the consent—reluctant it is believed—of the Emperor, for the mission of congratulation to the Czar. After the festivities at Moscow, Li made the tour of Europe and the United States, meeting everywhere with a distinguished reception.

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CHAPTER XXX.

CHINA'S AWAKENING.

Prestige gained, 1880-90—Yields to Japan in Korea while reasserting full suzerainty—The lessons of adversity—Schemes for naval and military reforms—Purchase and manufacture—Provincial system antagonistic to reform—Li Hung-Chang's efforts—Faithful service of foreign experts—Drill-instructors—Creation of a navy—Coast fortification—Superior efficiency of navy compared with army—Corruption and nepotism—Awakening of China apparent, not real.

The service of the navy in the conveyance of troops and of a special envoy to Korea in 1882 was the first which that luckless force was able to render to China. The service was repeated on two other occasions: when a High Commissioner was sent on a mission of imperial condolence in 1890, and again when an assassin was rescued from the revenge of counter-assassins and conveyed safely from China to Korea in 1894. The little kingdom thus played a considerable part in the awakening scenes of the suzerain empire.

On a retrospective view, indeed, it would appear that during the period in question China passed the culminating-point in her efforts to regain national prestige. She had just asserted herself in an unexpected manner in her dealings with Russia, playing a very different part in regard to her distant and worthless possessions in the north-west from what she had done twenty years before in regard to the integral part of her proper territories in the north-east, which she had surrendered with scarcely a protest. The world began to respect China as a power. Her decisive action in Korea showed that she was no longer disposed to permit her neighbours to trifle with the question of her suzerainty in that kingdom, and for ten years she was pre-eminent there in

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fact as well as of right. Yet with a significant qualification. For, being challenged by Japan while at war with France in 1885, she was unable to vindicate her sole supremacy in Korea, and was constrained to admit her rival into partnership. Thus was the first irrevocable step taken towards the future realisation of the Japanese designs on the peninsula. A *condominium* must ever be destructive to the policy of the less energetic member, and the treaty concluded between Li Hung-chang and Count Ito in 1885 was the fatal prelude to the events of ten years later. As the treaties granting to Russia a coequal right of navigating the Amur and a joint ownership of the Usuri province constituted the virtual surrender of Chinese rights, so any treaty with Japan, no matter on what conditions, respecting Korea, was a virtual abdication of the Chinese suzerainty. The right in common to send troops into Korea on notice given could have no other effect than to deliver up the kingdom to the Power which was the most alert in taking advantage of the agreement. In giving up half her rights China retreated from an inexpugnable position, and left herself no footing for defending the remaining half, when its turn came to be assailed.

But with the irony which is the very pathos of human and national decline, the outward pretence to authority became more demonstrative as the substance of the claim slipped away. Not for two hundred and fifty years had China asserted her prerogative with such uncompromising arrogance as when she sent an imperial mission of condolence to the royal Court in 1890, years after the keystone of her Korean arch had been pulled away. It was also about this period that the Chinese Minister to England lent his name to a manifesto warning the world of the coming resurrection of China. "The sleep and the awakening" strictly followed the law above alluded to, that hollowness, not solidity, makes the loudest sound. [390]

But so many interests are now inextricably interwoven with the destinies of China that her effort at reform and its failure compel us to give attention to the opening of a new chapter in the world's history. The humiliating foreign invasions, the three rebellions that shook the empire, and the numerous minor risings, had all left their impression. The lessons taught by these adversities had been taken to heart, and the rulers of the empire were called upon to devise a remedy. The first and most obvious desideratum was, of course, naval and military reform, or rather regeneration, whereby they might be strengthened to speak with their enemies in the gates. On this subject Chinese statesmen were absolutely at one with their officious foreign advisers: it was a subject which inspired many of the early homilies of the British Minister, if no others. There was, however, this essential difference in the conception of the means of carrying out the reform, that the foreign advisers of China were completely prepossessed by the notion that an imperial executive, if it did not exist, must be promptly created, while nothing was further from the imagination of the Chinese. They were entirely prepossessed by their tradition and the state of things actually existing, which they did not dream of changing. That was the provincial system on which the administration of the empire rested. The fiasco of the Lay-Osborn flotilla, which was the first crude attempt to mix the oil and vinegar of the two conflicting systems, revealed the fundamental, irreconcilable divergence between the two sets of ideas, which rendered all advice from the one side to the other futile, and co-operation impossible. That palpable failure of the Central Government was calculated to discourage fresh innovations from the same quarter, and the incident was constantly referred to by diplomatists as having blighted the promising career of Wên-siang as a reformer, he being the minister personally responsible for the scheme. [391]

The Chinese, nevertheless, proceeded according to their own lights to set their house in order in so far as its defensive services were concerned. The successful employment of foreign arms and foreign auxiliaries in the suppression of the Taiping rebellion showed them the way. It was a natural but a fatal error, which the Chinese have not to this day abjured, to attach too much importance to the arms, and too little to the man using them. They accordingly commenced in a rather wild and wayward manner to buy weapons and munitions, and then to set up in their own country the means of manufacturing the simpler kinds. The chief promoter, if not the originator, of these novelties was Li Hung-chang, who continued to be the presiding genius of military and naval reform, no matter in what province his official duties happened to lie. The personal authority wielded by the Grand Secretary in provinces beyond his own government was really a step towards centralisation of the executive, and with time and an adequate succession of followers in the same path there is no telling what changes in the Government system might not have been evolved from such a nucleus. But the one-man power was unequal to any great result; it also weakened with age, opposition, and discouragement. The actual reforms inaugurated remained strictly provincial, and even local. There was no evidence of initiative or supervision from the Central Government. The nearest approach to it was the establishment of an arsenal at Tientsin by Chunghou, the first superintendent of trade for the northern ports, and a member of the imperial clan. It would almost appear as if the Government had no concern with the more distant parts of the country, and the strange anomaly presented itself to the onlookers of large sums being expended on the most modern artillery and in the manufacture of thousands of arms of precision while the Peking field force was equipped with bows and arrows. [392]

There came a time at last when the necessity of some kind of centralisation was forced on the Government. It was after Prince Kung had been sent into retirement in 1884, when his younger brother, the father of the emperor, had decided to "come out" and take a part in the executive government, and especially after Prince Ch'un had made a short cruise in salt water in 1886, that a Naval Board was established in Peking itself with the prince at its head. The institution was of course laughed at, as the beginnings of things usually are, and its inefficiency was indeed glaring enough. It would have taken a generation in slow-moving China for such a board to have learned the rudiments of its duties. [393]

What we are at the moment concerned with is the naval and military reform of the twenty-five years preceding the advent of Prince Ch'un to power. In the purchase of war material no single system was followed. The provincial rulers at Canton, Foochow, Nanking, and Tientsin no doubt had to sanction what was done within their respective provinces—a check which might be perfunctory or conscientious—but practically the management was in the hands of subordinate officials without knowledge or training or visible responsibility. As in war each Chinese regiment fights for its own hand, or runs away as the case may be, so in the supply of arms each local official did pretty much what seemed right in his own eyes. Hence the heterogeneous composition of *matériel*, one small body of troops carrying in a campaign thirteen different patterns of rifle, with ammunition still more curiously diversified.

Concerning the arsenals established under the auspices of the various governors-general from Canton even to Kirin in Manchuria, and under the technical management of foreigners, the most remarkable point to be noted—and it applies generally to the employment of foreigners in China—is the faithful service the Chinese have been able to command in circumstances where it was hardly to be expected. An ignorant employer and an expert employee is a combination apt to engender the worst abuses, and the way the Chinese selected their foreign executive—a marine engineer here, a surgeon of a marching regiment there, a naval lieutenant somewhere else—was not the way, one would have thought, to obtain either honesty or efficiency. Yet the foreigners selected either possessed or acquired adequate qualifications, and one and all rendered devoted service to their employers. The position of these foreigners, however, never was or could be one of authority: whatever they did was under the orders of their Chinese superior, who was often too ignorant to weigh the reasons for what was done. In course of time the natives themselves became more instructed, but whether their half-knowledge was a help or a hindrance to the work of their foreign experts is problematical. Of the quality or quantity of the *matériel* turned out in the various Chinese arsenals it were useless to speak. It produced an illusory sense of security, and for a time imposed equally on native and foreigner.

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Nor was training entirely neglected. Drill-masters were engaged. Schools were established in connection with the arsenals, where naval instruction especially was carried to a high standard. Students sent to Europe proved themselves most apt to assimilate the instruction given to them. Of those who distinguished themselves at Greenwich may be mentioned the present Minister to the Court of St James's. Cadets were also received into the British navy, and some very expert officers were turned out by these means. A large number of youths were at one time selected to be educated in the United States, remaining there long enough to learn to read and write English, and to become enamoured of Western life. This educational experiment was interesting in many ways. The youths who were sent to America under the care and at the instigation of the Cantonese, Yung Wing, who had himself been educated in the United States, were domiciled for the most part with private families there; and they so imbibed the influence of their surroundings that a high sense of honour was developed in them. The writer can speak from personal experience of the fidelity and efficiency of some of these students. Captain Clayson, who had several serving under him in the "Peiyang Squadron," has said that although on their return to China the authorities had distributed them in services other than those for which they had been trained, yet because of the school discipline they had been subjected to, and the sense of honour developed by their contact with Western people, he found them far more useful and trustworthy than the men who had been trained in Chinese naval schools. This experience seems to suggest that there are good moral qualities of the Chinese waiting, like the mineral ores in their country, for an awakening influence. In all these progressive efforts Li Hung-chang retained the lead, and his own province was well in advance in educational enterprises. Besides a military school with German, and a naval school with English, instructors, he set up within a mile of his Yamên a fairly furnished medical school with a hospital attached. His special corps of foreign-drilled troops was the best equipped and best disciplined force in the empire.

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While all this progress was being made in the direction of military efficiency, the naval requirements of the country were not neglected. The failure of the undigested Lay-Osborn scheme showed the Chinese that the naval problem must be attacked in a different fashion. It was a false start, and they must begin again. Accordingly, profiting by what they had heard and seen of the efficient service rendered in their narrow waters by foreign gunboats, the Chinese Government contracted with the Armstrong firm for a small flotilla carrying one heavy gun with a wide range of fire. These craft were little more than floating gun-carriages; but notwithstanding broad beam and flat bottoms, they were moderately sea-worthy. They were known as the Alphabeticals, from being named after the Greek letters. This modest flotilla was the nucleus of the Chinese navy.

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Attempts at naval construction were made at Shanghai, Foochow, and Canton; but beyond providing work and training for native artificers, and acting occasionally as transports on a small scale, despatch-carriers, and official yachts, the vessels turned out from native yards rendered no service to the country. The Chinese navy as a potential military arm only took shape when Li Hung-chang was able to carry the Government with him so far as to purchase effective war-ships in Europe, to institute a system of training under competent foreign officers, and to establish naval harbours with docks and workshops. Two iron-clad battleships, a respectable squadron of cruisers, and some smaller craft, manned by trained crews and officered by men who had received a regular naval education and perfectly understood their duties, constituted the fighting navy of China. The two English officers who supervised the training, Captain Tracy at Foochow and Captain Lang in the Gulf of Pechili, were thoroughly satisfied with the capacity of both officers and men, and what was distinguished as the Peiyang or Northern Squadron was brought

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up by the latter officer to such a state of efficiency that he reckoned that a further two years' drill would enable the Chinese to take its place, on a small scale, among the best equipped fleets in the world.

And while the navy was developing so satisfactorily, coast fortifications also made great progress. The mouths of rivers were all defended by the best modern guns; three naval ports in the Gulf of Pechili—Port Arthur, Weihai-wei, and Talien-wan—were fortified at great expense, and everything externally evinced a determination on the part of China to place herself in a position of independence, delivered from the fear of foreign attack, except of course by land, and even that had been partially provided for, as we have seen, by the military establishments in Manchuria.

Between the naval and the military preparations, however, there was an immense disparity. The force for which Li Hung-chang was personally responsible was carefully drilled, armed, fed, and paid, and, given competent leading, would no doubt have rendered a good account of itself; but the army as a whole was never brought to a state approaching efficiency. The navy, on the other hand, possessed the best ships and the best armament that money could buy, with the most modern appliances for war, and its *personnel* was subjected to the most careful discipline. The fortress guns were also of the newest and best pattern, and nothing was spared, apparently, to fit them for the purpose for which they were intended. It was generally conceded that the fortresses so armed were safe from attack by sea.

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The explanation of the great difference between the organisation of the sea and the land forces seems to be that the former, being a new creation, was beyond the range of criticism and was unhampered by any traditions, while the reform of the army was merely patching a worn-out garment. The immemorial conditions of military service were unchanged. No army was formed, but a series of local levies raised without cohesion or central control. The foreign instructors were kept strictly to their class-work, were subordinated to the people whom they had to instruct, and possessed no kind of authority. They were allowed to drill the men, while the officers for the most part held themselves above the drudgery of the parade-ground. The few who had acquired a smattering of military education in Europe were as helpless as the foreign drill-masters to move their wholly ignorant superiors. Hence abuses of the most grotesque kind did not creep but rushed into every camp and every school, reducing the scientific teaching to a hollow farce.

The familiar factors of peculation and nepotism had an important influence on these naval and military developments in China. Such things are no monopoly of the Chinese. If corruption could ruin a State, it would not be necessary to look so far afield as China for national disasters. But the form which the vice takes in China has a determining effect on the administration quite irrespective of the waste of resources and diminution of efficiency which are common to corruption in all its forms. Thus if we have to reconcile the lavish purchases of material with the attenuation of *personnel*, we need only reflect that the former bring large emoluments with little labour to the official employed, while the training of men involves much work and little profit. Further, if we want an explanation of the infinite diversity of the arms which are furnished to the troops, we may find it in the excessive competition among officials for a share of the traffic, and the interest which the higher authorities have in passing without inspection what is purveyed by their subordinates.

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Nepotism in China is part and parcel of the family system, which is the palladium of the nation. Every military corps raised is essentially territorial; and if ever it is moved from one province to another, it looks to a territorial chief, and no stranger can command it. Li Hung-chang's disciplined troops, if not all of his own clan, were at least the natives of his province and spoke his dialect. His subordinate officials were blood relations and family adherents. It needs no argument to show how such a survival of feudalism militates against national organisation. Pure feudalism, indeed, would be less detrimental; for under it territorial exclusiveness would at least be balanced by territorial responsibility, but under the short-service system of China a governor or governor-general may during his three years' term throw everything into confusion and half ruin the finances of a province with which he is precluded from having any territorial tie, and then proceed to another and repeat the performance. The navy, though, as we have said, exempt from the incubus of tradition, was nevertheless unable to withstand the pressure of immemorial heredity. As the first and principal naval school happened to be at Foochow, it was natural that new battleships and cruisers should be officered and manned in the first instance by natives of Fukien province. The admiral, however, hailed from another province—that of Li Hung-chang. Though brave and capable, Admiral Ting was uneducated, and found it hard to hold his own among the captains and lieutenants who had been to Greenwich and could speak and write English, and some of them French. Neither the Chinese admiral nor the English co-admiral—who was led to believe he possessed authority, but was deceived—were able to repress the intrigues which ran riot among the Foochow officers,—intrigues having for their object the complete control of the fleet, the power of keeping out and admitting whom they chose without reference to qualifications, and the general determination to subordinate the naval service to their personal and family advantage. The presence of Captain Lang was a hindrance to their schemes, and they intrigued him out. But as the fleet belonged to the north, they were unable to exclude northern seamen from the country round Weihai-wei, who proved when the day of trial came the most intelligent and the staunchest force that China possessed.

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The Peiyang Squadron was the nearest approach to an imperial navy that China ever possessed, and yet it was so far provincial that it could not be sent into the central or southern waters

without creating jealousy on the part of the local authorities, just as if it had been a foreign force. In 1891, when anti-foreign riots in various places on the Yangtze threatened to endanger the peace of the empire, the Imperial Government allowed foreign ships of war to proceed up the river for the purpose of preventing outbreaks rather than offend the susceptibilities of the provincial authorities by employing their own naval forces on that duty. During that critical period the Peiyang Squadron was cruising in Japanese waters while the Great River was being patrolled by foreign gunboats.

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These various evidences of martial energy procured for China the credit of a real awakening, and ensured her the respect due to a serious Power. Yet the unsoundness of the foundation on which her new prestige rested was no secret to any one who took the trouble to consider the facts, for all the weaknesses we have mentioned, with many more, were notorious to every foreign resident in China; nor was there a naval officer of any nation who did not regard the fighting value of the Chinese fleet as nothing. Ships were good, officers and men in themselves were passable, but without organisation, while the whole force was governed by other than militant principles. The attempted military reorganisation could, in fact, have no vitality except as a branch of a general reform of the administration, the keystone of which was fiscal. Of this, however, the Chinese rulers seemed to take no heed, contenting themselves with snatching at what was superficial and conspicuous to the eye. The Chinese florists in the spring-time supply to hawkers shrubs covered with blossom which is so cleverly attached by fine wire to the twigs as almost to deceive the elect. This is practically what the Chinese Government had been doing with their national defences, so that on the first trial they collapsed like a sapless flower. These experiences have an important bearing on the large problem of Chinese reform and reorganisation, and indeed on the continued existence of the empire.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

THE COLLAPSE.

China clings to universal sovereignty—Demonstration of same towards Korea—Irritating to Japanese—Their aspirations in Korea—Insurrection in southern districts—Chinese troops sent there—Japanese simultaneously occupy Korean capital—War between China and Japan—China defeated—Causes and consequences—General sympathy with Japan.

We have seen that up to the end of 1892 the Chinese Government clung to the figment of universal sovereignty. Perhaps it was the figment that clung to them, they not knowing how to drop it. When they had, under stress, seemed to concede the principle of equality, it was not done heartily, but to serve a momentary purpose. Like a belligerent who continues a guerilla warfare after concluding peace, they fought inch by inch for the rags of the old prerogative after having by treaty surrendered it. It had been long predicted that their refusal or inability to bring their theories into agreement with patent facts, and to come into line with the Powers of the world, must lead to tragic consequences. Foreign nations laughed at the Chinese pretension as an innocent archaic survival. But those individuals to whose lot it fell, in their own persons, to suffer the continued humiliation which was a consequence of the survival, did not find the comedy of the situation quite so congenial. The high-spirited nation living in the closest neighbourhood to China, using its language and literature, was naturally more galled by the Chinese assumption than those distant peoples who only suffered in the persons of their diplomatic agents. Though it would be more than the evidence warrants to say that the pretension of the Chinese Government was directly provocative of the events of 1894, yet it is certain that it had a full share in filling the cup. Nowhere had the Chinese conception of supremacy been exemplified in a more uncompromising form than in her relations with Korea. Her position as suzerain was a reality. She had in times past defended her tributary at great cost, had marked the relationship by permanent monuments, and had maintained the rites necessary to keep her title alive. As late as 1890 the tributary formalities were repeated conspicuously before the world. In that year the "Grand" Queen-Dowager Chao of Korea died. According to custom the king despatched a messenger to Peking to report the death to his suzerain. The envoy presented his papers kneeling before the vice-president of the Board of Rites. He was the bearer of a petition from the king descanting on the miseries of his country, and expressing regret that, owing to the straitened circumstances of his Court, he might be unable to carry out all the ceremonies required for the entertainment of the usual mission of condolence from the emperor; therefore, as "an infant trusting to the tender mercies of his parents," the king begged that not a mission, but a message

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only, might be returned to him by the hands of his own envoy. The imperial decree in reply to this petition, while admitting the facts of the situation as set forth by the king, nevertheless announced that the customary usage must be maintained, only an important concession would be made to the poverty of Korea in the route which would be followed by the new mission. Previous envoys had made the whole journey between the two capitals by land, and after entering Korean territory they had to pass many stations in their slow march to the capital, involving much expense to the country through which they travelled. All this would be saved on the present occasion by the two commissioners travelling by sea, and landing at Chemulpo, a few miles only from the capital. The king had to submit to the modified burden, if such he really considered it. The ceremonies observed were elaborate and impressive. Frequent prostrations by Korean officials before the emperor's tablet, and before the Imperial Commissioners, introduced the proceedings; afterwards the king was taken charge of by the Chinese master of ceremonies, led through a complicated ritual, and told to bend, kneel, *kotow*, and stand erect at so many different stages that the mere reading of the official account of them is bewildering. The reporter's conclusion gives the gist of the whole ceremonial from the Chinese point of view: "The emperor's consideration for his vassal State as evinced by his thoughtfulness in matters pertaining to the mission is fathomless. How admirable and satisfactory! And how glorious!"

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All this was unexceptionably correct, and in its fantastic way expressed an actuality not to be contested. Yet to the Japanese, with their antagonistic policy, we can well understand that this renewed assertion of the Chinese suzerainty, after the convention of 1885, must have been highly irritating. Scarcely less so was the superior position habitually assigned to the Chinese Resident over all the other foreign representatives at the Korean Court. He alone at all times had the ear of the king; he was the only one privileged to enter the palace in his sedan chair, the others having to leave theirs at the gate and walk. While abstaining from interference in small things, the Chinese Resident did, in fact, direct the national policy of Korea so far as such a thing could be said to exist.

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As the affairs of Korea formed the occasion, if not the cause, of the Japanese War in 1894, it might seem desirable to refer once more to the troubles and misgovernment of that country. To explain them would be quite impossible, for to say that there are wheels within wheels, intrigue within intrigue, the whole revolving round a pivot of sordid corruption, is perhaps the only general account that can be given of the state of the Government and of its official hierarchy. But the conflict between China and Japan held on its way through the labyrinth of local intrigue, and eventually produced a result which, strange to say, seems never to have been anticipated by any one outside the Government circles of Japan. The energetic Chinese Resident at the Korean Court may perhaps have been needlessly ostentatious in asserting the legitimate paramountcy of China, but the aggression of the Japanese in various parts of the country, and the extravagant claims they founded upon these aggressions, really called for a champion of Korean independence, a function which Yuan Shih-kai^[32] filled with considerable ability. The subordination of Korea to China was nowhere visible except in Court relations. The subjugation of the peninsula by the Japanese, on the other hand, was rapidly bringing the population itself into bondage to alien merchants, adventurers, and usurers, actively supported by their own Government. If they had had the patience to wait a few years, the Japanese must have won Korea by energetic infiltration alone.

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But these things did not move fast enough for the settled ambition of Japan, which she with diligence, unanimity, and wonderful secrecy determined to develop by force of arms. It would be idle to seek for the causes of the war elsewhere than in this forward national policy of Japan. Alert as she had been to seize every chance that offered of detaching Korea from her allegiance to China, her preparations were not sufficiently complete to justify her unmasking her whole policy until 1894, when the grand opportunity for which she had been waiting, if she did not actively assist in bringing it about, presented itself. What proved to be an ill-advised interference of China in the internal affairs of Korea furnished the occasion. An insurrection had broken out in the southern part of the peninsula, and the king had no forces to put it down. Various versions had been circulated of the extent and character of the insurrection; but when it had continued for some time, and nothing was done to check it, the advisers of the Chinese Government became apprehensive of interference by some foreign Power for the restoration of order. Strangely enough, Japan was the very last quarter from which this danger was anticipated. The Chinese at length summoned resolution to send a force to the king's assistance to put down the insurrection, but whether the king in his heart desired this armed interference it is impossible for us to say.

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Li Hung-chang was personally opposed to any such expedition, and when goaded to action from Peking, where the bellicose spirit had been generated, he pointed out that no request had been received from the king. This omission was also remarked upon by the practical Admiral Ting, and both may have hoped that the absence of so important a link in the chain would enable them to avoid the overt action which they had the best grounds for deprecating. Such a hope, if it existed, was of brief duration; for the King of Korea was induced, by influences brought to bear on him, "to place himself in order" and implore his suzerain for assistance, which the suzerain could no longer withhold. Then was Li Hung-chang pressed by that body whose characteristic was the negation of initiative, the Tsungli-Yamên, and like a sluggish horse which once takes the bit in its teeth, the Yamên became as impatient for action as in all its previous history it had been resolute in evasion. When but a few days had elapsed since the issue of the order, and the troops were not yet embarked, the Ministers, quite ignorant of what was involved in sending a military force across the sea, began to jeer Li Hung-chang on his delay, hinting that he was perhaps growing stale with age. The troops were, nevertheless, despatched all too soon. On their landing at

Yashan in Southern Korea, the insurrection immediately collapsed: such was the prestige of the imperial authority.

In order to comply with the letter of the Li-Ito convention China notified Japan officially of the despatch of these troops, some 2000 in all, and of the purpose for which they were sent. But Japan had no need to wait for any such formal intimation. She had her Intelligence Department, remarkably alert. Japanese—not perhaps always known as such—were employed in the Chinese official bureaus, even in the most confidential departments, while Japanese in disguise swarmed in all the military centres. The Chinese telegraph service has no secrets from any one who thinks it worth his while to possess them. Consequently every detail of the preparation, every point in the discussion, and every step in embarkation, was punctually telegraphed by the Japanese consul to the Foreign Office in Tokio. Hence it was that Japanese troops arrived in Korea simultaneously with the Chinese, only they numbered 10,000 against 2000, and instead of being assigned to the region of the insurrection, in accordance with the provisions of the Li-Ito convention, they marched straight to the capital and took possession of the king. The insurrection having collapsed, the Chinese troops were under orders of withdrawal, and would have returned home in the same transports that conveyed them to Korea but for the unaccountable, and of course illegitimate, presence of Japanese troops at the capital. Notwithstanding the provocation to retain the Chinese troops in Korea as a counterbalance to those, five times more numerous, which had been sent by Japan, the Chinese authorities were advised by their best friends to recall their troops, even though the Japanese should thereby be apparently left in possession of the field. The Chinese would in that case have maintained an unassailably correct position, and Japan would have had to dispense with her pretexts for war. Evacuation by the Chinese had been actually decided upon, and the steamer Kowshing was chartered for the purpose of bringing back the troops. Before the measure was carried out, however, other counsels prevailed, and that very ship was employed in conveying more troops to reinforce the first expedition, and in the midst of pretended negotiations for an arrangement between the two Powers, the Japanese sank the Kowshing on the high sea with all on board.

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It is usual, as a matter of form, if nothing else, to assign some specific cause for a war; but though many able writers have essayed to explain the Japanese action in 1894, they have all of them left the question in greater obscurity than they found it. Nor did the formal declaration of war by the Mikado throw any light on the subject. A Japanese statesman being asked what the war was about, replied bluntly, "It is to defeat China," and the most elaborate exposition of motives or policy does not carry us perceptibly further than this concise and straightforward statement. The Chinese Government itself held precisely the same view as to the object of the war, though its perceptions were so obscured that it was quite unaware of its incapacity for defence. Neither did it during the actual progress of hostilities realise the cause of its defeat. Indeed there is no evidence to show that China has even to this day discovered the secret of her impotence.

The course and immediate consequence of the war itself have been set forth in many books, and are so well known as to render it superfluous to enter into any detail here. A few general points only need be mentioned as a key to what followed.

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1. Russia took unusual pains to dissuade Japan from engaging in the war, pointing out in clear terms that her interests would not allow her to be an indifferent spectator of any changes on the continent of Asia.

2. Great Britain next endeavoured to patch up the supposed quarrel—which could never be defined in words—between China and Japan, and on the day on which her agent in Tokio expressed himself confident that the differences, so far as he understood them, would be arranged without recourse to war, the British chartered transport Kowshing was sunk with 1200 men on board.

3. The solution of the question which would have reconciled the views of the four Powers more immediately concerned was the neutralisation of Korea. Great Britain, Russia, and Japan were of one mind on this subject, and China would have hailed such an escape from her chronic embarrassment respecting Korea. Why, then, was no attempt made to bring about such a solution? Want of co-ordination, it would appear; diplomatic paralysis. Though the views of each Power separately ascertained were identical, none of them would speak first, and there was no fifth party to assume the initiative in bringing them to a common understanding. The blame of this must be equally distributed, though in point of fact there were degrees of responsibility which it would be useless now to recall. It is only one example the more of the great gap which often yawns between professional diplomacy and practical politics.

The issue of the war was a foregone conclusion, both by sea and land. China had no army, and the more numerous her levies the more helpless they were before a disciplined enemy. The navy failed precisely where it was expected to fail. It was an incomplete machine, neglected and in disorder, deficient in many essential things. Worst of all, there was no heart in it. Captain Lang, R.N., and other British officers had been expelled from the service through a conspiracy of the captains in 1890, and thenceforth its deterioration became rapid. The efficiency of the navy for its main purpose was the last thing considered by the cabal. They relied absolutely on the diplomatic resources of Li Hung-chang to save them from any possible trial of strength, and refused to face an alternative even by way of argument. Bravery was by no means lacking in the ranks, nor professional education among the officers. There were some who had Nelson's maxims at the tip of their tongue, and there were some who added to a thorough naval training the spirit

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of devotion which makes heroes. But these qualities were isolated and incoherent; there was no tradition to render them fruitful, no martial spirit, no disgrace for the coward, no honour for the valiant. The fleet was a body, defective enough at that, but without a soul. The minds of the captains being set on quite other objects than the efficiency of their service, when the crisis threatened they were intent only on evading collisions. The valour of the admiral, the fine sense of duty of individual officers, and the fighting qualities of a considerable body of the seamen, were swamped in the prevailing pusillanimity of the service; the choice spirits were discouraged by the fatuous neglect at headquarters to supply the ordinary necessaries of warfare. It was the writer's fortune to make a passage in a Chinese protected cruiser in September 1894, a few days before the great naval action off the Yalu, and it was most pathetic to hear the defects pointed out by the captain and first lieutenant—defects in ammunition for the guns mounted, absence of gun crews, so that in action men would have to be taken from one gun to another and put to work for which they had no training, everywhere the ship spoiled for want of the ha'porth of tar. That particular vessel was not disgraced in the Yalu fight, but was brought into Port Arthur by the superhuman exertions of her officers, her iron deck beams twisted by the fire and her plates red hot. A second conversation with the captain and first lieutenant after the action was but a painful commentary on that of the week before. The one was prediction, the other fulfilment. Perhaps the state of the navy could not be more forcibly illustrated than by the fact that the fleet was led into action at the Yalu by a German military officer. [413]

China was indeed defeated, amid the applause of Europe and the whole world, and the primeval law of violence received a new consecration. This is the one outcome of the war which seems likely to leave a permanent impress on the surface of our civilisation, for the spontaneous outburst from the four corners of the earth cannot be referred to any venal or wire-pulling agency. There had been foreign wars in China before, wars entered upon after long discussion and accumulating causes of quarrel. Their merits divided the opinion of the world—they divided even the nations that waged them; and the opposition was on one occasion strong enough to overturn a British Government that had actually entered into hostilities against China. But in 1894 there was not a dissentient voice. The cause of the war was not known and not inquired into, the universal enthusiasm was simply for the victor, as such, without regard to anything but his military prowess. That was what the world fell down and worshipped. Not any righteous cause, or racial sympathy, or community of interest, inspired their acclamations; for none of these things were considered or understood by the masses who chorussed the triumph of the conqueror of China. English pens and tongues beyond all others urged the victorious Power to make crushing conditions of peace, and in the clamour traditional landmarks were forgotten. The policy of saving China, the great English milch cow, from destruction, which had been patiently followed by Great Britain for forty years, was thus suddenly submerged in a wave of warlike enthusiasm. [414]

Press-made feeling was both stronger and had more influence on the action of Government in England than in any other country. The war had upset the balance of power in Asia, but the press took no heed of that, and urged with conspicuous success that the Japanese should on no account be hindered in their seizure of the spoils. Other countries, keeping a cooler outlook on eventualities, were unable to regard the occupation of Liao-tung by Japanese forces with the equanimity with which it was viewed in England, though they made no objection to the enormous indemnities forced from China, which might indeed be philosophically regarded by them as a tax levied specially on British trade. Being threatened in her weakest frontier by this ambitious military Power, Russia had intimated before war began, in no ambiguous terms, that she could not tolerate such a neighbour, and on the conclusion of peace she took steps to give effect to that resolution. Russia had throughout the war been extremely nervous about the possible action of Great Britain, and would have gone considerable lengths to come to an understanding with her; but towards the end, when the pretensions of the Japanese began to assume extravagant dimensions, their moral effect on the Great Powers enabled her to dispense with English favour by drawing France and Germany to her support. The gravity of the Japanese demands was the factor that drew the three Powers together, and Li Hung-chang, when he went as envoy to Japan in March 1895, assented to the indemnity and the surrender of territory on the assurance given him that the more excessive the conditions of peace he might be forced to sign, the more certain were they to be revised by the intervention of the Powers. The three Powers proved strong enough to induce Japan to give up Liao-tung for an increased indemnity, and the future of the Far East thus was arranged in conferences from which Great Britain had excluded herself. There were several reasons for the abstention of the British Government from taking a share in this settlement. One was the complete failure of their Intelligence Department before, during, and after the war. But the fervour of the nation in deprecating interference with the Japanese was a sufficient, and no doubt a welcome, warrant for the inaction of the Government. An experienced observer of English public life remarked afterwards that he had never known a situation in which the press, metropolitan and provincial, had displayed such entire unanimity and lavished such unmixed praise on the Government for its isolation. And yet it was a unanimity of nescience, of simple abdication, the surrender of a position in the Far East which had been built up for two generations on the permanent interests of the country, and which, sacrificed at the critical moment, is gone beyond recall. The "new diplomacy," uninstructed popular impulse, never had a freer field; for the Government which it dominated was scarcely more enlightened, and decidedly more apathetic, than the nation itself. [415] [416]



MINISTERS OF THE YAMÊN OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.
H.E. Shên Kuei-fên.
H.E. Tung Hsün.
H.E. Mao Chang-tsi.

From a photo by J. Thomson, Grosvenor Street, W.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

THE RESETTLEMENT OF THE FAR EAST.

An unsettlement—Interference of Russia, Germany, and France—China reduced to dependence—Disintegration proceeds—France forces China to violate her treaties with England—Russian approval—The loans pressed upon China—Russia vetoes English loan, substituting a French one, Russia standing security—Germany seizes Kiaochow—Russia seizes Port-Arthur—England's remonstrance unheeded—A diplomatic correspondence explained—British public aroused to importance of the Far Eastern question—Call upon Government to take protective action.

It would perhaps be in stricter accordance with facts to describe what ensued on the Chinese collapse as a process of unsettlement than resettlement, since no man now living is likely to see the end of the dislocation effected by the transactions of 1895. The crude ingredients of national policy, stripped of the international decencies with which they were wont to be invested, were then thrown into the caldron; elementary forces, naked and undisguised, confronted each other; and the scramble which moderate men had hoped to see indefinitely postponed was entered into with the zest of a Cornish wrecking raid. The officious interference of quasi-friendly Powers to save the derelict empire from mutilation proved, according to unvarying experience, a remedy which was worse than the disease. Russia, Germany, and France proceeded to treat China as a No Man's Land; disintegration was the order of the day. The example was, of course, contagious.

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Other Powers, with no more substantial ground of claim than was afforded by the defencelessness of China, began whetting their knives to carve the moribund carcass.

A momentous transformation had been effected in a few months. China now occupied the paradoxical position of a protected State without protection; of a sovereign State shorn of the power of fulfilling her obligations. To this impossible situation the Government itself had been an efficient contributor. During the progress of the war China had, of her own motion, thrown herself on the mercy of the world. Before all the Powers, great and small, with whom she had intercourse, she humbled herself in the dust, imploring them collectively, separately, or anyhow, to save her from her relentless foe. She, the titular mistress of the world, grovelled thus at the feet of Powers to whom she would not, even then, in plain words, have conceded equality. And when assistance eventually came it was imposed on her by external force. She could make no conditions.

The revolution which the revised treaty of Shimonoseki effected in the international status of China was naturally first realised by those who had brought it about. China ceased to be a free agent; she became a vassal, and not to one Power only. And the intervening Powers lost no time in demonstrating the fact, France taking the lead. Within two months of the revision of the treaty of Shimonoseki the French Minister in Peking compelled China to sign a treaty granting to France large territorial concessions on which she had long had her eye, with commercial privileges never before granted to any Power. But the stipulations of the French convention were in open conflict with those of an existing treaty with this country, inasmuch as they gave to France a portion of the Shan States, which had been expressly reserved as a neutral zone in the treaty between China and Great Britain. The British Minister, pointing this out before the French treaty was concluded, protested against its signature. The Ministers of the Yamèn admitted the justice of his contention, nor can it be said the protest was unheeded. With the Yamèn it was a question solely of the balance of power, and feeling that the French force was the heaviest in the scale, they yielded to that and signed the treaty with France in direct violation of that which they had previously signed with Great Britain. As if to leave no ambiguity as to the true significance of the change of status which had come over China, the Russian Minister on the day following made a formal visit to the Tsungli-Yamèn, with more than the customary display, to congratulate the Chinese Ministers on what they had done, and to assure them of the approval of his Government.

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This novel application of the law of force threw out of gear the whole system of Chinese national engagements, and was quite incompatible with normal diplomatic relations. Formerly the struggle had lain between China and all the Powers, her obligations to whom were observed in proportion to the amount of coercion applied by, or to be apprehended from, each. From this resulted a chronic demand for the fulfilment of agreements, and constant reclamations for non-fulfilment. But now the native reluctance to observe treaties was potentially reinforced by the action of foreign Powers in not only condoning, but explicitly insisting upon, China's violating her engagements.

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It may be that this species of *force majeure* was not wholly unwelcome to the Chinese. It certainly widened the field for their favourite tactics of playing off one foreign Power against another. A better answer than heretofore was now available to all demands and remonstrances. "We should for our part be most happy to do as you desire, but—what would Russia say, what would France say?" Thus diplomacy in China at once degenerated into a "tug of war" contest, China herself being merely the rope which was pulled. She was virtually ruled out of the active management of her own affairs and became the *corpus vile* for rival aggressors.

Aggression sometimes assumed strange forms. One of the first which the treaty of peace with Japan developed was a remarkable competition in lending money to the Chinese. The indemnities to be paid to Japan were heavy, and it was obvious that China must borrow. But before she had time to take any step in that direction money was being thrust upon her. First in the ranks were English loan-mongers, who had had some experience in the business. Their negotiations were slow and halting; and when they had at last concluded a contract it was only to be told that Russia objected to the transaction, and required that China should borrow from French capitalists, who were willing to lend on the guarantee of Russia. The Chinese Government were absolutely passive, not willingly, but of necessity; they had not asked for the guarantee which Russia volunteered, and were quite willing to accept the loan of £16,000,000 sterling on the English terms. But Russia simply insisted on their taking the French money, under an ominous threat, while she herself stood security for the solvency of China, thereby assuming the position of first mortgagee on the revenues of that empire. That accomplished, Russia stipulated that China should contract no further loan for a period of six months.

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The precedent set by Russia and France of ignoring the Government of China as an efficient factor in negotiations respecting her territory or her obligations was followed to the letter by Germany when in November 1897 she took possession of the most important naval harbour on the Chinese coast, with an adequate hinterland, carrying elastic rights extending over an immense area of country. Admiral von Diederichs reduced the question of the acquisition to its very simplest expression. "Common-sense," he submitted to the Chinese commandant, "must tell you on which side the superior force lies, and therefore you would be wise to make way for me without resistance." With the prize in her hands, Germany next demanded a formal title to what she had seized, and instead of giving the German Minister his passports the Chinese Government granted the request.

In this unceremonious manner was the new status of China embodied in monumental facts. She

was the common victim, having no power to bind or loose save in accordance with the dictates of her masters. The Chinese Government seemed to have abdicated sovereign functions. [422]

After France and Germany it was Russia's turn to give tangible evidence of the real ascendancy she had gained over the Chinese Imperial Government. Hers was the only true mastery. The others might wrest provinces and extort concessions from a prostrate Government, but Russia alone reached the cerebral centre and controlled—so far as outward effect went—the volition of the organism. Negotiations, partly revealed in 1895, showed conclusively the scope and direction of her Chinese policy. It was profound and practical, continuing on the lines that had proved so successful in the past. The basis of it was an ostensible friendship for China, out of which grew a protective alliance, and the peculiar kind of partnership which had constituted the intermediate stage in the previous great territorial acquisitions of Russia. The joint right of the two Powers—to the exclusion of all others—to navigate the Amur and the Songari, and the joint possession of the Usuri territory—"details to be hereafter settled"—was now to be applied to the coast and harbours of Liao-tung, of which Russia was to have the use, afterwards defined in a treaty as the "usufruct." The gentlest methods were to be used, and so far as mere phrases were concerned, a matter on which the Chinese always were punctilious, the utmost consideration for their feelings was to be shown. Russia had two immediate objects in view, both of cardinal importance to her. The first was to obtain a terminus for the Great Siberian Railway more southerly than Vladivostock, which could only be obtained in Korean or Chinese territory. The second—the [423] necessary corollary of the first—was to bring the territory through which the railway should run within the Russian administration. The sanction of China to a branch of the Siberian Railway being carried through Manchuria to a terminus on the Liao-tung littoral was formally given in conferences between Li Hung-chang and the Czar on the occasion of the coronation at Moscow in 1896. The details were afterwards developed in a way of which it is probable the Chinese Government had little foresight; but it would have made no difference, for to Russia nothing could be denied.

Out of these comprehensive projects of Russia—projects which belonged to the very highest order of imperial statecraft—arose a strange unequal duel between Russian and British diplomacy, which has also left its mark on history. Her Majesty's Government and their agents abroad having been found wanting in the matter of information during the upheaval of the Far East, it appeared to be their *rôle* to ignore and deny the facts upon which other Powers were acting. In particular the whole Russian scheme of utilising Chinese territory and controlling the Chinese Government was discredited with considerable vehemence. The consequence of this attitude of scepticism was that whatever Great Britain might resolve to do must be done in the dark. Assured by their agents in the Far East that the bay of Kiaochow was worthless, the British Government satisfied themselves that Germany had made a poor bargain in taking it. Dismissing [424] as a phantasy the whole string of facts concerning Russia's plans, the British Government exposed themselves to collision with those plans, and received in consequence a series of diplomatic humiliations, entailing upon the country permanent disadvantages of a most substantial kind. Towards the end of 1898, soon after the German seizure of Kiaochow, a harbour which had also proved a convenient winter rendezvous for the Russian fleet, the announcement came from China that the latter had received permission from the Chinese Government to winter at Port Arthur on the opposite coast of Liao-tung. Thereupon a discussion was raised between London and St Petersburg concerning the prospective designs of Russia. This discussion was stamped from its origin with futility by previous communications with the Russian Government, the purport of which was inferred from a speech by Mr Balfour in February 1896. On that occasion he declared that the British Government would not only not oppose, but would hail with satisfaction, the acquisition by Russia of an ice-free port in the Pacific. As her Majesty's Government held Russia to the pledge she gave in 1886 to respect the integrity of the Korean coast, it followed that the ice-free harbour contemplated by Mr Balfour could only be in Chinese territory, which, as affecting the dominating power of Russia in the Far East, was greatly in advance of what the occupation of a Korean harbour would have been. Korea had been safeguarded from encroachment because it was the stepping-stone to China, but the Russian lodgment on the inner waters of China itself deprived Korea of most of its strategical value. Hence Russia kept silence when Mr Curzon stated in Parliament that the pledge held good which preserved the integrity of Korea, a pledge which had lost its significance. This acquiescence [425] in Russia's taking an ice-free port on the Chinese coast was in direct contradiction to other no less authoritative statements of the British Government. As, for instance, the resolution passed by the House of Commons, and accepted by the Government, pledging them to maintain the integrity of China, followed by the statement by the Under Secretary of State that the Liao-tung coast with its harbours constituted an integral part of the Chinese dominions. It is obvious that this confusion arose either from lack of information or lack of interest in the subject, coupled in either case with absent-mindedness on the part of the British Government. But these inconsistencies of the members of the British Government made no difference to the steady prosecution of the Russian plans, which were now developed with great rapidity. These pretensions were signalled by two memorable incidents, following each other so closely as to be practically simultaneous, in January 1898. The first was a new loan to the Chinese under negotiation by British financiers, to assist which her Majesty's Government was strongly urged by the China merchants to give its guarantee to the lenders as Russia had done in the case of the previous loan. On being asked by the Foreign Office what securities it would be proper to demand from the Chinese Government as the equivalent of such British guarantee, the British Minister at Peking replied that one of the conditions should be the opening of Talién-wan as a treaty port by the Chinese Government. Whether he had considered in what way this concession was to benefit the position of Great

Britain was not disclosed. The proposal was promptly vetoed by the Russian Government, whose ambassador in London urged strongly that "if we insisted on making Talién-wan an open port we should be encroaching on the Russian sphere of influence, and denying her in future that right to the use of Port Arthur to which the progress of events had given her a claim,"—adding, that without having any designs on the territory, "it was generally admitted that Russia might claim a commercial *débouché* upon the open sea, and that in order to enjoy that advantage fully she ought to be at liberty to make such arrangements with China as she could obtain with respect to the commercial *régime* which was to prevail there."

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The second incident was that two British war-vessels which were anchored in Port Arthur—where, of course, they had the same right to be as any other foreign man-of-war—"made a bad impression" on the Russian Government, and formed the subject of complaint to the British Secretary of State. While denying the right of Russia to comment on the movements of British ships in Chinese waters, Lord Salisbury nevertheless allowed the vessels in question to depart, a movement which was reported with much colour of truth in Peking and St Petersburg as having been made by the order of Russia.

Thus within one month the exposition of the Russian designs was expanded from the first assurance of Count Muravieff that the wintering of the ships was merely for the temporary convenience of the fleet, to the assertion of vague territorial rights over the coast and harbours of Liao-tung. And Lord Salisbury observed with plaintive naïveté in the month of March, that whereas his Government "had always looked with favour upon the idea of Russia obtaining an ice-free port on the Pacific, Russia had now given a most unfortunate extension to this policy." It appears that the eyes of the British Government were not opened to the gravity of the situation until Russia, alleging that an ice-free port on the Chinese coast (no longer the Pacific) was a vital necessity to her, thereupon took possession of Port Arthur and Talién-wan. The British Government at the eleventh hour opposed the proceeding, for the reason that "the influence of Russia over the Government of Peking will be so increased to the detriment of that of her Majesty's Government, if the Russians are to have a lease of Port Arthur and Talién-wan, that it seems desirable for us to make some counter-move." Thus the British Government were brought to see, when too late, what those interested in Far Eastern affairs had been endeavouring to tell them years before; and there seems to be no doubt that the final discovery of the truth was due to the efforts of one or two persistent writers in the press during January and February 1898, but chiefly to the action of a small independent section of the British House of Commons led by Mr Yerburgh. On such trifling accidents do great events sometimes hang, that it seems probable that had Mr Yerburgh's movement taken effect three months earlier British ships would not have been withdrawn from Port Arthur, neither would China have been ousted from the possession of her only two naval harbours north of the Yangtze—at least not just then. It would serve no good purpose to follow the various explanations given by Ministers of the British Crown of their diplomatic encounters with Russia. They will have little interest for the historian. But a clear account of these transactions given in a letter to the 'Times,' May 19, 1898, may very well serve as a guide to future inquirers into these matters:—

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The Legend of Talién-wan.

Before the recent diplomatic struggle in the Far East is allowed to pass away from the public mind, may I be permitted to say a few words on one of its aspects which seems to have received very little attention?

The bad faith of the Russian Government has been strongly, and not unreasonably, condemned; but no attempt has been made to explain it, except on the popular hypothesis that a double dose of original sin is normal in the Muscovite. It does not seem to have occurred to any writer on the subject that the Russians themselves may have a grievance, that they may have acted under a sense of injury, or that, in their view, the good faith of the British Government is not above reproach. I believe they are mistaken; but it is none the less true that the chain of facts on which they rely will well bear the interpretation they place upon it.

The great blot on the recently published "Correspondence respecting the affairs of China" (No. 1, 1898) is that it takes no account of its immediate *Vorgeschichte*. It relates to a diplomatic struggle of which we last heard officially as far back as 1887, when the Blue-book on Port Hamilton was published. Since then many important things have happened, notably the Chino-Japanese war and the intervention of Russia, France, and Germany in the settlement of Shimonoseki. To ignore these events is really to delude the public; for the chapter of Far Eastern politics which begins with the German descent on Kiaochow is little short of meaningless if the story of Shimonoseki is passed over. Indeed the legend of Talién-wan itself belongs to a policy which may easily be traced back half a century. It is, however, not necessary for my purpose that I should go behind the Shimonoseki intervention. What was the object of that transaction? No one who has given any attention to Far Eastern affairs has ever been under the slightest illusion on this point. The great problem of Russian statesmanship since the foundation of the empire has been to reach the open sea, first in the Baltic, then in the Euxine and the Mediterranean, and, after the Crimean war, in the Pacific. Since Muravieff and Nevelskoy opened the Amur Russia has neglected no opportunity of pushing southward in order to get beyond the line of winter ice, and every embarrassment of China has been skilfully used by her to bring her nearer her goal. We in England have consistently resisted this policy, and in 1886 we thought to have finally defeated it when, by seizing Port Hamilton, we extracted a pledge from Russia that she would not occupy Korean territory "under any circumstances whatever." To all outward seeming Russian expansion in the Far East was thus stopped in the ice-bound harbour of Vladivostock. This, however, was not the view of Russia herself. She was still confident that an opportunity would be afforded her of realising her ambition, for there were other harbours on the Pacific besides those of Korea, and if the road to them was longer and more difficult, Russian patience was equal to the task of covering it. In

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these circumstances Japan, victorious in her war with China, claimed and obtained the cession of the Liao-tung peninsula, and thus threatened to shut the door for ever against Russian access to the Pacific. The intervention of the Powers which Russia thereupon organised was ostensibly directed to the protection of the integrity and independence of China, but no intelligent politician doubted at the time, or has doubted since, that its real aim was to keep the Pacific door open for Russia.

Shortly after this event Lord Salisbury came into office. The problem which then most urgently demanded his attention was that of Armenia. Largely by its attitude in the Far East the Rosebery Cabinet had left our relations with Russia in a distinctly strained condition, and the one obvious remedy of the Armenian horrors—the coercion of the Sultan—was blocked by Russia. Lord Salisbury directed himself to the conciliation of Russia, wisely recognising that nothing could be done in the Near East without Russian goodwill and assistance. What were the means he employed? I cannot say what private negotiations may have taken place between the two Governments, but we seem to have a sufficiently significant illustration of the direction in which the Premier was disposed to make concessions to Russia in a speech delivered by Mr Balfour at Bristol on February 3, 1896. In that speech a British Minister announced for the first time that this country would not oppose Russian expansion to the Pacific. "I, for my part, frankly state," he said, "that, so far from regarding with fear and jealousy a commercial outlet for Russia in the Pacific Ocean which would not be ice-bound half the year, I should welcome such a result as a distinct advance in this far-distant region." This statement made a profound impression all over the world, as well it might, seeing that it implied the abandonment of a policy which had been consistently and vigilantly adhered to by Great Britain from the time of Lord Clarendon to that of Lord Rosebery.

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A few days after Mr Balfour's Bristol speech—on February 20—it fell to Mr Curzon to explain in a negative way the scope of his leader's pronouncement. An impression had got abroad that the new policy implied the surrender of the pledge given by Russia in 1886 with regard to the occupation of Korean territory, and the Under Secretary was asked in the House of Commons for his views on the subject. Mr Curzon replied that "her Majesty's Government consider that the pledge given by the Russian Government is still binding." Was this a disavowal of the new Russophile policy. Obviously not: for later in the year, at the Guildhall banquet, Lord Salisbury made to Russia the friendliest overtures he has ever made in public speech. At the same time he especially accentuated the novelty of his attitude by asserting that "it is a superstition of an antiquated diplomacy that there is any necessary antagonism between Russia and Great Britain."

The position, then, of the Government was apparently this: they had abandoned the traditional hostility of this country to Russian expansion towards the ice-free Pacific on condition that it did not trench on Korean territory. It followed, then, that they were not disposed to offer any hindrance to the acquisition by Russia of a port on Chinese territory, westward of the Korean frontier—that is, somewhere between the mouth of the Yalu and Port Arthur. This must be clear to anybody who cares to glance at a map. The upshot of the speeches of Mr Balfour and Lord Salisbury and of the statement of Mr Curzon was, in short, to invite Russia, whenever she might feel so disposed, to plant the Russian flag on the southern coast of Manchuria. This, at any rate, was the view taken in Russia, and, for my part, I can see no escape from it. It is not a little significant of the satisfaction caused in Russia by this interpretation of the policy of Great Britain that, on November 25, a fortnight after Lord Salisbury's speech, the Tsar at last consented in principle to the British proposals for coercing the Sultan of Turkey on the Armenian question.

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Now we come to the events of last November, when Germany suddenly swooped down on Kiaochow. This step is known to have been very distasteful to the Russian Government. It was the first appearance of a European Power in the northern waters of China, in a region which Russia had persuaded herself was reserved for her own domination. Long before the murder of the unfortunate German missionaries in Shantung it was well known in St Petersburg that Germany had her eyes on Kiaochow, and the Russian Minister at Peking had more than once warned Li Hung-chang and urged him to fortify the bay. The disappointment of Russia became intensified when it was observed that the step taken by Germany, was not resented in this country, and fears of an Anglo-German alliance in the Far East began to possess the Russian mind. Then suddenly there came the Talién-wan incident, and Russia found herself once more confronted by the danger which had threatened her in the treaty of Shimonoseki.

The real significance of the Talién-wan incident has never yet been fully set forth. Had Talién-wan been made a treaty port, and thus given more or less of an international status, Russia would have been practically shut out for ever from the ice-free ocean. The only stretch of coast on which she could obtain this outlet was, as I have already shown, the southern coast of Manchuria from the Korean frontier on the Yalu to Port Arthur. Now, if we examine this coast-line carefully we shall find that there is only one spot capable of being transformed into a commercial port, and that is Talién-wan. The China Sea Directory (vol. iii.), published by the Hydrographic Department of the Admiralty, gives us the fullest particulars on this subject. It traces the coast-line in microscopic detail and shows us that it has only five possible harbours. The first, westward from the Yalu, is Taku-shan, the approach to which is frozen during the winter months. The second is Pi-tse-wo,—here the water is too shallow even for large junks. The third is Yen-tao Bay, the anchorage of which is bad, and in places dangerous. The fourth is Talién-wan, and the fifth Port Arthur. Talién-wan has all the advantages which are absent from the other ports. It is ice-free, spacious, well sheltered, with excellent anchorage and considerable commercial possibilities. Is it surprising that Russia should have felt aggrieved when it was proposed to make Talién-wan a treaty port?

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As a matter of fact, I believe Russia regarded this proposal as an attempt to evade the assurance given by Mr Balfour in his Bristol speech. She looked upon it as the design of a powerful Anglo-German combination to exclude her for ever from the China seas. It was to her mind a conspiracy of the most dangerous kind, and she bent all her efforts to defeat it. When she had defeated it she lost no time in securing her position. She took Port Arthur as well as Talién-wan, for the simple reason that her interpretation of the situation convinced her that a

commercial port overlooked by a great citadel in foreign hands would be a vantage to her foes rather than a prize to herself. Can she be altogether blamed for taking this view?

The mistake the Russian Government made was in attaching a serious meaning to the casual blunders of our Government, and in imagining that these blunders marked a connected purpose, if not a consistent policy. They were not to know that the Russophile passage in Mr Balfour's Bristol speech was a mere oratorical tag; that our friendly attitude towards Germany at Kiaochow was only a sort of amiable tolerance of an act the scope and consequence of which we had not measured; and that our proposal to open Talién-wan was made at the suggestion of our Minister at Peking, who, of course, knew what he was about, while it was acquiesced in at home by Ministers who simply did not know what they were doing. That Sir Claude Macdonald designed the Talién-wan move as a check to Russia I have no doubt; that Lord Salisbury never dreamed of this aspect of it I am equally convinced.

However that may be, one thing, I think, is clear. The sense of injury and the complaints of bad faith are not all on one side. In diplomacy, as in most of the affairs in this world, it is a wise rule not to believe your opponent to be as stupid as he looks. Russia at any rate paid us this compliment during the recent negotiations. The result, no doubt, is that she has overreached us. But whose fault is it?

The Russian flag once hoisted over Port Arthur and Talién-wan (by what nominal authority makes no difference whatever to the fact) placed the new relation of China to the rest of the world beyond all discussion. China did not willingly surrender her territory: she looked in vain for help, but found none. She weighed in the balance the words and acts of one great Power against the words and acts of another, and had no choice but to place herself under authority of the strongest, finally and irrevocably. That fact must be taken as the master-key to her subsequent policy in all its phases. [433]

These several events succeeding each other in close order awoke the British public from their optimistic dream, and forced them to reflect that there was after all something more in these Far Eastern readjustments than had occurred to them when cheering on gallant little Japan to the spoliation of China. The result obtained was certainly not that which was contemplated either by the nation or the Government when Great Britain settled down into her isolation. When the truth of the situation had revealed itself to the public there was naturally a loud call for something to be done to safeguard the commercial interests of the country, if not to recover lost prestige; but the Government were as far from having definite aims in China as they had ever been, and while goading them to action, the public was scarcely in a position to advise what that action should be. Neither had the Government, in spite of all that had taken place, fully realised to what extent China had added impotence to reluctance, for they continued to deal with China very much as if the events of 1895 to 1898 had never happened. They were reluctant to recognise the fact that Russia, in possession of the Liao-tung or Kwan-tung peninsula and of the railway line connecting it with Siberia, held a noose round the neck of the Peking Government, which she could tighten or relax, conceal or parade, as circumstances required, and that until some other Power or Powers were prepared to speak with equal authority Russia must be paramount, not by virtue of any convention, but as the outcome of accomplished facts. [434]

Two measures adopted by Great Britain to rectify the preponderance of Russia were the seizure, under a form of negotiation, of the harbour of Weihai-wei and the forcing of money upon the Chinese by way of loan. The value of these strokes of policy has not yet become apparent.



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CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE OUTCOME.

I. THE SITUATION IN PEKING.

A magnified repetition of experiences in Canton—Chinese unchanged—International usages inapplicable.

Since the foregoing chapters were put into the printer's hands the Far Eastern Question has reached a crisis in which its ruling factors have been suddenly exposed in their nakedness. But the searchlight now thrown upon them casts a blacker shadow on the unilluminated portions of the field. The events of 1900, while revealing the landmarks of past foreign relations with China, have deepened the obscurity of all that concerns the future of the Chinese State itself, as well as

of the position of the foreign Powers in relation to it and to one another. International comity is seen to have made no progress in sixty years; on the contrary, the gulf that divides China from the world yawns wider than ever, of which a striking example is afforded by the telegrams lately exchanged between the Chinese and the German Emperors. They speak in tongues unknown to one another and are mutually unintelligible, so that they have no common ground but that of brute force. Intercourse imposed on them against their will and conscience has resulted, naturally enough, in exhibiting the Chinese as the enemies of the human family.

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The capture of the Taku forts and the occupation of Peking by foreign troops were but a repetition of similar incidents forty years before; and it is instructive to observe how closely the lines of the old precedents have been followed. Prisoners taken treacherously, or envoys held as hostages; the threat to kill them if foreign troops menaced the capital; the devices to arrest the advance of the Allied forces; the proposal to negotiate only when the Chinese case became desperate; the ineradicable belief in the credulity of foreigners; and the flight of the Court when all other expedients failed,—were but another rehearsal, with variations, of previous performances at Canton, Nanking, and Peking. The parallel is completed by the efforts of foreign Powers to coax the emperor back to his capital. Nothing has been changed, only the scale has been magnified, and the civilised world, instead of one or two Powers, has become directly interested in the catastrophe. Official intercourse with China has thus continued on the lines on which it began. The first British envoy was treated as a malefactor, imprisoned, his letters were intercepted, his communications cut off, his servants withdrawn; he was guarded and threatened by armed men posted at his door, and reduced to dangerous subterfuges in order to get a message conveyed to his countrymen outside. Canton in 1834 was simply Peking in 1900, in embryo. A naval force was required to relieve Lord Napier from his perilous situation then, [33] as a combined naval and military force has been required to relieve the foreign Ministers in Peking now. The cycle has been completed. Every link in the chain connecting the opening with the closing incidents of diplomatic intercourse has been, on one side at least, homogeneous. Whatever and whoever may have altered, the Chinese certainly have not. Commissioner Lin, Viceroy Yeh, Prince Tuan, the empress-dowager, and all wielding authority, whether in name or not, have been true to the Chinese ideal. They have all alike been blind to the consequences of their acts, which have throughout been characterised by the strategy of fools—momentary success followed by overwhelming reverses, resulting at each succeeding encounter in a further invasion of the frontiers of their political independence.

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The crisis has been sufficiently prolonged to enable the world to perceive what the Chinese mean by the term negotiation. To them it signifies what it has always done, a palaver to gain time, to hoodwink an opponent, to escape from a threatened danger, to purchase immunity by promises; a device to manage, or, as they themselves express it, "to soothe and bridle barbarians." As little now as at any former period can they conceive the idea of a fair bargain between equals. They but temporise as with a savage or a dangerous beast. "Get rid of the barbarians" is their unvarying *mot d'ordre*, and it matters but little to them what instruments are employed in carrying it out. The office is one from which every statesman instinctively shrinks, since if he fails in taming the barbarians his case is referred to the Board of Punishments, and if he succeeds he incurs the contempt of all classes for the concessions by which he has purchased peace. It is hardly possible for him in any case to escape degradation. Be it therefore Lin, Kishen, Kiyong, Yeh, Kweiliang, Wênsiang, Chunghou, Li Hung-chang, or any one else, Chinese negotiators, whatever their apparent success in averting a danger, are morally certain to come to a bad end; and for the reason which caused the failure of Lord Napier in 1834, the impossibility of reconciling two principles which are wholly incompatible. As negotiation under such conditions can only be nugatory, a lengthened experience has made it clear that neither the negotiator nor the negotiation avails anything, but solely the manner in which the Chinese are held to their engagements, even when imposed on them by force, and the strictness with which the common duties of civilised nations are exacted from them, with or without written agreements.

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One feature in the recent Peking episode distinguishes it from previous experiences. A Government communicating with foreign Powers through its own envoys, doling out through them garbled information, while isolating the envoys of those same Powers within its capital, and planning, and if not doing its best to effect, their extermination, at least openly approving the attempt, is surely unexampled in human history. The proposal of such a Government, on the failure of its plans to "negotiate for peace," would be the most sardonic of practical jokes if we could disconnect it from the evidence implied in the proposal of the estimate of foreign nations which is ingrained in the Chinese moral constitution. Obviously, however, such a Government has placed itself beyond the pale of international relations, and it is hardly possible to conceive any restoration of the old or evolution of a new *régime* which can place China in the rank of civilised Powers.

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We are, in fact, thrust back on the conclusion arrived at by Lord Napier in 1834: "That Government is not in a position to be dealt with or treated by civilised nations according to the same rules as are acknowledged and practised among themselves." Yet, instead of being treated with less, the Chinese Government has received greater consideration than is accorded by one Western State to another. Prerogatives implying superiority have been conceded to it by consent of all the foreign Powers—a false principle which has now produced its natural result.

The usages of Western Courts, therefore, being wholly inapplicable in China, no matter what Government may rule there, international relations of the European type must be, as they have hitherto been, an illusory ideal, and some new form of intercourse, corresponding more closely to

the realities of the case, must take the place of that which has proved so totally unworkable. Should foreign nations, by reason of differences among themselves or the magnitude of the problem, hesitate to act up to this view of the situation, the continuance of a status which is essentially false to the facts must lead to some still more tragic catastrophe than any that has yet taken place.

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II. THE CHRONIC CAUSE.

Hostility of Government and people—Fostered by immunity—Cause of animosity as set forth by Chinese—Incitements to outrage—Chinese press calumnies—Compared with European—Effect on the Chinese of international vituperation.

It must be admitted that the attitude of the Chinese has been quite consistent: from first to last they have resisted the foreign impact *per fas et nefas*, using such weapons as they could command, while avoiding, according to their lights, the risk of reprisals. Their lights have indeed deceived them, their resistance has failed, and their methods stand condemned. But it is beside the question to inveigh against their barbarity, for "what is bred in the bone comes out in the flesh," and in human relations there are permanent facts which have to be accepted, like the skin of the Ethiopian and the spots of the leopard. Since foreigners have, for their own purposes, broken into a hornet's nest, it is idle for them to prescribe the manner of retaliation unless they are prepared to go through with their aggression and to enforce obedience to their own canon.

The constant feature in all Chinese attacks on foreigners has been the immunity from punishment of the real instigators. Massacres of foreigners have been condoned, for the blood-money exacted for them was no punishment to criminals who did not contribute to the payment. All attempts on the part of foreign agents to make guilty officials responsible for their outrages have been frustrated by the Government, who have invariably held the persons of officials exempt from punishment at the instance of, or for injuries done to, foreigners. In Chinese eyes injury to foreigners is meritorious in the abstract, and to be rewarded rather than punished. Foreign Powers have in practice acquiesced in this fatal principle, for though on rare occasions they have successfully insisted on the removal of some obnoxious official, the Government have taken care to nullify the penalty by promoting him to a better post. The various attempts that have been made by foreign representatives to collect evidence to support a legal charge against the instigators of outrages have been baffled by the inflexible determination of the Government to shield the official as well as the non-official leaders of riots. The foreign method of seeking redress, being thus foredoomed to failure, is obviously not suited to the circumstances.

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But while foreigners were pursuing their object by a hopeless path, the Chinese administration itself provided the simpler and more efficacious remedy of holding the chief authority of every province responsible for misgovernment, as well as for crimes and misdemeanours committed within his district. In the words of Sir Rutherford Alcock, "Each province constitutes a separate state in its administration; to compensate for this the emperor can appoint and remove every official, from the Governor-General downwards, at his pleasure. And they are each and all individually and collectively held responsible for all that may happen in the limits of their jurisdiction." By the custom of the country, therefore, the guilt of the highest official is assumed whenever any disturbance of the peace takes place or crime is committed within his government. He may transfer it, if he can, and ferret out evidence in his own exculpation; but errors of judgment, pleas of good intentions, and palliatives of that kind are not admitted, and not offered. Why foreigners have never appealed to this fundamental principle of Chinese administration, and have preferred relying on their own crude procedure and strange methods of collecting evidence while practically acquiescing in the immunity of Chinese officials, has never been satisfactorily explained. For it is only in matters concerning foreigners that the persons of Chinese officials are held sacred. The Government have no scruples with regard even to the highest in rank when they make themselves obnoxious to the powers that be. Degradation, deprivation, chains, imprisonment, and the headsman's broadsword, are ever ready to vindicate the majesty of the law when the Court awards the penalty. But foreigners are treated as outside the law, which is the gravamen of the Chinese offence against them. The constitution of the country afforded them a clear ground for demanding that the traditional principle of responsibility should be put in force for their protection. It was, in fact, applied spontaneously by Li Hung-chang in the province of which he was viceroy, with the result that Chihli was exempt from outrages on foreigners for nearly a quarter of a century. Why was the system not extended to all the provinces of the empire? Had not the foreign representatives the natural right of demanding the benefit of Chinese institutions, or did they consider their exotic substitute as preferable?

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A wrong road can never lead to a right destination; sins of omission and commission have alike to be atoned for, and the cost accumulates at compound interest. The result of sparing prefects and governors the consequences of the evil deeds permitted within their jurisdiction is that the Western Powers are now confronted with the more serious dilemma of sparing the throne itself and tolerating the continuance of anti-foreign outrages, or of doing stern justice towards the guilty even though the heavens should fall. A retrospective glance over the history of sixty years might help towards a solution even of this momentous problem. Have the sacrifices of principle that have hitherto been made in order to save the empire, or the dynasty, been efficacious to these ends? The answer of history is No; on the contrary, they have accelerated the ruin of both.

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The provoking cause of recent outbreaks against foreigners in all parts of the Chinese empire may be gathered from the proceedings of the conspirators, from their placards and lampoons, and from their secret correspondence. The keynote of all these is general detestation of foreigners, special enmity to Christianity and its accessories, and aversion to the symbols of material progress. Hatred of foreigners now shows itself as a passion which binds the provinces together as nothing else has ever been known to do. Their expulsion is a cause which is held to justify the vilest deeds done in its name. Nor is the present state of things a growth of yesterday. The ferment has been working for forty years—to go no further back—with many sporadic outbreaks to mark its progress. It was not nipped in the bud, as it might perhaps have been. Exhibitions of ill-feeling had been habitually disregarded by foreigners, who in their readiness to blame each other for provoking them, were accustomed to repel obvious explanations, and to go far afield for theories which would exonerate themselves at the expense of their neighbours. If stones were thrown or abusive epithets shouted, "It was only the children." Only the children! As if more conclusive testimony to any prevailing sentiment were possible.^[34] In Peking itself the foreign Ministers set the example of palliating these abuses, and the only wonder is that the fire has smouldered so long without bursting into flame. During thirty years—to speak only of the recent period—missionaries in the interior have encountered the growing hostility of the people, which they have ascribed, perhaps too exclusively, to the machinations of "literati and gentry," forgetting that the torch would be applied in vain to a substance that was not inflammable. [444]

Not that the machinations of the official and literary classes of the country are by any means to be held of little account, for they have been the most potent factor in fomenting and directing the passions of the people. What corresponds in China to a newspaper press has been constantly employed in vilifying the character and execrating the designs of foreigners, and holding them up continually to the contempt and hatred of the Chinese people. There was no effective means of contradicting the calumnies which were daily poured forth from every centre of population. Attempts have, indeed, been made by special counterblasts in the form of missionary publications in the chief citadel of hostility, and in a less polemic form in the periodicals in the Chinese language conducted by foreigners, yet these have had little more effect on the popular beliefs than a leading article in the 'Times' has upon the flood of anti-English literature that is poured out every day from Continental journals. From an observation of the calumnies which are so unquestioningly accepted by European populations we may partly judge of the effect of a constant stream of the same class of vituperative literature among the still more ignorant people of China. The features of both are the same. In Europe, as in China, there is no crime that the lowest savages have ever committed which is not attributed, with impassioned eloquence and with the finest literary skill, to those who are held up to the popular animosity. In Europe, as in China, the ruling powers encourage the virulence of the press. In countries where the Government exercises direct control, and in others where the connection is less official, extravagances are permitted which can serve no other purpose than that of making the objects of the invective so odious that a quarrel with them is rendered popular in advance. European Governments thus play with fire, as the Chinese have done, but in the case of the latter the incendiary policy has worked out its logical result. [445]

Nor should it be forgotten that since, in these days, the Chinese have the fullest access to European literature, the calumnies of one nation by another are calculated to confirm their conviction of the turpitude of all. Neither is their armoury confined to the international amenities of the Western press. The charges habitually, and as a matter of course, made against their own countrymen by British writers and speakers would justify a stranger people, already predisposed thereto, in forming the worst opinion of English character. During the saturnalia of a general election, when the fountains of the great deep are broken up, no baseness, no falsity, no treachery, is too gross to be attributed, not to the rabble, but to the chosen leaders of the people. Such things being circulated throughout the world, preserved in indelible ink, can the enemies of the British nation, or at least the prejudiced Chinese, be greatly blamed for accepting the character of our people on such unimpeachable evidence? Should we not judge them on analogous testimony? From whatever sources they gather their ideas, however,—whether from the study of foreign newspapers, from their own observation of the ways of foreign men and women, or from the gross libels published by their literati,—there is no reason to doubt that the unfavourable opinion which the Chinese entertain of foreigners is held by them in good faith. [446]

III. IMMEDIATE PROVOCATION.

Shock of the Japanese war—European spoliation of China—Anarchy apprehended therefrom—Reminiscence of Taiping rebellion—Proposals for moderating foreign inroads—Lawlessness of foreign Powers—Chinese yield to force but nurse resentment—The missionary irritant.

What has caused the chronic anti-foreign movement to swell suddenly to imperial dimensions, and to explode simultaneously in the capital and in distant provinces, is a larger question than we can attempt to answer. As contributory causes, however, there are certain facts lying on the surface of foreign relations which are too suggestive to be passed over. The Japanese war of 1894-95, and the train of events following it, noted in a previous chapter, struck at the vital centre of the Chinese empire. Foreigners of all nations applied force to China, not to defend person or property, but to divide up the empire in disregard of the Government and the people, both assumed to be moribund. The partition of China was discussed in the Western press as a

matter in which the Government and natives of the country had no concern. Open doors, spheres of influence, concessions, protectorates—the various modes in which the Chinese oyster was to be cooked and served—were treated solely as questions of rivalry and preponderance between the Western Powers. The people were not indeed ignored, for the aggressors reckoned on them as their most valuable asset, the raw material of prospective armies, the source of labour supply for excavations and earthworks, and of the payable traffic for railways and other exotic enterprises. But there is more in human nature than a capacity to dig or obey a drill-sergeant, and it is precisely the elements which were disregarded by political, financial, and industrial adventurers which have risen up in judgment against them. The grandiose pronouncements of the foreign press during the last two or three years were by no means lost on the Chinese Government. These writings showed that the ambitions of foreign countries had no limits, while the gratification of them was absolutely incompatible with the retention of any semblance of independent authority by the rulers of the country.

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Reasoning after the fact, and from effect to cause, is apt to be fallacious, but when the circuit is completed by the joining of prediction with realisation, some confidence may be felt in the soundness of the conclusion. Those who have observed the condition of China with a sympathetic eye have been for years labouring under the deepest apprehension for the peace of the country. The Japanese war accentuated this feeling, and the subsequent ruthless proceedings of the Western Powers deepened the apprehension. As the forces of aggression could in nowise be restrained, anxious, but inadequate and altogether ineffectual, attempts were made to avert their worst effects. Warnings were not wanting that "dangers which might have slept for generations to come had been suddenly brought within the range of practical politics, and that unless measures of precaution were taken in time, what happened in 1894-95 would sooner or later happen again, ... that the Chinese Empire would be brought to the verge of disruption; for all the forces, external and internal, which make for anarchy would be let loose, and the empire would be powerless alike to resist dismemberment by the aggressive Powers or the subversion of authority by internal upheaval." The paper from which we quote, doubtless one of many such drawn up in 1896, goes on to say: "However desirous some, or even all, of the Great Powers might be of saving China from dissolution, they would be paralysed by their own jealousies, and they would perhaps be more concerned to avert a general war among themselves than to prevent calamity in China. A crisis might thus arise more direful in its consequences than the chronic crisis in the Ottoman Empire, and a reign of havoc would follow in which millions would perish where the loss of thousands now excites the indignation of the civilised world.^[35] No circumstances would be wanting to intensify the horror, for it would not be even civil war, but promiscuous rapine as aimless and as uncontrollable as a forest fire. A generation has scarcely passed since China was desolated by the scourge of the Taiping rebellion, which is thought to have destroyed a population equal to that of a first-class European State; and a new outbreak of the like kind would be more hopeless, inasmuch as the factors which were eventually brought into play to extinguish the conflagration in 1862-64 would now be wanting, or would be rendered inoperative by the complex circumstances above indicated."

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The spectre was anarchy, the provocatives aggression and dismemberment; and the permanent interests of international commerce were appealed to to avert the calamities foreshadowed. "Dismemberment, from the point of view of the general interests of trade, would be little better than anarchy." Severe pressure was being put on the Chinese Government—even in 1896, when these and similar forebodings were uttered—to permit free communication by steam and rail, and the development of the mineral resources of their country. It was from such sources that the immediate danger to the integrity of the territory and the peace of the State was apprehended, while, on the other hand, the need for the innovations was freely granted. "The Chinese having neither men nor appliances capable of undertaking either the construction or management of railways, must be wholly dependent on foreigners for their inauguration. This state of things, fully recognised on all sides, has led speculators and promoters of all nations to besiege the Chinese authorities with offers of the means of construction and with demands for concessions. But considering the relative positions of China and the Western nations, it cannot but be admitted that the Chinese have done well to refuse to listen to such proposals. Rival concessionaires working under the ægis of extra-territoriality in the interior would be the axe at the root of the tree of China's integrity."

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The problem of preserving the independence and integrity of China, while permitting the opening of the interior of the country to foreign enterprise, was felt to be one of the gravest importance, not to be settled by the clamour either of rival concession-hunters or the intrigue of rival States. "Inland residence," wrote Sir Rutherford Alcock, in 1868, "will bring weakness to the nation and death to the Government, and must eventuate in greater anarchy than has yet been seen.... Right of residence in the interior is hardly compatible with an extra-territorial clause."

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The essential condition of safety for the country was evidently, therefore, to bar the acquisition of territorial rights by any foreign Government or company. With this view it was urged that at least the ownership and control of railways and mines should be retained in the hands of the Government itself, under a competent organisation in which foreign skill and experience should be effectively represented. As the then existing railway line of 200 miles was of such a character, a development of the same system was recommended for the larger schemes which were thought to be impending. The foreign Powers were urged to assist China in putting her house in order and in adapting her administration to the exigencies of the time.

Such were among the proposals made in 1896, and not disapproved by the Powers to which they

were addressed. But common action thereon by foreigners was hindered by mutual rivalry and distrust, while the Chinese Government on its part showed neither inclination nor capacity—any more than it had ever done—to meet its difficulties by comprehensive measures. It preferred the ancient system of resisting, in detail and in secret, the advances of foreigners,—a policy of traps and snares and entanglements. Possibly the paralysis of despair had already reached the nerve centres of Chinese statesmanship, or the desperate scheme of a general expulsion of foreigners had begun to fascinate the leading spirits. Certain it is no practical *rapprochement* was effected, or even seriously attempted, between the contending forces. [452]

Meantime, however, the invaders would brook no delay,—they had no time for temporising tactics. The "ugly rush" began—syndicate rivalled syndicate, and Government Government, in dividing up the *corpus vile*. Within twelve months of the period just referred to Germany led the way in the dismemberment of China by cutting off a slice of Shantung; Russia promptly followed in Liaotung; then Great Britain took Weihai-wei as a set-off, and assumed an interest in the central zone keener than that of the Chinese Government itself. Other Powers followed with imperious demands for portions of Chinese territory, on no ground whatever except that China was weak. Every law save the law of the strongest was suspended. Justice and mercy were thrown to the winds. And yet the orgies of spoliation were followed by no change in the outward forms of diplomatic relations with the Chinese Government. Foreign representatives continued to negotiate as if the power of that Government remained intact, though to assume, for one purpose, that there was neither sentient organism nor sovereign authority in China, and for another, that the Government retained its full competence,^[36] was obviously to bring chaos into their intercourse. As a consequence, diplomatic correspondence with China since 1898—the British share of which, so far as has been published, extends to a thousand pages—is but a harvest of Dead Sea Fruit. [453]

But Chinese relations being a compound of courtesy and force on the part of foreign Powers, it is not difficult to divine which of the two must be the dominant factor. Though they bowed their heads in morose silence before their conquerors, Chinese statesmen retained sufficient vitality to discriminate between platonic diplomacy and the "mailed fist," yielding in all things to menace, in nothing to argument. To seize territory, under this *régime*, presented less difficulty than to obtain redress for trivial injuries. Aggressive Powers were respected according to the measure of their aggression, while those who concerned themselves with the preservation of the empire met with no recognition whatever. British schemes were thwarted at every point, while other Powers ran riot throughout the territory. For this reason the Chinese Government collectively, and individual mandarins, have been stigmatised as anti-British, as if to be so were a blot upon their escutcheons. No doubt they are; but to assume on that account that the Chinese rulers are pro-Russian, pro-French, or pro-German is more than the premisses seem to warrant. History and tradition are alike opposed to such an idea. That peculiar kind of patriot, the friend of every country but his own, is not much in evidence in China. The vainest and most jealous nation on earth was not likely in a moment to suppress its self-love, invert its whole character, and welcome an army of foreign adventurers, no matter of what nationality, who came in the guise not of servants but masters. And, setting sentiment aside, the Chinese were not blind to the material consequences of the foreign schemes which were pressed on them, but were as keenly alive to the danger of intrusting railway and mining enterprises to foreigners as they had always shown themselves to be when their military and naval armaments were concerned. The memorials of provincial authorities clearly prove this. If, therefore, they admitted the disruptive agency into their country, it was from no love of the interlopers, but solely by way of submission to superior force, and under the same mental reservation with which they had subscribed to all their previous treaty engagements. [454]

The chronic missionary irritant mentioned in previous chapters had been steadily spreading, and the hostility evoked by it as steadily increasing. Christianity being the only character in which foreigners had presented themselves to the view of the masses, the extirpation of it stood in the forefront of the anti-foreign programme. The disasters which the governing classes had always apprehended from the extension of foreign missions had suddenly assumed the form of a concrete reality. All that its opponents had for generations foretold became fact: their administration was being undermined, their traditions set at nought, their very territory wrenched from them in the name of the foreign religion. Propagandism was finally unmasked by the German Emperor in the uncompromising manner characteristic of that potentate. The Name that is above every name was openly made subservient to the lust of conquest. China saw at last that she was really doomed through the instrumentality of the religion which she had engaged herself to tolerate. [455]

IV. THE DYNASTIC FACTOR.

Irregularity of the succession—Defensive position of the empress-dowager—Cantonese reformers influence emperor—Regent's alarm, vengeance and reaction—The new heir-apparent.

Ever since the *coup d'état* in January 1875, whereby the empress-regent by her own fiat placed her infant nephew on the throne of her deceased son, to the exclusion of more legitimate heirs, the dynastic question has been regarded by Chinese patriots as a certain source of future trouble.^[37] The imperial dignity was not the only matter involved in the succession, but a vast amount of

property also, and so many members of the imperial clan were interested in the result that it was deemed certain that the partisans of legitimacy would lie in wait for an opportunity of enforcing the claims of the rightful heir. As it is customary to attribute the acts of statesmen to personal motives, it has never been doubted that the interest of the empress-regent in setting the reigning emperor on the throne was sufficiently explained by her own lust of power. We know what is done, but do not always know what is prevented, and in the case of the families of both the elder brothers who were passed over, there may have been practical as well as judicial reasons to justify even a *coup d'état* which supplanted them. From what has recently been revealed of the character of Prince Tuan, for example, the exclusion of his progeny may possibly have been a providential deliverance.

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Be these things as they may, however, and be her ulterior motives what they may, the solicitude of the empress-regent has been constantly directed to protecting the weak point in her dynastic defences. The childlessness of the present emperor, as well as the misfortunes of the empire since he assumed the reins of power in 1889, of course added indefinitely to her anxiety, while at the same time serving to keep alive the pretensions of the elder branches.

Speaking, as we have done throughout, only of what is apparent, the succession question was brought to the point of incandescence by certain events in 1898. Great and justifiable discontent had arisen in the provinces with the manner in which the affairs of the empire had been conducted, resulting in humiliation and calamity. The idea of doing something to stem the tide of misgovernment by enforcing the lessons of recent misfortune was freely discussed. But the Chinese have not discovered any method of remedying grievances except insurrections in one form or another, on a small or on a large scale. A movement of this character has been on foot in the Canton province ever since the Japanese war. These revolutionary conspiracies have indeed been so well organised, and so powerfully supported, that once, if not oftener, the provincial city of Canton has narrowly escaped capture. The agitation has been directed nominally against the Manchu Government. Whether directly associated with the insurrectionary propaganda or not, another body afterwards challenged public notice under the name of Reformers. As in the case of the insurrectionary movement, many Government officials secretly gave their adhesion to the cause, and inspired the leaders with confidence in the ultimate success of their schemes.

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Reform had been preached continuously to China from every foreign pulpit for forty years. "Reform or perish" was the regular formula—words so easily written that no resident, tourist, publicist, foreign official, or any one with a pen or a tongue, refrained from reiterating them continually. Individually every Chinese official with whom foreigners came in contact joined in the cry. But though the general demand was unanimous, there was diversity in the details, and in such a case the details were everything. A dozen writers, each insisting on the necessity of thorough reform, would postulate separately some indispensable preliminary to any reform whatsoever. These indispensable preliminaries, added together, would have left nothing for the substantive portion of the programme; by them Chinese administration would have been renovated from top to bottom. Such was the difficulty which friends and critics experienced in knowing where to begin in their efforts to reduce the general to the particular.

In 1898, however, a bold attempt was made to launch a comprehensive scheme of reform by imperial fiat. A Cantonese named Kang Yu-wei, backed by a body of opinion,—of the extent and value of which different estimates may be formed, "financed," of course, as popular leaders must be,—obtained the ear of the emperor, and induced him to promulgate a budget of edicts of startling novelty. Being deemed revolutionary, they excited alarm in the Imperial Court. What were the specific grounds of alarm may be easily surmised. Foreigners who refer it exclusively to the question of reform may possibly take as partial a view of this as they have done of other Court movements. What is known is, that the empress-regent, always ready to strike when her interest or her schemes have been threatened, pounced on the unfortunate emperor, and by force of will and the parental authority which counts for so much in China, and in virtue of the Great Seal which she had reserved when handing over her trust, made him revoke his revolutionary edicts, hunted out his dangerous counsellors and punished them as traitors. The embers of reform were thus for the time ruthlessly stamped out. Of the ethics of these proceedings it is needless to speak: not ethics but strength decided the issue; nature's primeval law was not suspended in favour of the adventurous spirits who flew at such high game. A reaction against all reform naturally set in, and the old struggle was renewed: between conservation and revolution, viewed from the Chinese Court side; between purity and corruption, viewed from that of the Reformers.

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But the quarrel cannot be restricted to so simple an issue as either of these. The question between the Reformers and the Court was complicated by sundry important considerations. In the first place, the capture of the Emperor by Kang Yu-wei was directly inspired by the teaching of foreign missionaries. In the second place, the movement originated in the same southern provinces whence the Taiping rebellion itself had sprung, and where conspiracies against the Government had been active since 1895. And thirdly, the reform agitation was ostentatiously patronised by the foreign, or at least by the English, press, while the leaders of the insurgents found a safe asylum, if not an effective base of operations, in Hongkong and in foreign countries. Taking these circumstances together, therefore, whatever may be thought of the intrinsic merits of the double agitation, it could scarcely be expected that the Powers which saw themselves so seriously menaced should draw any such fine distinction between the ostensible objects of the reformers and of the revolutionaries, as to regard the one with complacency while suppressing the other. The most abject of governments and the most timid of animals will resist to the death

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an attack which threatens their existence. There would be nothing unnatural, therefore, in the resentment of the Imperial Government against its disaffected people being, by the process which is so familiar to us in family quarrels, temporarily diverted from the domestic to the foreign enemy, against whom the combined hostility of all parties in the Chinese State might, for the time being, be concentrated.

Without, however, attempting to assign their relative values to all or any of these factors in the question, it seems evident that the events of 1898 revealed the elements of a drama in which the contending factions in the Court were forced to show their colours. The course of the conflict during the year and a half following the autumn of 1898 has probably been obscured rather than elucidated by the contradictory reports and fluctuating comments which have been so freely disseminated with but slight regard to the authenticity of their origin. But the nomination of a grandson of Prince Tun as heir-apparent, which was decreed in January 1900, looks like a belated, if not compulsory, recognition of the prior claims of that Princes family, and a confession that the Emperor Kwanghsu has kept the rightful heir twenty-five years out of his inheritance; for the grandson now selected possesses no right which the grandson set aside in 1875 did not possess. The relations of Prince Tuan, the father of the emperor designate, with the empress-regent are as obscure as the intricacies of palace politics usually are to contemporary foreign observers. Fortunately, however (in one sense), the cross-currents and undercurrents of the Court, the question who are confederates and who rivals, who betrayers and who betrayed, in the imperial camp, are matters which have to a great extent been deprived of their significance. Under normal conditions the dynastic imbroglio might have had a perturbing influence on the policy of foreign Powers, but the explosion of last summer has relegated all such domestic questions to a secondary place. When the correspondent of the 'Times' could report that there was "no Government" in Peking, the *personnel* of that Government lost its practical interest. The old order, with its sins and sorrows, has indeed passed away, but to find a substitute for it is a problem that will tax the wisdom as well as the forbearance of the world. The anarchy which has been so long dreaded is actually upon us, and the prospective horrors of it are assuredly not lessened by the outbreak being signalled in the capital rather than in the provinces. [460]

V. THE CHINESE OUTBREAK.

Chinese methods of expelling foreigners—Secret societies—The Boxers.

Considering as a whole, therefore, the succession of crushing blows which during the past six years have been dealt against the integrity of China by open enemies and dissimulating friends, we may conceive, at least partially, the hatred of foreigners which exists in the country. In this case we are not driven to assume any wide difference between the Chinese and races more nearly allied to ourselves, nor need we seek to account for their demonstrations by defects in their moral or religious training. Had even the whole population of China been miraculously converted to Christianity, as suggested by Sir Robert Hart ('Fortnightly Review,' November 1900), it is not permissible to assume that they would have continued turning the other cheek to so many smiters. If we suppose the case of any Western nation subjected to the experiences through which the Chinese have had to pass at the hands of foreign dictators, the mode in which it would act may afford us some measure by which to gauge the excesses of the Chinese.

The origin and organisation of the recent outbreak will no doubt be a topic of discussion for some time to come, and it is not within our province to anticipate the final verdict on it. But, as in certain contagious diseases which become constitutional, the angry symptoms first show themselves at the point of infection, it is interesting to note that the German sphere in Shantung enjoys the distinction of being the cradle of the principal agency producing the cataclysm. The prominence suddenly attained by the Boxer movement is probably fortuitous, due to its casual connection with high personages. Secret societies are nothing new, nor societies of divers sorts which have scarcely the pretence of secrecy. As weeds spring up where cultivation is neglected, these social growths may be considered in the light of spontaneous efforts to occupy ground left vacant by the constituted Government,—a sort of excrescence of autonomy rising and falling according as the administration is less or more efficient. The members of these societies may be ascetics who follow strict rules of living, defenders of popular rights, or mere "bullies" who may be hired. They bear virtuous titles, but it is safe to assume that the ostensible object of the associations is in practice invariably lost in schemes of a different complexion. Sometimes in collision, at other times in collusion, with the established Government, these societies are a mobile factor, a sort of shifting ballast, always to be reckoned with in the Chinese economy. [462]

As the Boxers are an athletic corps, drilled and exercised, it was natural to inquire, when their imposing force stood revealed, how such a formidable movement could have been organised among the Chinese people without the fact becoming known to the foreign residents in the country. One answer is, that those who saw what was going on and warned their countrymen were decried as alarmists, and then held their peace. The wisest were but little wiser than their neighbours, for as weather prophets easily forecast the character of the following season, while they are at fault as regards that of the next twenty-four hours, so those who are able to predict with confidence the remote future in China are often the most blind to the nearer future which is reckoned by days or months. But incredulity was excusable in the present case, for the extent and apparent suddenness of the movement were really unprecedented. Such a force has not been [463]

mobilised and kept in the field in a militant condition without immense effort and liberal supplies, for though pillage might go far, it would not go all the way in supporting so large a body for any length of time. The junction of the Boxers with imperial troops, the relations of the commanders to members of the imperial family, and the influence of the movement on the question of the dynastic succession, are all matters on which light will be welcome; for as no military invasion of the territory has ever called forth such a general enthusiasm of resistance, interesting, indeed, will be the discovery of the real genesis of a rising at once spontaneous and aggressive.

The most practical observation, however, that foreign nations have been forced to make during the crisis is that, whatever might have been the separate designs of those who presided over the general movement, the rallying flag of the combination was the extermination of foreigners. That was the pretext which, for the time being at least, reconciled all antagonisms and satisfied all consciences. It seemed as if the long-accumulated hatred of the Chinese had gathered to a head, and its whole force had been concentrated in one supreme effort to sweep the aliens throughout the empire into the sea. That elaborate preparation had been made to carry this into effect seems to be placed beyond doubt, the rulers of China evidently conceiving that the effort would be successful.

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The excuse put forward in palliation of an anti-crusade headed by the highest personages in the empire bears an interesting family resemblance to the apology usually made for rebels. Being beguiled by false prophets, they believed they would succeed;^[38] and success would have justified the venture. The facts are such as no subsequent negotiations, no treaties, no modifications of government, no reform, no professions of any kind, can ever explain away.

VI. THE CRUX.

Concert of foreign Powers unstable—Divergent aims—Aggressive and non-aggressive Powers—Unpromising outlook—The progress of Russia the only permanent element.

If conflicting forces in China have been united in an effort to expel the foreigners, so the non-Chinese world has been forced into temporary agreement in order to extinguish a conflagration which endangered all interests. But the Powers assembled to execute judgment and restore order in China present a picturesque diversity of ulterior aims. Their unity can hardly, therefore, be expected to survive the emergency which gave it birth. After the storm has passed—if it does pass—the permanent policy of the several Powers may be expected to resume its normal sway. Of the character of these different policies we are not left in doubt, for in the history of the past six years it has been revealed in overt acts bearing a higher authority than the most solemn official manifestoes.

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The principal Powers concerned may be ranged in three groups—the aggressive, the non-aggressive, and the absorbent. Under the first must be ranked Japan, France, and Germany. Facts which cannot lie have proved that these three Powers have long cherished designs upon the territory of China. No doubt they flatter themselves with the belief that their rule over such portions of Chinese soil as may come under their control would be a blessing to mankind, an opinion which it would serve no good purpose to controvert. And they reckon that, in addition to the higher civilisation which they propose to confer on the Chinese people and Government, they will secure material advantages for their own populations. The ruling characteristic, however, of this policy is that it is factitious, adventurous, and ideal, in search of interests to defend rather than framed for the defence of interests existing. It is essentially, therefore, an aggressive policy, though, in a sense, also progressive. Dividing the world into communities to be conquered and nations who are fitted to conquer them, it represents the primeval moving power in ethnic evolution. But it is a policy quite unsuited for co-operation, and the attempt to yoke together Governments, certain of whom are moved empirically by facts as they exist and as they arise, and others by the desire of creating facts, ends—as all concerts of antagonistic interests must end—most likely in explosion. A safe calculation may be made as to the action of a non-aggressive Power, under given circumstances, as the action of a man of business may be approximately inferred from obvious considerations of pecuniary advantage. But in the case of States with ideal policies, like France and Germany, no such forecast can be made. This radical divergence between the aims of the Powers who are called upon to decree the fate of China must render a sincere agreement between them, under any circumstances, impossible; and if the policy of one of them should happen to be directed by a political genius ambitious of distinction, the course of the whole would be subject to aberrations incalculable. It is true that the Governments which have marked out for themselves these extensive plans of aggression may begin to perceive that their proceedings in China have been somewhat in advance of any justification, also that they have been reckoning without their host, and that to found and maintain empires in further Asia may put a strain upon their resources out of proportion to the material gains to be derived from the enterprise. Perceiving that their "vaulting ambition may o'erleap itself" and land them on the off-side of the horse, they may show themselves willing, for the moment, to attenuate the significance of their previous energy. The discovery that the conquest of China involves something more than a military promenade may induce them to make professions which, however sincere for the time being, accord but indifferently with established facts. In the procession of history, however, it is the facts and not the words which ultimately prevail.

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And this is the only canon by which it is safe to interpret the apocalyptic exchange of notes just

announced between Great Britain and Germany, whose significance, like that of the conversation of a Chinese, lies in the things which are not said. Considered as a convention, it must be classed with those elastic bargains of which several examples occur in the preceding narrative, in which one party has a definite aim and the other not, and which is therefore destined to be employed exclusively to the advantage of the former. *Vigilantibus non dormientibus servit lex*. Without knowing what secret inducements led to such a declaration of policy between Great Britain and Germany it is impossible to assign a value to it. Its most authoritative expositors in the German press rejoice in the fact that it pins Great Britain down to the only policy which she has ever pursued, or ever will,—a policy in which her public utterances have throughout coincided with her overt acts,—that, namely, of opening Chinese and all other markets not for herself but for the whole world on equal terms. An agreement, however, which does not arrest French encroachments in the south, Russian appropriations in the north, nor German exclusive exploitations in Shantung or elsewhere, contributes little to that maintenance of the integrity of China which is its professed object. Neither the world at large nor China herself will benefit greatly by a verbal restriction on the one Power to whom the "open door" and the integrity of China are articles of political religion and of undeviating practice. And the clause which solemnly reserves to the two parties the right of consulting together in certain contingencies gives to the transaction a very platonic character. But a covenant whose meaning is veiled is always a hazardous operation, even in private life, where the power of definite interpretation lies with the more aggressive of the two parties.

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The non-aggressive Powers may be defined as those whose citizens have established in the country a substantial position, which their Governments have been slow to protect. The principal representatives of this group are Great Britain and the United States, whose interests in China have many times been defined as commercial, and not territorial. They have acted consistently on the conviction that there is no country in the world where conquest for the sake of commerce was less justifiable than in China, which possesses a large population inured to labour, accustomed to the luxuries of a civilised society, and with unsurpassed aptitude for business. No special credit is due to the two Anglo-Saxon nations for their recognition of these circumstances, except in so far as it indicates an intelligent appreciation of their own interests. They desire, as an ordinary trader or manufacturer would, that a good customer may be kept on his legs, and that a promising inheritance shall not be alienated from the next generation of their merchants. Their policy, however, being essentially passive and conservative, suffers from the defects of these qualities, and is liable to be overborne by the more energetic action of the Powers which we have ventured to place in the aggressive class.

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There remains the third group, which consists of one member, and that is Russia. Although Russia is in effect more aggressive than all the others put together, her annexations have been conducted under a different formula from those of Germany, France, or Japan. It is not merely that she has avoided hostilities, and effected her purpose by patient and adroit diplomacy, but that her acquisitions of Chinese territory have not been of the "wild-cat" order, but genuine integral additions to her existing possessions. The expansion of Russia, whether a matter to be deplored or applauded, is at any rate a natural growth, unduly forced at times, but steady and progressive. It is the shadow of this secular advance of Russia that covers the whole Far Eastern situation, and has in fact done so for nearly fifty years. The character of her progress could not be better described, even with the lights we now possess, than it was by Sir Rutherford Alcock as far back as 1855. With rare clearness of vision and firmness of touch he thus foretold the position which Russia was destined to occupy in the Far East:—

China has long been impotent. Russia has within the last few years, by force of diplomacy, appropriated half the province of Manchuria, the ancient patrimony of the reigning dynasty, and with it the command of the river Amur. If this other great Leviathan ... has not yet swallowed the whole empire, it can only be that, great as are its capacities, there are limits imposed by nature to the powers of deglutition and digestion in the largest boa-constrictor or predatory animal yet discovered. In the mean time the danger is more immediate and menacing to Europe than to China, perhaps; for Russia has at Sakhalin, the mouth of the Amur, and the adjoining coasts of the Western continent, laid the foundation for a position as menacing to European commerce as any now existing at the opposite extremity in the Baltic. Stretching with giant arms across the whole breadth of Northern Asia and Europe from fastnesses at each end, Asiatic hordes, directed by Western genius and science, are held in leash, ready to let slip over the fair and fertile south of both continents. The wealthiest regions of both Europe and Asia are at once threatened by this modern colossus.... China, India, and the kingdoms of Southern Europe form but the three different stages of invading progress. Long before the whole of such a gigantic scheme of rule and conquest can have its accomplishment in China—the most helpless as well as the richest of all the victims—Russia will be enabled to reap the first-fruits and take instalments of the larger and more distant spoil, by controlling the trade of Northern China and the rich European trade so recently developed in its seas.

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Russia alone has a policy independent at once of accidents, autocrats, shifting governing bodies, and of all personalities, weak or strong. With the accumulated force of past achievements, an unbroken tradition, and great military forces massed on a frontier which is no frontier, Russia among the other Powers now masquerading in the Far East is as the iron vessel floating among the earthenware pots. Russian publicists, in order to strengthen the dominant position to which they aspire, have been proclaiming with increasing insistency that they are the only nation who can deal with the Chinese Question because they are themselves an Asiatic people. They justify

this pretension by their primitive Asiatic military ethics, and it is an instructive spectacle to see their forces massacring Chinese populations wholesale while their diplomatists are ostentatiously shielding those in high places from the just consequences of their crimes. The German Emperor has said many clever and some foolish things, but perhaps he never did a wiser one than in making over his schemes of vengeance to his august ally, for the work is more becoming to an Asiatic than a Teutonic people.

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From an areopagus composed of these incongruous elements great achievements are expected, but the comparison between the end and the means inspires little confidence as to the result. The task itself is gigantic enough to appal the boldest political experimenter that ever lived, while its complexity involves insoluble contradictions. China, the very Government itself, has been guilty of outrages against foreign nations such as no nation can forgive another. The foreign Powers have been openly and persistently defied—their people massacred throughout the empire. Yet the nations so hated and flouted assume that they have a mission to fulfil in setting up a stable Government in China, a Government to be created for their own convenience, with which they may in future negotiate,—a puppet Government, therefore, yet one which is to maintain peace and good order throughout a vast empire by the prestige of its authority over a loyal and devoted people. As buttresses to the stability of the new *régime*, "the loyal southern viceroys," as they are termed—loyal to whom, or to what?—deriving authority, it is to be presumed, from the Government which is to be patronised by foreigners, are expected to meet the convenience of the dictators and prevent anarchy in the provinces. In short, the subjective Chinaman, as we have ventured to call the fabulous animal so often evolved from Western consciousness, is once more to be brought on the scene, and do everything that is expected of him.

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A puppet Government is an intelligible thing, but of a puppet pulled by a dozen strings no clear conception can be formed. Such, however, has been the anomalous history of foreign relations with China, that the identical state of things now threatening has not been absent from the minds of observers for a whole generation. The missionary question alone was thought likely to result in a deadlock between China and the Powers. More than thirty years ago Sir Rutherford Alcock was impressed with the destructive effect of "each treaty Power dictating to the Government and coercing its officers in their jurisdiction wherever Christians were concerned." This, he thought, "would tend to paralyse and bring into contempt the executive, leading to a process of disintegration fatal to the existence of the Empire." What was then thought applicable to the missionary field now affects the whole range of international intercourse and of Chinese government. We are, in fact, confronted by two anarchies of most serious portent—anarchy in the administration of China, and anarchy among the foreign Powers who are so active in that country. From the beginning of the intervention to protect the Legations anarchy among the Allies has been the predominant feature: it was that which frustrated effective action in June, and led to such severe loss and suffering. Anarchy alone can account for the lawless proceedings at Tientsin, Peking, and on the Chinese coast, which on any other hypothesis would be a disgrace to civilisation. Anarchy has characterised all the utterances of the Western Powers. Beginning at the wrong end with great swelling words full of sound and fury, the Powers who assumed to lead have gradually toned down their threats as they obtained more light on the situation and on their own incapacity to deal with it. The latest expression of this incapacity is the Anglo-German Agreement, already referred to, which perpetuates the fallacy of excluding the Chinese factor from the China question. Yet out of, even by means of, this confusion it is expected that order may be established in China! *Similia similibus!*

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In this desperate imbroglio the ultimate advantage will no doubt fall to those members of the unnatural coalition who have the clearest views and the firmest resolution in giving effect to them. The dubious and vacillating Powers frittering away their political forces, espousing every contradiction in succession, and turning in weariness from the disgusting scenes in which they will have reluctantly participated, will in all probability leave the path open for their neighbours who have steadier aims and fewer scruples.

Russia has been in real, though not nominal or legal, possession of Manchuria since 1896. She has absorbed in times past many stony deserts and barren solitudes, but in Manchuria she has for the first time acquired a rich territory with an all-important sea-base and a virile population, whereby her dominant position in Eastern Asia has been rendered inexpugnable. China lies at her feet. Obviously, therefore, her interests in that empire are not only distinct from, but opposed to, those of every other Power: for while they may desire (1) to support an efficient government and keep the empire of China on its legs, and (2) to cut off slices of the territory for their own use,—two contradictory and mutually destructive policies,—Russia has no need to be anxious, either as to the efficiency of any Chinese Government or as to her own ulterior interests in the territory. The looser the substance to be absorbed the more painless will be the process of absorption. Once established in strength in Manchuria, disorder on her frontier may afford the perhaps not unwelcome opportunity of restoring order on her own terms,—of, in fact, continuing the process by which Siberia with Central and North-Eastern Asia have, in the course of two hundred years, been gradually incorporated into the Russian Empire. "It may well be doubted," wrote Sir Rutherford Alcock in 1868, "if this vast empire (of China) is not too large to be any longer governed from Peking. It is impossible to conceive a more disadvantageous site for the capital." Disadvantageous, perhaps, to China, whose centre of gravity lies a thousand miles to the south; but not disadvantageous to a Power whose strength is consolidated five hundred miles to the north.^[39]

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And the veto which Russia has exercised over the acts of the Chinese Government since 1895, whereby she has been able, at her pleasure, to frustrate the enterprises of other Powers, is not likely to fall into abeyance when that Government has been prostrated by its own folly. For the weaker the Chinese Government becomes the greater will be its need of correction and guidance. But we have only to imagine half-a-dozen Powers, each aspiring, and some of them fully resolved, to exercise their special veto over the proposals of the others, to realise the tragic complexity of the international problems which now present themselves for solution. A government holding together three hundred millions of people ripened for rebellion, potentially at war with the rest of the world, and yet governing under multiple tutelage—such is the prospect before us. Of all the legacies which the nineteenth bequeaths to the twentieth century, there is none more portentous than that of the sick giant of the Far East.



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CHAPTER XXXIV.

SIR RUTHERFORD ALCOCK'S LATER YEARS.

Retirement—Literary work—Social and charitable occupations—Geographical Society—Borneo—Failing health—Active to the end.

After twenty-seven years' service in the Far East Sir Rutherford Alcock spent the remaining twenty-seven years of his life in his own country, not in the placid enjoyment of a well-earned leisure or in mere literary recreation, but in labours incessant for the good of his countrymen. Though the scene had changed, the methodical habits of his business life remained unaltered, and were directed in their full activity to the duties that presented themselves in England.

During his whole active life Sir Rutherford had cherished the hope of occupying his years of leisure with work for the sick and needy. His visit to England, 1856-58, perhaps gave the definite direction to this aspiration, and led him to see that hospitals, schools, prisons, and similar institutions would afford the best available medium through which he could reach the object of his desires. No sooner, therefore, was he released from official service than the ex-army surgeon returned to his first love. The associations of his youth were bound up with the two hospitals in Westminster where he had studied. There, accordingly, after the lapse of forty years, his active connection with the medical schools was resumed. Residing in the immediate vicinity, Sir Rutherford was able to devote a large share of his time to the affairs of Westminster Hospital, giving back with interest what he had received from his nursing mother. He was a regular visitor there: before long he joined the Board, and became a prominent figure at its meetings. Being appointed one of the vice-presidents, an office he held till his death, he was, through his constant attendance, the working chairman of the board. There was much good work waiting to be done in the control and direction of the routine service of the establishment, and still more in the way of improvements required to adapt the machine to the needs of the time. Hospitals in general were by no means in a satisfactory condition thirty years ago, and the Westminster was certainly no better than its neighbours. The sanitary state of the establishment was antiquated and unfavourable to the patients. But the structural changes necessary to improve this and to extend the accommodation, and the heavy expenditure involved, demanded first-rate financial and organising capacity, as well as unremitting labour,—desiderata which Sir Rutherford was eminently qualified to supply. The nursing was at such a low level as amounted almost to a scandal. Drastic remedies, in short, and in many directions, were called for. But reform from within is proverbially an unpromising undertaking, the *personnel* being identified with conservative traditions. That kind of parsimony which is in effect the worst extravagance, inasmuch as it yields no adequate return, was a serious obstacle to improvement. It was not their fault, but that of the system of which they were but creatures, that nurses and other attendants were so perfunctory and so inefficient. It was the system, therefore, that had to be reformed, and into that work Sir Rutherford Alcock threw himself *con amore*. In his labours for the improvement of the hospital he was supported throughout by the cordial co-operation of the late Lady Augusta Stanley. We are indebted to his colleague, Mr George Cowell, F.R.C.S., for a short reference to the work initiated and carried through by Sir Rutherford Alcock, and for a warm tribute to the zeal and ability which he brought into the service:—

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Most of the many valuable reports on such subjects as the nursing, admission of out-patients, structural alterations, and improved sanitation were written by him, and endorsed by the committees over which he so ably presided. The writer of this notice remembers the early controversies with reference to the nursing, and the growing complaints which failed to

receive attention until Sir Rutherford came on the scene. Hospital committees in those days were not so liberal as they are now, and all increase in the wages of the nurses was absolutely refused for many years. The result of this parsimony was that as the general rate of wages increased, the best nurses were enticed away by better pay elsewhere, and Westminster had gradually come to be nursed by a lower and lower class, and indeed thirty years ago it was not an unheard-of thing to convict a nurse for consuming brandy ordered for the patient. The medical staff were obliged to make a stand against this crying evil, and at last, with the assistance of Sir Rutherford, and in spite of the determined opposition of the then senior physician, a change was made, and the cost of the nursing was doubled at a bound.

Sir Rutherford was chairman of the Westminster Ophthalmic Hospital for sixteen years, and of the Hospital for Women in Soho Square, to both of which institutions he rendered great services. He was member of the Council of the House of Charity for assisting those who have seen better days, and chairman of the Nursing Home founded by Lady Augusta Stanley, in which he took a keen interest. He was also a Poor Law Guardian and a leader in sundry charitable and other parochial work, his experiences of which he likened to the steps of a dancing-master—"two forward and one backward, with no very sensible advance in any one direction." One important step forward he did, however, succeed in making, and that was in obtaining trained nurses for sick inmates of workhouses. His efforts, while connected with St George's Union, were specially devoted to the treatment of the sick: he also took a great interest in the emigration of pauper children to Canada. [479]

As a member of the committee of the Charity Organisation Society he laboured for many years in a variety of ways to bring about unity of action between that body and the Board of Guardians. In connection with the Westminster District Board of Works, Board of Parochial Trustees, Western Dispensary, and Westminster Nursing Committee, he rendered innumerable services to the populous districts controlled by these organisations. Having been elected to the Board of Works in 1875, Sir Rutherford was at once placed upon the Sanitary Committee, to which the Board delegated the administration of the Public Health Acts then in force. The vestry clerk of St Margaret's and St John's records that the Sanitary Committee of the District Board of Works was Sir Rutherford's favourite field of work—an impression which was no doubt also formed by the executive officers of the other spheres of his multifarious activity. The members of the Board were at that time greatly occupied in combating the evils resulting from the overcrowded and insanitary condition of their district, and Sir Rutherford was largely instrumental in urging upon the Home Office the necessity of legislation to compel medical practitioners and heads of families to give notice of cases of infectious diseases—efforts which eventually resulted in the Act of Parliament of 1889. [480]

In 1881 he was appointed a member of the Royal Commission to investigate the London smallpox and fever hospitals, to the formation of which he had contributed powerfully by his reports and articles and labours in the Medical Conference. In 1882 he presided over the Health Department of the Social Science Congress.

In all the social and philanthropic objects to which he devoted himself he was an original worker, never a follower of routine or one to say ditto to another man's opinions. Whatever he undertook he did thoroughly, and with a single eye to the main purpose. His various activities brought him into contact with all sorts and conditions of men, but chiefly with those on the pathetic side of social life—the unfortunate, the debilitated, the improvident, the suffering. He shirked none of his obligations to the meanest of these, and would suffer the greatest personal inconvenience rather than fail in fulfilment of the smallest promise, or in gratifying the slightest request. This punctilious observance of the minor duties was remarked as a prominent feature in his character. An intimate friend writes, "How I wish I could convey even a faint idea of his kindly and sympathetic friendship, which left the feeling that he was on a plane above one in his lofty sense of love and duty." Pure philanthropy, genuine economy, and sound finance being his guiding principles in all social undertakings, and whatever he undertook being pushed through to a successful issue, he by degrees acquired a reputation for efficiency and tenacity. It was not surprising that his energetic character should have gained him the credit of aggressiveness, or, as Mr Co well puts it, "bellicose individuality," which, however, served him in good stead in every post he occupied. We have already seen throughout his official career how he was stimulated by controversy: he was at his best as a fighting man. [481]

The high qualities which Sir Rutherford devoted to his labours of love received flattering recognition from the Queen, who applied to him to draw up the regulations and rules of the institution by which deserving nurses were to be benefited in commemoration of her Majesty's Jubilee. This honour he accepted from her Majesty on the condition that he should have for colleagues in the work Sir James Paget and the Duke of Westminster, a request which was graciously granted. The balance of the Women's Jubilee offering of 1887 was £70,000, of which fund the three were appointed trustees. They decided that it should be applied to the foundation of an institution to promote the education and maintenance of nurses for the sick poor in their own homes. When the scheme had been matured a royal charter of incorporation was granted, wherein the governing body was styled "The Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses," the three trustees being appointed to act permanently in that capacity, and also as members of the Council of the Institute. "Sir Rutherford," says the Rev. Arthur Peile, Master of St Katharine's, "continued to the last to take an unflinching interest in the work, and in many valuable ways aided the committee and council by his advice. From his wide grasp of the subject in its various bearings he was able to make important suggestions." The Diamond Jubilee and the incidents connected with the celebration interested Sir Rutherford greatly during the last year of his life, [482]

and the medal he received on the occasion was valued by him more highly than any other distinction, because he knew that the bestowal of it was the spontaneous act of the Queen herself, for whom he had a deep personal affection.

To the larger public Sir Rutherford Alcock was perhaps best known by his work in connection with the Royal Geographical Society, on the committee of which he served for twenty years. Elected President in 1876, it fell to him to receive Sir George Nares on his return from his Arctic expedition in that year, and Mr H. M. Stanley on his return from the Congo in 1877. His various presidential addresses to the Society itself, and to the geographical section of the British Association, are replete with well-digested summaries of the progress of geographical exploration throughout the world. His comprehensive treatment of the subject assisted very much, if not to make geography a science, at least to lift it out of the region of mere technical knowledge, and to assign to the study of it the social and political significance now universally attached to the description of the earth's surface. Personally he did much to stimulate enterprise of that kind in various regions. As Chairman of the African Exploration Fund, he took an active share in the labours which resulted in the despatch of Mr Keith Johnston and Mr Joseph Thomson to East Africa, and, by bringing the country into notice, had such important results in the direction of the opening up of that part of the continent. Speaking of him a few days after his death, the President, Sir Clements Markham, said: "Judicious, patient, and courteous, he was esteemed by us all, and his able advice helped us out of many a difficulty. The period of his presidency will always be remembered for the energy with which he advocated African exploration, the result of his efforts being represented by the memorable expeditions of Joseph Thomson."

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We have already had occasion to remark on the personal interest which Sir Rutherford had taken during the earlier years of his service in China and Japan in the London Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862.^[40] Indeed the Japanese "show" in the latter was virtually organised by him. His well-known sympathy with, and interest in, all industrial and artistic collections led to his being chosen as British Commissioner to the Paris Exhibition of 1878.

About the same time a question of imperial concern claimed Sir Rutherford's active intervention: that was colonisation in the Eastern Archipelago. Borneo, the largest island in the world after Australia, has from time to time excited considerable interest in Great Britain. The romantic career of the Rajah of Sarawak, Sir James Brooke, on the west coast, had much to do with bringing that part of the world into public notice. Adopting as his country the domain made over to him by the native chiefs, Rajah Brooke laboured among his people like a missionary of civilisation, trampled out the savage customs of the natives, and after many trials gained the confidence of the people by his justice and firmness, and eventually brought the country into a state of prosperity and good order. In this he was loyally seconded by Captain Keppel, now Admiral of the Fleet, whose 'Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S. Dido' is a graphic story of their joint adventures among pirates and head-hunters. Coal having been found in Labuan, adjoining the Rajah's territory, that island was acquired by Great Britain in 1847, under treaty from the Sultan of Brunei, who engaged not to make any cession of his territory without her Majesty's consent, and established as a Crown colony.

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The Netherlands and Spain claimed between them, upon a vague tenure, enormous tracts of the coast of Borneo and the adjoining archipelago, effectually blocking all progress in these regions. There still remained, however, an important section of the northern part of that immense island unappropriated by the white man. Portions of this tract had been leased to an American citizen, who transferred it to an American company; but being unable to furnish the capital either to pay the stipulated rent or to develop so enormous a property, in 1877 the holders were glad to part with all their rights to an English association consisting of Baron von Overbeck and Mr (now Sir) Alfred Dent, who undertook to pay the agreed tribute to the Sultans of Borneo and Sooloo. Possessing this immense estate, with the sovereign rights inherent in the proprietor, the English association made arrangements to develop the property. Agents were sent out to occupy certain points on the coast, and a provisional government, suited to the requirements of the place, was set up. But the administration putting too heavy a strain upon a private individual, Mr Dent set to work to find assistance in his undertaking.

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At this juncture, 1879, Sir Rutherford Alcock, impressed by the important strategical position of the island of Borneo, lying close to the track of vessels traversing the China Sea, its possession of several good harbours, and prospective coal supply, joined Mr Dent in his efforts to place the British occupation of the Bornean harbours on a secure basis. As a first step it was necessary to organise a company with sufficient capital to take over the government and utilise the resources of the territory. This may well have seemed at the time not only an arduous but an impossible undertaking; for nothing short of a royal charter could supply the necessary guarantee to attract capitalists, and to assure them that their property investment would eventually be productive. The era had long gone past when royal charters were granted to merchant adventurers. Such an institution, therefore, seemed an anachronism, opposed to the spirit of the age. Nor was the political colour of the British Government at the time encouraging to imperial schemes of any description. In spite of these difficulties the knowledge of affairs and insistency of Sir Rutherford Alcock and the other promoters enabled them eventually to succeed in pushing their enterprise with the Government to the point of obtaining a charter of incorporation in November 1881. On the faith of this charter a company was formed, of which the capital now stands at £2,000,000, under the title of the "British North Borneo Company." Sir Rutherford Alcock became the chairman, which post he continued to fill during the ten years which may be considered the probationary stage of the company. To him it owed much of its success in overcoming the

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numerous difficulties incidental to starting so novel a venture; and among his other labours in its behalf he drew up a full and elaborate handbook of North Borneo. It was not a trading, but a governing and a land-owning company, its revenues consisting of royalties paid by private adventurers for the privileges of mining, agriculture, and so forth, licences and the necessary taxes on commerce. But the interests of a dividend-earning and a governing company were so nearly incompatible that no little ingenuity as well as patient effort were required to bring about reconciliation between the two elements.

The affairs of the company have been conducted with great perseverance, the exploitation of the territory by means of planting, mining, and industries of various kinds having been handed over to subsidiary companies created for the purpose, while the parent body maintains its position as overlord, administering the whole territory.

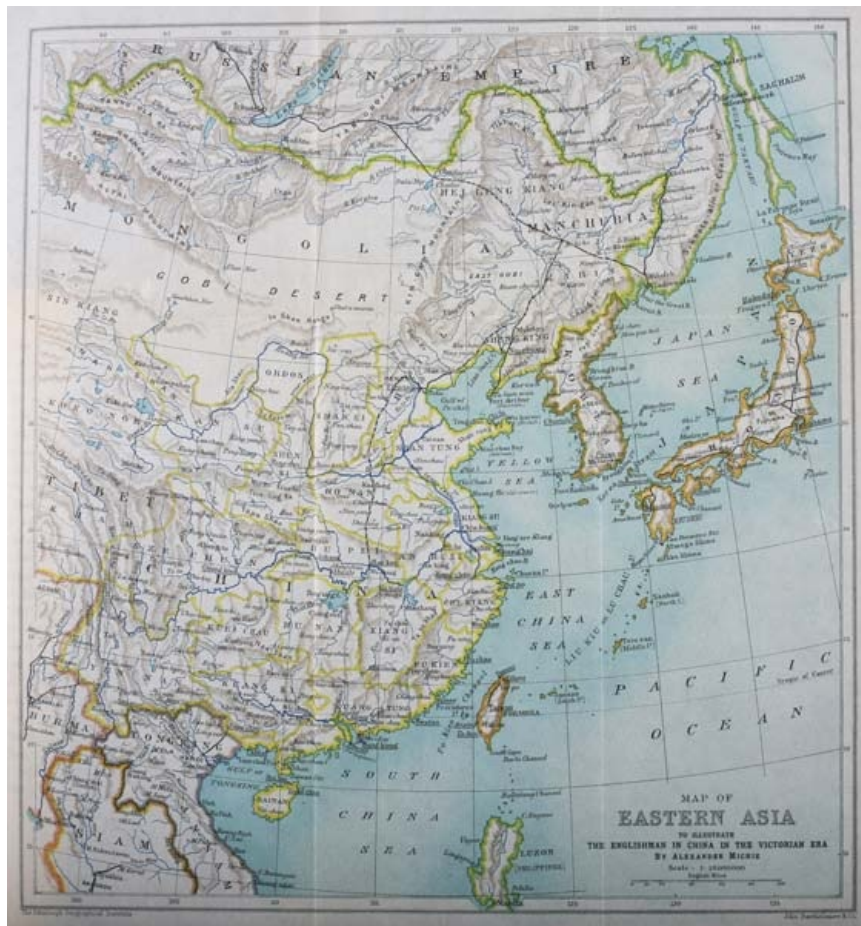
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But amidst his numerous preoccupations in England Sir Rutherford never loosened his grasp on the events which were transpiring in the distant field to which his official life had been devoted. As the only competent and persistent critic of these events, he did as much as one man could to turn the eyes of his countrymen towards their most important interests in Further Asia. Nearly every passing event was noticed briefly by him in the columns of the daily press, while the permanent features of the Far Eastern problem, which are only now beginning to dawn upon the consciousness of the nation, were copiously dealt with in the monthly magazines and in the more stately pages of the 'Edinburgh Review.' Sir Rutherford's contributions to periodical literature, forming a tolerably complete repertory of the questions arising out of the intercourse of Europe with Eastern Asia, would fill many volumes. As late as 1896 the subject was still uppermost in his mind. "In China," he then wrote, "there is a far larger Eastern question than what is occupying us at Constantinople. An open port for Russia, a railroad across Russia, with the French scheming for our commerce in the Indo-Chinese peninsula,—the whole situation is full of danger to all our interests in China." And during the last year of his life the thought of all that had been lost to the country through sheer neglect seemed to weigh heavily on his mind. That his constant premonitions of coming changes passed practically unheeded by the public to whom they were addressed is unfortunately true; and it is trite to say that it would have been well for this country if the warnings of such serious writers as this had been taken to heart before instead of after the deluge. But that would have been a historical anomaly, for mankind has learned little since the days of Noah.

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Under the valid plea of advancing age and failing health Sir Rutherford during his last years relinquished one after another the offices which he had filled with so much earnestness and good faith. Deafness alone obliged him to retire from the active chairmanship of the Westminster Hospital, though his attendances at the weekly meetings of the Board were unremitting to the very end. As late as July 1897 he took a leading part in measures he deemed urgent for the wellbeing of the institution. During the Jubilee celebrations he was able to receive a formal visit from a party of twelve Dyak police from British North Borneo, under the command of Mr Wardrop. The Committee of the Jubilee Nurses continued to meet at his house, and he did work for the institution during the summer. While at Wimbledon with his family in August, he was seized by an illness from which he rallied sufficiently to be brought home to his house at Westminster, where he came under the medical care of his old friend and physician, Dr Lionel Beale. Among the few friends who were admitted to see him during the last month of his life were the Dean of Westminster, Lord Lister, Mr Edmund Bagshawe of Bath, and one or two others. His strength was then gradually failing, though he retained his intellect unimpaired till within a few days of the end, on November 2, 1897. He was buried in Merstham churchyard. His widow, nearly his own age, survived him sixteen months, dying in March 1899. How much the maintenance of the husband's long life of active usefulness owed to the support and encouragement of a judicious and devoted wife must remain behind the veil. She had her reward.

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**MAP OF EASTERN ASIA TO ILLUSTRATE THE ENGLISHMAN
IN CHINA IN THE VICTORIAN ERA**

By ALEXANDER MICHIE

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It may be interesting in conclusion to add a few words of Sir Rutherford Alcock's estimate of himself, which occur in a letter to the friend who had pressed him on the subject of biography, written within a year of his death. "In worldly things," he said, "I have been exceptionally favoured by opportunities, many of them unanticipated, and rather fortuitous than by any efforts or merits. My early life was marked by a great rashness, and a readiness to accept responsibilities which savoured much of presumption and confidence from conceit in my powers to deal with whatever fell in my way—very different from my retrospect in old age and the sobered estimate my judgment is now disposed to form of all I undertook and accomplished, and the risks I accepted, through my fifty years of active life."

If, however, age be the season appropriate for judgment, youth is the time for laying up the materials for it; and he who takes no risks achieves nothing worthy of being judged. We estimate the man by his record rather than by his own review of it, falling back on the criterion, valid in all circumstances, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

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- [1] "We are never for a moment unwatched; ... if my servant runs after a butterfly, a two-sworded official runs after him."—Laurence Oliphant, Letter from Yedo, July 1861.
- [2] "As a general rule, our guardians exercise their functions with civility; when they are impertinent, one has to submit as one would to one's jailor.... With entire humility, one is in no danger whatever."—Oliphant, 2nd July 1861.
- [3] The effect of the commercial isolation of Japan on the value of general commodities was no less striking. The first foreign traders might have bought with eyes shut nearly every article that was offered to them, so great was the disparity of prices between Japan and her nearest markets. Mr Hunter gives an interesting example. "I had in go-downs," he says, "8000 piculs of sapan-wood imported from Manila unsaleable at one dollar and a quarter per picul, which was about its cost. Immediately that the opening of the port of Simoda to foreign trade was announced officially, an English vessel was chartered to carry it there. Brief—it was sold for 35 dollars per picul, and the proceeds were invested in Japanese vegetable wax at a cost of 6½ dollars, and sold for \$17 the picul (133½ lb. English)," so that in the short voyage from China to Japan and back the capital multiplied seventy times!
- [4] A story is told of two Samurai meeting on a bridge which was too narrow to allow of their passing each other. Neither being willing to give way, they were about to settle the difficulty at the point of the sword, when a peasant, strolling along the dry bed of the stream, offered to extricate them without loss of dignity on either side. Amused at his impertinence, and curious to see how he would effect his purpose, they consented to humour him; and when each, following his instructions, was seated in one of the baskets at either end of the pole he was carrying, he swung it round on to the opposite shoulder, asked pardon, bowed, and went on his way, leaving them each facing in the direction in which he would proceed.
- [5] Ieyasu says the Samurai are the masters of the four classes. Agriculturists, artisans, and merchants may not behave in a rude manner towards Samurai. The term for a rude man is, "other than expected fellow"; and a Samurai is not to be interfered with in cutting down a fellow who has behaved to him in a manner other than is expected. The Samurai are grouped into direct retainers, secondary retainers and nobles, and retainers of high and low grade; but the same line of conduct is equally allowable to them all towards an "other than expected fellow."
- [6] "All my old friends have disappeared," writes Laurence Oliphant on his return to Yedo as secretary of Legation. "One who was an especial favourite of mine when I was here last, ripped himself up a short time ago; and two of the other commissioners are disgraced, and it is supposed have followed his example. This was all on account of their friendship for foreigners. Every one, down to the lowest interpreter, who has had anything to do with the introduction of foreigners, has disappeared or been disgraced."
- [7] This man, Murioka by name, became afterwards well known to foreigners, and was always ready to talk freely about the whole transaction. When asked why he struck at a lady he would reply, "How should I know, never having seen a foreign woman, least of all on horseback?"
- [8] It was a common thing for a Daimio to rid himself of the irksome obligations of his position by abdicating in favour of his son. On better acquaintance Shimadso Saburo proved a most genial old gentleman. Three years later he entertained Sir Harry and Lady Parkes at his capital most hospitably.
- [9] Count Inouyé, the foremost statesman of the new Japan, is said to have confessed that he set fire to the British Legation with his own hand with the express object of embarrassing the Tycoon's Government.
- [10] The following souvenir of Count Mutsu, Foreign Minister of Japan, who died in 1897, told by Mr J. F. Lowder and quoted in 'Things Japanese' by Mr Basil Hall Chamberlain, affords a graphic illustration of this point. "In the very early Sixties, when he was in his nineteenth or twentieth year, he was in Nagasaki desirous of acquiring a knowledge of English. A lady of my acquaintance taking an interest in him used to devote an hour or two every morning to teaching him to read and write, but it was not long before he came to me despairing of his slow progress, and asking whether I could not give him a berth on board ship where nothing but English was spoken. Believing him to be physically too weak to stand such an ordeal, I endeavoured to dissuade him, but without success; and so with some misgivings I shipped him as a cabin-boy, which was the only position I could obtain for him, on board a small British schooner that used in those days to voyage between Nagasaki and Shanghai. How long he remained on board I cannot say, but my recollection is that it was a very considerable time."
- [11] The foreign trade of Japan now (1900) approximates 40 millions sterling, exports and imports being very nearly balanced.
- [12] There is more truth than may appear in the bishop's paradox. Peking is singularly free from epidemics, except occasionally of smallpox. When Shanghai suffered so severely from cholera in 1862, there were two British regiments quartered there—one, the 67th, within the native city, amid filth and stagnant water; the other, the 31st, in the foreign settlement, in quarters carefully selected by the surgeon, Dr Rennie. The 31st lost a third of its strength; the 67th suffered very little. Writing in August 1860 from Peitang, a town 500 yards square in the midst of a great swamp, into which 17,000 men were huddled, Sir Hope Grant says: "Notwithstanding the pestilential nature of the place, our troops, wonderful to say, never enjoyed better health."
- [13] See *infra*, "Revision of the Treaty," pp. 210-222.
- [14] *Vide* 'U.S. Diplomatic Corresp.,' vol. ii. for 1867, p. 424.

- [15] He now knows better.
- [16] Germany in her treaty made no profession, but simply stipulated for toleration.
- [17] M. Eugene Simon, one of the most distinguished of the French consuls in China, in his book, 'La Cité Chinoise,' awards the credit of this performance to M. Delamarre, "un prêtre des Missions étrangères," who acted as Baron Gros' interpreter. "Je tiens," says M. Simon, "le fait de plusieurs sources, et entre autres de M. Delamarre, qui se glorifiait beaucoup de sa supercherie."
- [18] Compare "Jesuits' Estates Act" in Canada, 1890, for which Mr Mercier was decorated by the Pope.
- [19] It will be understood that a concise view of the general mission question is all that is here aimed at, no distinction being drawn between branches of the propaganda. Important as are their differences viewed from the foreign standpoint, they are practically ignored by the Chinese, as we see from the impartiality with which they visit resentment on all. Our concern is with the impression produced by the propaganda as a whole, gathered as far as possible from Chinese evidence and not from the hypothetical arguments of foreign disputants. In other words, it is the political bearing of the movement which alone we are endeavouring to illustrate.
- [20] This measure was intended by the Chinese Government to facilitate the local settlement of disputes where the facts were known, and so obviate incessant appeals to the Central Government. It has not fulfilled its purpose, partly because an important section of the propaganda declined to avail itself of the concession offered to them. Indeed the form of the concession implies a hierarchy which only Catholic missions possess.
- [21] For an unvarnished narrative of both the French and the Russian advances the reader cannot do better than consult Mr Gundry's 'China and her Neighbours,' Chapman & Hall, 1893.
- [22] "Experience shows us that in the eyes of the Chinese negotiation is a sign of weakness."—Sir F. BRUCE.
- [23] "*Likin* is in its nature an oppressive institution only continued in force owing to the necessity of providing resources to meet the army expenditure in the north-west."—'Peking Gazette,' January 18, 1875.
- [24] See *infra*, p. 343.
- [25] See *infra*, p. 330.
- [26] 'Contemporary Review,' December 1884.
- [27] The effect of these imposing edifices, which dwarf into insignificance the most pretentious native buildings, is well exemplified in the approach to Canton, where the French cathedral church, erected on the site of the Viceroy Yeh's *yamên*, is the only object visible, and where the idea of a permanent memorial of defeat is well realised. It is not a conciliatory policy; irresistible force is required to maintain it.
- [28] See *supra*, p. 308.
- [29] Village Life in China. By Arthur Smith, D.D.
- [30] An ingenious friend, who was kind enough to read this passage in MS., sent me the following suggestive note: "King Solomon was a thorough Chinaman, crafty, gaining the throne although the fourth and youngest son of his mother; killing off the kingdom-maker, Joab, and murdering the lawful heir, Adonijah. His fondness for pomp and joss pidjin, witness the Queen of Sheba and the Temple; love of trade, his ventures with King Hiram to Ophir. His apathy in military affairs, leading to the breaking up of the empire. His love of sententious maxims, Proverbs. His truly Chinese and non-Hebrew syncretism, worshipping Ashtoreth, Moloch, and Chemosh, as well as Jehovah. Now David, judging by the weak characters of his children, was, like many famous men in history, the reverse of prepotent. Solomon was a son of erewhile widow Bathsheba. Uriah being a Hittite, she was presumably one also. So Solomon would be practically a Hittite—i.e., Mongolian or Tartar; a striking example of the newly-named but long-observed phenomenon called telegony or 'throwing back.' Solomon 'threw back' to the first sire, Uriah."
- [31] "The boasted influence that the Government of China possesses over its subjects is almost entirely *moral*, and they really do not possess the power to cope with a popular tumult, which is the object of their greatest dread."—H. Parkes, at Foochow, May 1, 1846, *æ.t.* seventeen.
- [32] The same who is now governor of Shantung.
- [33] See [vol. i. p. 38](#).
- [34] Mr Freeman-Mitford, in 'The Attaché at Peking,' recently published, tells the following good story illustrative of this (p. 168). M. de Mas, the Spanish Minister, happening to be at the house of Hêng-Chi, and knowing that he had a little son of whom he was inordinately proud, thought it would be a very pretty compliment if he asked to see the little boy, who was accordingly produced, sucking his thumb after the manner of his years. Him his father ordered to pay his respects to M. de Mas—that is to say, shake his united fists at him in token of salutation; instead of which the child, after long silence and much urging, taking his thumb deliberately out of his mouth roared out "Kwei-tzū" (devils) at the top of his voice and fled.
- [35] Referring to the massacre of Armenian Christians, with regard to which Germany took up a very different attitude from that now assumed towards China—a circumstance, by

the way, which serves to reduce the "Christian" factor in the present intervention to its proper value.

- [36] Or, as M. Paul Boell expresses it, "Traitant la Chine tantôt comme un pouvoir tout à fait formidable, tantôt comme une puissance nègre de septième ordre."
- [37] Kwanghsu, being first cousin to the deceased Emperor Tungchih, could not, according to Chinese usage, be his heir. In adopting him, therefore, as posthumous heir to the previous Emperor Hsienfêng, his uncle, the Regent left her own son, the Emperor Tungchih, without an heir, promising to supply the want from the future offspring of Kwanghsu, or by some other adoption; but against this procedure strong protests were made. The arrangement, however, conferred upon the Dowager-Empress, as the widow of Hsienfêng, the authority of a mother over his heir, a circumstance which to a large extent accounts for the filial deference the reigning emperor has always paid to his adoptive mother.
- [38] Thirty years ago the great Nanking viceroy, Tsêng Kwo-fan, assured the Government in a memorial to the throne that if the question of treaty revision could not be satisfactorily arranged with foreigners, he had forces enough under his orders to drive them all into the sea.
- [39] The question of removing the capital to a more convenient site has been discussed academically—by foreigners—for many years, their view being that Nanking would be the most suitable. No doubt a central point open to the sea would be more convenient for the maritime Powers, but that is evidently not an advantage which commends itself to the Chinese themselves. During the Japanese war their strategists urged the removal of the Court from Peking to Signan fu in Shensi, simply on the ground of the inaccessibility of the latter site. The transport was prepared and the Emperor was ready, but the Empress-Dowager vetoed the project.
- [40] In 1863 the University of Oxford conferred upon him the degree of D.C.L.

THE END.

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