

# THE LIVING AGE

Founded by E. LITTELL in 1844

NO. 3913

JULY 5, 1919

## JAPAN AS MISTRESS OF CHINA

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GREAT BRITAIN and Japan are close allies by the definite treaties and agreements of 1902, 1905, and 1911. These arrangements, unless some secret modifications have been made over the head of Parliament and the public, will come to an end in 1921. By the original Convention the two countries mutually guaranteed one another's possessions in Asia, Japan pledging herself to uphold British suzerainty in India; Great Britain undertaking to the like for the Japanese ownership of Korea. Needless to enlarge upon the obvious fact that matters are in a very different position now from what they were, even in 1911, when the last settlement was made, which extended the Anglo-Japanese understanding for another ten years from that date.

For one thing, Japan, who has carried out her undertakings toward the Allies during the period of hostilities, is very much stronger financially, economically, and politically than she was when the war began. In fact, Japan and the United States are the only two of the Allied Powers who are in this fortunate position. All the rest are greatly weakened by the strain of four and a half years of the tremen-

dous struggle now coming to a close. Consequently, unless the United States takes a very different and much more definite line than she has adopted hitherto, Japan will be able to do pretty much what she likes in the Far East, and particularly in China. The belief that the inchoate League of Nations will be able to prevent this rising Power of Asia from following up the determined policy which she has been pursuing for the past twenty years is like one of those illusions with which our politicians so genially played before August, 1914. The Hague Conventions neither induced Germany to keep the peace, when she thought it was to her advantage to go to war; nor did they have the slightest influence in harmonizing her methods during the period of hostilities. Making due allowance for the differences between the position and race of the two nations, I venture to predict that Japan will follow the course of the great aggressive Empire of modern Europe. Indeed, she is already doing so, much more successfully than her Western predecessors.

Her alliance with our own country has not only helped Japan materially

to attain her ends, as far as she has achieved them, but the rulers of our policy in the East are blind or apathetic in reference to the further steps toward the realization of her full 'Continental' programme which she is now taking. Japan and the Japanese are popular in Great Britain. A systematic propaganda has been carried on in Great Britain to create and extend this feeling among us; but the Japanese have never been popular with those of our own countrymen who live in China and Japan. Our own possession of India, which we hold by right of conquest, as well as the terms of our alliance, prevent us, in many ways, from opposing adequately Japan's progress on the mainland of Asia. It is no easy matter for British statesmen effectively to denounce the Japanese policy of the absorption of China when England made herself mistress of an Empire containing 315,000,000 of inhabitants by very similar commercial and military tactics.

For it is the absorption and domination of China upon which Japan is steadfastly bent, whatever may be said or written in Paris, in London, or in Washington to the contrary. The Chinese themselves have no doubt whatever about that. They point to Korea as an example of the fate which awaits China if the Great Allied Powers give Japan the free hand in Asia which her statesmen think, with some justice, they will be forced to accord to her. Korea, like China to-day, was to have been left with the 'open door' to European and American traders and settlers. Nothing of the kind now. The whole of Korea is in the hands of Japanese merchants and traders, who carefully keep the entire market to themselves. The Koreans are subject to the most stringent economic as well as political, military, and social pressure. Here is an account, by a well-

known Korean, of the way in which economic power is used to enforce complete domination upon the Korean people. A Japanese colonization company was anxious to obtain lands from the Koreans in order to settle them with Japanese. The Koreans, naturally enough, refused to sell land for this purpose. Thereupon, the Japanese Government took the matter in hand. Its Imperial Bank of Chosen, at Seoul, called in all the circulating medium in the country, though the Koreans could only pay their taxes and the cost of their necessaries of life in cash. After this financial ukase, only by selling their land at one half down to one fifth of its previous price could the Koreans obtain this essential money. Then the richest land thus reduced in value by forced sales, was bought by the agents of the bank for tens of thousands of imported Japanese emigrants!

Teaching the language of the Koreans is forbidden in the public schools, just as Polish was tabooed in Prussian Poland. It is even alleged by Mr. Chung that ancient works of Korean history and literature have been systematically collected and burned by the Japanese, and that now Koreans may not go for education to Europe or America. When it is borne in mind that Japan owes her civilization to China, through Korea, and that this fact is publicly acknowledged on monuments throughout Japan, we can scarcely imagine a worse form of Oriental tyranny. Yet Japan has hitherto left the whole of this terrible indictment unanswered. No wonder that the Koreans have recently been in revolt against such ruthless foreign rule.

Seeing all this done, contrary to justice and treaty rights, in an old civilized country, which was quite recently a province of China, the

Chinese themselves may well feel alarmed at the encroachments now being made on their own independence. Nor can they be in the least confident that the Western Powers and the United States will save them from the increasing menace of Japanese tyranny, though their nominal control over the province of Shantung, wrested from Germany by the Japanese, aided by a very small English contingent, will be restored to them — 'nominal control,' because Japan will continue to exercise all the economic influence to which she, at this stage, attaches most importance.

Japan is still a very poor country, even when full account is taken of all that she has gained in money and markets during the war. Her scope of cultivated land does not suffice for her increasing population, she has no great mineral resources. Yet in forty years she has sprung up from being a nation viewed with amused tolerance to a recognized position as one of the great Powers of the world. Her army and navy are admirable, but costly. The ambitions of the statesmen who are still guiding her policy are boundless. Those who know Japan best, and have most carefully watched her growth, and her attitude toward engagements which tend to hamper her 'manifest destiny' are convinced that no scruples will restrain her. That again is the view of the Chinese, who have had better opportunities of forming a judgment than anybody else.

And now, close at hand, no longer separated by the sea, with powerful Japanese armies and fleets within striking distance of her most vulnerable points, lies the peaceful and divided Republic of China, possessed of possibly the most valuable undeveloped wealth in the whole world. In the province of Chihli alone there is

available coal enough to last, on a gigantic scale of expenditure, for 1,000 years. There are in China also iron and other rich mineral deposits of every kind. The enormous population of this splendid Empire is industrious, physically capable, educated, and accustomed to obedience. China wants nothing but vigorous leadership and scientific development to become actually, as she is potentially, by far the most powerful nation in the world. This leadership Japan can at once supply. Japan was prevented by the White Powers from displacing the Mongol Dynasty, according to Asiatic custom, after her triumphal victory over the Chinese armies in 1894-95. That she has never forgotten. Now these interfering Westerners have been carefully engaged in bleeding one another white. This, therefore, the Japanese say, is our turn. We will take advantage of it at once.

So Japan thought, and so she acted when on 18 January, 1915, Mr. Hioki handed to President Yuan Shih-Kai the famous series of demands upon China which, if accepted in their integrity, would have handed over the Flowery Land entirely to the domination of the Japanese Government. Nothing less than that. Industrially, militarily, politically, financially, commercially, administratively, China, with its 350,000,000 or 400,000,000 of inhabitants, would become little more than a huge province of the Japanese Empire. Even the police of China was to be a Japanese constabulary. No fewer than 60,000 Japanese bureaucrats were in readiness to establish thoroughgoing Japanese officialdom in place of the inefficient old government by Mandarins and literati. Powerful armies were in array in Manchuria and Shantung ready to enforce compliance with the ruinous terms formulated.

Throughout the conferences between the Chinese and Japanese negotiators, the latter took the highest possible tone. Practically, as the official account of the twenty-four meetings show, Japan defied all the rules of courtesy or even international decency, and reduced the discussions to a series of ultimatums which were so many undisguised threats. China appealed to the civilized world to help her in this her extremity. In vain. Although America had not then entered upon the war against Germany — she was then in the 'too proud to fight' stage — the statesmen of the United States were as ineffective as their fully-occupied brethren in Europe. At last, on 7 May, 1915, Japan submitted her final ultimatum, which was really a menace of the immediate invasion of helpless China. So China gave way. There was nothing else she could do. Fifteen out of the twenty-one points urged by Japan were perforce conceded, which gave to Japan the bulk of her immediate claims in regard to Manchuria, Shantung, Fukien, railways, mines, military advisorship, supplies of munitions, and commercial advantages.

To no purpose did the Chinese representative urge that some of the Japanese demands directly conflicted with arrangements already made with Great Britain, and other nations. That went for nothing. Even the remaining six demands upon China, which would complete her humiliation and subjugation, were not withdrawn. Their enforcement was only postponed. Since then China has been further shown how little reliance she can place upon her foreign friends. Mr. Lansing, in his correspondence with Count Ishii, actually adopted and sanctioned the latter statesman's claim of 'territorial propinquity' as justifying Japan's attitude on the Chinese question. That sin-

ister doctrine would justify endless piracy in Europe as well as in Asia.

But China is now one of the Allies in the war against Germany, which is not yet finally concluded, even at the time of writing. Does the Peace Conference, does the League of Nations, secure China from the full assertion of Japan's supremacy over her territory? Once more the Chinese are quite certain that neither the one nor the other will do her this crucial service. And Great Britain, the country most deeply interested in honestly maintaining the independence of China, actually chooses this moment to discriminate against the importation of Chinese tea as an evidence of her good feeling toward the people of this great but much harassed Republic! Meanwhile the Japanese are lending both the discordant elements in the Chinese Republic large sums of money at high rates of interest, and are formally accused of fomenting the civil war, and internal disturbances generally, in order to weaken China and prepare the way for a great coup at a propitious moment. As Europe and America seem unable or unwilling to intervene, the only hope for China lies in the poor possibility of a rapid growth of the democratic anti-annexionist movement in Japan itself.

A completely new and more enlightened policy is called for in Asia on the part of all nations in any way interested in that vast and populous continent. If Great Britain, France, and other European Powers insist upon shutting their eyes to what is going on in the territories which they at present control, and if, neglecting to uphold the freedom of nationalities in the East as in the West, they allow Japan to have her own way in Asia, then a war even more terrible than that which is now being concluded may easily confront our successors.

## A NEW WITNESS

### THE STORY OF THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO RUSSIA

WE are having a flood of memoirs. Helfferich, Jagow, Tirpitz, Ludendorff, and perhaps others still more eminent in rank, are anxious to tell the preliminary history of the war. We shall probably have the novel experience of hearing the participants in the greatest tragedy of history telling the people how it happened that the world was set on fire, not with the cool afterthought of later decades, but in the heat and passion of the moment. To be sure, it is a question as to whether we shall thus learn those phases of the situation which are not on the surface and whether these disclosures will reveal more than the outer symptoms of the great disease which has seized the human race. For never were the ostensible and the real reasons of an event in such marked contrast, in such painful opposition to each other as in this war. The real reason was a long cherished resolve of France to regain Alsace-Lorraine, the determination of England to defeat Germany's maritime ambitions and the plan of Russia to destroy Austria-Hungary. The ostensible reasons were the note to Serbia and the general mobilization of Russia. No other person is better qualified to bring out these points than the former Ambassador to the German Empire, Graf Pourtalés. He did not know the determining evidence as to the direct responsibility for the war contained in the revelations of the Suchomlinof trial. But when he wrote down the facts in his diary, he was conscious of the military influences at work and he saw clearly how helpless Sazonoff was in the

hands of the army people, how his excitement and agitation grew beyond his control and how, in spite of the efforts of the rest of the world, this arrogant criminal precipitated the catastrophe.

Let us begin with the end, which contains the most interesting and important information which Graf Pourtalés gives us. It was July 31st. A person who has read and compared the dispatches of all the foreign offices will remember how the wires were actually hot at that moment with the passage of thousands of communications, how every day was crowded with diplomatic communications, reports, appeals, reproaches, and complaints. However, no one of these dispatches was more important than the communication of Graf Berchtold on the 29th of July that he was always ready to discuss the different points in the ultimatum with Russia. That was the subject of controversy. The monarchy had resisted this for a time, with a sensitiveness easily explained at the thought of having a matter involving its relations with Serbia submitted to a third Power. Graf Pourtalés had been laboring with Minister Sazonoff both day and night. He had begged him and implored him not to take up arms on account of Serbia, but had merely been able to get a promise that Russia would not continue its mobilization if Austria-Hungary modified its ultimatum. Finally, on the night before the 31st of July, Pourtalés received the report of the concession made by Vienna, which in his opinion was an assurance of peace.