

THE MESSAGE OF ASIA.*

BY WILLIAM WESTCOTT FINK.

THEY stand on the shores of Europe, kings, gazing across the sea,
('Tis the time of the "Times-and-half-times" prophetic of woe to be.)
They have drawn them close together, for danger waits without,
Each pledging true allegiance, each sharing a secret doubt.
A ship, with unknown design, brings one of the swarthy race;
No message lights his Orient eyes; thought-masked his patient face:

"I come to speak for Asia, for its millions yellow and brown,
For the golden rule your Christ set up and your arms have broken down.
You have taught us Christ is Mammon, that God is a god of greed;
You have preached the sweet-souled Nazarene while sowing destruction's seed.
You have rent our lands asunder and parcelled them out by lot,
The larger lot to the stronger with the dice of your cannon's shot."

Speaks one whose mien is kingly: "We have driven your night away;
We have loaned you the keys of science; brought civilization's day."

"Yea! Loaned us the keys of science through usurious laws of trade!
A thousand *yen* for a hundred *yen* we have paid, and the debt is paid!
We bought the white man's wisdom, the skill of the white man's hand;
The fateful force of your demon arts we have studied,—we understand!
You speak of our night: Aye, long we slept while the smoke of our incense curled
And a century marked but one degree in a journey around the world.
We wake: and kinship's bonds are brazed in our race's quenchless fire,
And the bounding blood of our scattered stock is burning with one desire.
Our blood has felt that kinship, from Hon-do's sea-washed shore
To Asia's farthest fringe that sleeps beneath the evening star,
Since the awful curse at Babel, through cycles of untold years,
To the time of the 'Times-and-half-time' in the books of our ancient seers.
I came to speak for Asia, but come with palms of peace;
Your lease has run its limit; I but ask our lands' release—
Nay! 'Time to weigh the question in your various halls of state?'
The time of the 'Times-and-half-time' has struck on the clock of Fate!"

They stand on the shores of Europe while his ship sweeps out to sea.
They have drawn the closer together, save only one, and he
Stands brooding on dreams of conquest. Half-brother to brown and white,
He feels the fires of Tartar blood in the veins of the Muscovite.
In dreams he has waved his sceptre from Nebuchadnezzar's throne
Round the vasty sweep of the Orient to the Neva he calls his own.
He dreams, though cringing distance gleams bright with a million swords
And Asia quakes beneath the tramp of myriad tawny hordes.
They have changed their junks to battleships, their arrows to steel-tipped hail,
And the threshing-floors of Europe ring to the blows of Asia's flail.

The Hindu and the Buddhist, the bearer of Islam's blade,
Have crouched like hungry tigers o'er the mangled corpse of trade.
Join! sons of the mighty Aryan sire, Goth, Saxon and Gaul and Greek!
What matter your chance dividing lines? what matter the tongues you speak?
A common pall is over you all—from Scandia's wintry seas,
Round the ragged coasts of Christendom to the pillars of Hercules,
The ocean boils with navies as if lashed by a whirlwind's breath,
For the Occident and the Orient lock brows in the clutch of death.
A cloud obscures the ocean, a chill comes out of the cloud,
But the great guns peal till the awed coasts reel, and Ruin laughs aloud.

They stand on the shores of Europe, they who loosened the bands of hell,
While thunders roll through the darkness, but the issue—who can tell?

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*In the apprehension expressed in this striking poem we do not share, but it shows how the momentous events taking place in the Orient impress minds in the Occident.—ED.