

Charles Davis Jameson on the Future of China

To make clear the utter hopelessness of renaissance in the Chinese as a nation until several generations have passed I must first give a slight sketch of Chinese history.

China and her peoples have always been held as an example of a nation which, by its type of government, its laws, and the characteristics of its peoples, has for thousands of years been able to resist the general laws governing the rise and fall of nations. That China has preserved its entity, more or less, for ages, while other nations of more vitality, strength, and knowledge, have been born, lived, and died, cannot be denied; but that this has been due to any special Chinese characteristic, of either people or government, is absurd. This length of life has been due solely to location, environment and climate—nothing else.

From the beginning until the nineteenth century China was as isolated from the world at large as if located in Mars. On the north were the barren plains of Mongolia and the sandy waste of the Gobi desert, beyond which stretched the interminable and uninhabited forests of Siberia; on the west the impassable mountains—the Roof of the World; on the south swamps, jungle, and the Indian Ocean; and on the east the Pacific, an impassable barrier.

Thus carefully guarded by nature from the outside world, with a country of many waterways, a climate similar to that of America from Maine to Florida, a rich and varied soil, lending itself kindly to cultivation, with all natural resources in the greatest abundance (iron, coal, gold, silver, copper), it was possible for China to work out her own civilization, laws, government, literature, and economic life. But even under these conditions there was a natural ebb and flow in her national vitality, and dynasties changed, and twice the country has been conquered. The only possible point of attack in the years past has been from the north, the country of cold, deserts and scanty vegetation.

The first people to gain control were wandering bands of snout-faced Tartars; and later the Mongols—a poor, starved, hungry lot of nomads, with nothing to lose in fight and all to gain. The Mongol dynasty lasted until the conquerors became rich, fat, and soft with good living, and lost their fighting abilities. Then appeared the leader, a Chinese monk, Chu Huen Chang, a fighter and a leader of men. The whole of China rose and the Mongols were no more south of the Great Wall.

Thus began the Ming dynasty, the most brilliant of all Chinese dynasties. The country expanded to the east and south and north. Armies were sent to Turkestan and as far as Persia. All gave way before them. At last came peace and prosperity, arts and crafts and literature, flourishing as never before. The fighting spirit died. The central government lost its grip on the provinces. Internal troubles began—palace conspiracies and revolutions. North of the Great Wall were the Manchus, a small, half-civilized crowd, only a few generations removed from nomads. They longed for the treasure and lands of their fat, lazy, vainglorious neighbor, and watched for an opening. It came at last. There were two parties in the nation fighting against each other. Neither side had sufficient vitality to down the other, and neither had much liking for real fighting. The leader against the then Emperor opened the gates in the Great Wall and invited the Manchus to help him win the throne. This was their opportunity. They conquered the Emperor's party, then conquered the other party, and established themselves on the Dragon Throne in 1644. The fighting went on for many years before all China submitted, but at last all came under the Manchu rule, and are there today.

The inevitable result followed: years of peace and commerce destroyed all militant spirit, and the Manchus became more or less absorbed by the Chinese. The official class became rotten to the core, corruption of every kind was fostered, and then appeared the foreigner with modern arms and ships of war.

From the beginning of China's history until the coming of the Westerner, all the peoples with whom the Chinese came in contact were inferior to them in all that tends towards civilization. And not only in civilization but in numbers. Not all the Manchus numbered as many as the Chinese of a single province. Consequently the civilization of the Chinese was their own. They took nothing from other nations, and were never forced by competition to exert themselves along lines of improvement. They knew not the existence of anything superior to what they had. They could imagine nothing better. Anything not Chinese was unworthy of notice. They knew everything and were everything; and in their ignorance they feared no nation.

There was a rude awakening when, in 1860, the French and English landed a few thousand men at Taku, captured the forts, and with but little fighting, drove the Chinese army, a huge mob, before them and took possession of Peking, burning and utterly destroying the beautiful summer palace, "Yuenmingyuen." The Chinese paid, and the foreign troops departed, but the Ministers Plenipotentiary and Envoys Extraordinary of all civilizations had now the right of residence in Peking and the right of audience with the Imperial Son of Heaven. A fear of foreign force settled on the Imperial Government, and diplomacy, not arms, has since been the order of the day.

Chinese diplomacy means nothing but putting off the evil day—the paying of any price to insure quiet for tomorrow (leaving the day

after to look out for itself), anything to gain time; never making a determined effort to cure disease by a surgical operation, but merely taking a sedative for temporary relief. All civilized nations were there, and all wished some concession. Thus for forty years China has been kept intact by playing the different nations one against the other. Each has been in fear that some other would acquire an advantage, thus disturbing the balance of influence. Each has wanted much, and thus they have neutralized each other. The integrity of China has been but as a pole standing erect upon the surface of things, which, if left to itself, would fall. Its uprightness has been maintained solely by the pull of the different foreign nations. Each has a string of wants fastened to this pole, and they all pull together.

The Chinese-Japanese War in 1894 made plain the hopelessness and rottenness of China and the Chinese people from a collective and national viewpoint. Her Imperial Majesty the late Dowager Empress, one of the greatest women of history, was all that held things together, and after her the deluge. She had a following of all the best men in Chinese officialdom. The best were far from perfect statesmen, but they were devoted to the Empress, and thus pulled together. There was a definite head and a leader—not an enlightened one from a modern standpoint, but a strong woman doing her best to save the dynasty and the country. With her death came chaos. The only two prominent statesmen in China with ability and desire to serve their country for the good of the country were at once shelved by Prince Chun, the Regent, and all the important positions are held either by old men in their dotage, as Prince Ching and most of the Grand Council, or young princes of the present reigning family, ignorant of all things modern and filled with conceit, arrogance, and a desire to fill their purses regardless of the effect on their country.

The Prince Regent is a man of small ability and of no experience in the handling of affairs of state. He is much under the influence of his father's wife, whose one idea is to make the family rich at any cost. In statesmanship the regent is a man-afraid-of-himself, whose weakness and vacillation have been such that all the officials stand in deadly fear of him—a man of no settled policy or conviction, who orders this or that done, and then, by the counsel of the next adviser, degrades the official who is doing as ordered. What is the result? The few strong men are out of office. No official dares assume the slightest responsibility, or to act decisively on any question. The main object of the officials is to hold office; and to do this with safety no question of international policy must reach a definite conclusion and no final agreements must ever be signed unless they contain some condition upon which argument is still possible. There never was a time during the last fifty years when the Imperial Government of China was so headless and Chinese officialdom so invertebrate.

The much-talked-of modern army of China is a farce. It is in no way equals the same army of seven years ago when under the control of his Excellency Yuan Shih Kai. The officers are few and inexperienced, the discipline slack, the pay uncertain, and the whole organization permeated with an unrest that may at any moment turn it into a dangerous mob. As an army of defense it is useless, but as a mob it would be a terror among the native Chinese.

Financially the Chinese Government is approaching a crisis. The credit limit for foreign loans is about reached unless better and more speedy arrangements are devised for financing prospective railways and the natural resources of the country. At present nothing is being done to remedy these evils beyond preliminary agreements which never arrive, and much vain talk.

The inauguration of the National Assembly will only increase the present confusion. A few men in power who do not realize the needs of the country are less of a menace than several hundred. The menace of the few is negative, while that of the many is positive and quick moving, and may with ease run into mob law. While a very few may in a vague way, realize the needs of the country, no two will agree on the remedy, and none will take the personal risk of attempting the cure. While they talk the opportunity to save will be lost.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the Chinese people is their absolute inability to combine in a successful manner for any purpose. As bankers, merchants, contractors, etc., they are a success from both a commercial and an ethical standpoint. No people are commercially more honest or have a more exalted idea of the sacredness of a contract—either written, verbal, or merely implied—than the Chinese merchant, banker, or contractor of any kind, unless contaminated by dealings with unreliable foreign hongs at the open ports. The non-official word of a Chinese is usually as good as his bond, and his bond is as good as the wealth of his family. In fifteen years of dealing with Chinese merchants and contractors of all sorts I have never found them maliciously doing work contrary to the specifications or attempting to break their contract even if it was a losing one for them. But when the business becomes a limited corporation and the executive is a board of directors, everything goes to pieces. This division of responsibility, together with the fact that most of the capital invested does not belong to the directors, destroys all sense of commercial rectitude and of personal responsibility. It is

a notorious fact that hardly one single Chinese limited company has been a success from the standpoint of the shareholders. This includes the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company, Chinese mining companies, electric lighting plants, water-works, Chinese cotton factories, etc., etc. The railways that are managed solely by the Chinese are soon allowed to run down, and no funds are set aside for repairs or improvements.

Since the Chinese took over the Peking-Hankow Railway from the Belgians in December, 1908, no regular repairs or replacements have been made. The profits have been squandered and both roadbed and rolling stock are going to ruin. The company has just been making vain efforts to float a large foreign loan for the repair of this railway. If the people are unable to combine with success to manage the affairs of a small corporation, how much less could they combine to run the affairs of the country?

The present system of government is hopeless. The Central Government has but little hold on the provinces, and fears them. The taxes and revenues are practically farmed out, and but a small percentage of the amount taken from the people ever reaches the Central Government.

The whole effort is to get money at any cost, even if the source of revenue is eventually destroyed thereby. As an example, when the railway from Peking to Kalgan, one hundred and forty-five miles north from Peking, was opened, the amount of traffic and profits was large. What did the Chinese government do but at once establish six or more likin (Chinese customs) stations on this line, and collect customs duties on all traffic! Within a few months the cars were running empty and the goods were being transported in the good old-fashioned way—packed on mules and camels.

The people have no confidence in the officials or the Regent, and during the last two years this lack of confidence has broadened into utter contempt. The only thing that holds the "powers-that-be" in place is the lack of a leader for the people. As yet not one has appeared in China. The people have no confidence in any of the so-called revolutionary leaders, as not one of them has shown any ability beyond that of getting money from the people and spending it in safety abroad.

There is no love of country or patriotism. All the present talk of this by the half-educated or not half-educated new Chinese—this cutting off of fingers, etc., for love of their country—is nothing but the hysterical vapourings of badly brought up children. No reform can come without much hard, unselfish fighting. The Chinese as a nation are not fighters, and never have been. They are commercially personified, with only most material ideals.

Their social structure has been such that they have never been taught to obey, and they have no traditions of loyalty beyond their immediate family, which tradition has been done away with as much as possible by the Christian missionaries.

There have been no hereditary nobles or ruling class, and no natural leaders of the people. There is no caste feeling, and any one is eligible for any official position, provided he conforms to the rules of the game. Until within a few years the rules required a certain standard in Chinese literature, that is, an educational requirement, and men who stood high in the final examinations were looked up to with respect and admiration. The knowledge required was of no practical use, but ability to acquire it marked the man as superior to one without this ability, and gave him much prestige by tradition. These old examinations have been done away with, and there is nothing to replace them.

The great reforms in Japan were due entirely to the ruling class. The common people were attached to the clans of the different nobles, and by generations of tradition were loyal and obedient. Japan was a fighting nation, with all the glorious traditions of loyalty and self-sacrifice. Reform was much lower in the scale. The reform began at the top; the high ideals of the leaders with the virile militant spirit of the followers and their great love of country, made a perfect working machine. The Japanese had leaders, and were led by them. China has none; neither has it any traditions of self-sacrificing love of country. Its whole history shows that it has never been a unit, but has been composed of weakly connected provinces, all jealous of each other. The north and south, in addition, have always been at variance. Nothing but the hammer of the gods can arouse them and beat them into coherent action. The operation will be most severe, and China as a nation may die under the hammer; but to the Chinese people the result will be good. The only thing that possibly could now save China would be the appearance of a strong, virile leader who by his character and ability could make the people forget their own petty commercial selves and hammer into them the idea of doing something without expecting an immediate money return.

China, with her wealth, natural resources, and millions of hard-working, industrious individuals, is too great a prize to be lost for lack of a master. The master will arrive, and China's millions will be hammered into shape.

Japan is a perfectly organized machine for war. She is young, virile, militant. Her people are few and her natural resources and acres fewer. She needs people, land, and wealth—and what she needs and must have lies at her feet, practically helpless. It is merely a question of time when she will take possession. Every little detail has been attended to—no

thing has been forgotten. There will be no hurry and probably but little shock. Korea was to be independent; Korea was to be guarded by Japan; and then in a few months Korea was Japan. The open door was guaranteed in Manchuria, and China's sovereignty was to be maintained. The door is open, but the door-keeper is a Japanese. Not even China is allowed to build one mile of railway in this her own country. No foreign capital can enter Manchuria except under Japanese direction. This all applies to the southern and richer half of Manchuria. In the north Russia is even more dictatorial, and the Chinese Government does nothing. Russia and Japan have an agreement by the terms of which each agrees to assist the other against an infringement of their alleged rights. China's sole right in Manchuria is to protest and protest, and then submit to new demands. Both Russia and Japan may increase the number of their troops in Manchuria to any extent and call them railway guards or guards against the plague—or call them nothing: China cannot stop them, and not one foreign nation is going to interfere. The Japanese are in every part of China proper. They understand the working of the Chinese mind much better than any Westerner ever can, and they are able to get nearer to the Chinese. They are there as small traders, contractors, or anything: but nothing of importance happens which is not at once known to the Japanese Government. In Peking there are thousands, and many of them not only well-trained soldiers of the Japanese Reserve, but some of them commissioned officers. There is not an influential official in any of the Chinese Government boards who is not more or less under Japanese influence, and probably not a governor's yamen in the country in which there is not a Japanese agent. This influence has successfully blocked for nearly two years all efforts of Germany, France, England, and America to finance Chinese railways, and is now apparently obstructing with equal success the consummation of the loans for the regulation of Chinese currency until the terms of these loans have been so modified that Japan is satisfied. Nothing is too small for the Japanese to overlook, and nothing too large for them to study. This surveillance of things Chinese by the Japanese is nothing new. The study of the details of finally acquiring China has been going on for many years.

For example, sixteen years ago, at the time of the Chinese-Japanese war, the army of North China was the only force available for defense. The quartermaster-general of all this army had held his position for some years. Through his hands passed all the army supplies, food, clothes, arms, ammunition, etc., etc. He was the one man who knew how many actual men could be put in the field and exactly what the outfit of the army was. He was a most capable man, no amount of work was too much for him, and he took charge of everything—a remarkable man, and a good Chinese scholar. Near the close of the war it was discovered that this wonderful man was a Japanese, a devoted subject of the Emperor of Japan, and that the Japanese Government had always been as well posted on the unreality of the Chinese army as had its quartermaster-general. He had devoted years to this work for the good of Japan. He was executed, but he had made a good fight for his country, well worth the price he paid.

We must remember that the Japanese and Chinese are more or less the same race. Their written language is much the same. They think along the same lines, and can understand each other in a way never possible between the white and yellow races. Among the Japanese now in China many have Chinese wives. They intermarry on a basis of equality, and the results of these marriages are good and the offspring are always Japanese subjects. China has now a great fear of Japan, knowing her power, but they are rapidly coming together. The white races have clearly shown that they will have nothing to do with either nation upon an equal footing, and that all they want from China is profit. China has much that Japan requires—people, acres, resources; and Japan will supply what China needs—efficient, economical, strong government and leadership.

One cannot set an hour or a day, for the final move to be made, but we may be sure that until the end each well-thought-out move of the Japanese will have all the appearance of having been forced upon them by circumstances over which they (the Japanese) had no control. Any little happening may precipitate the affair. If from the plague or famine, or any other cause, serious rioting should take place in Peking or Tientsin, and the other foreign legations become alarmed, I think we may safely say that Japan would at once assume control. The foreign nations would protest—but after the fact. Japan is not only the one nation represented in Peking which has sufficient troops and equipment for at any moment taking entire charge of the whole city, but she is undoubtedly the only nation whose representatives in China have the thorough preparedness that will allow them to act at once when the moment arrives. Other nations will enrich the cable companies and wait. It is not necessary that serious troubles should occur in Peking. Let them occur in any part of China, and Japan will take charge. And what will the other nations do? Protest, call conventions, and talk. There will be, or is, an understanding with Russia which will prevent any active objections from that country. That Japan and Russia must at some time in the future try conclusions as to the superiority of the white or the yellow race is true; but that will not be

until after the Chinese-Japanese combination has been accomplished.

As to England, France, or Germany, not one of them can afford to try force in the Far East with Japan. They cannot get sufficient warships or land forces there, and would not dare to it if it were possible. They all have their own houses in Europe to keep in order. As for America, its people would not allow a war with Japan to save China. We will let it go at that, and not analyze the "perfect preparedness" of the American nation for war. The giving a strong government to China, the opening up of the country, and the increased commercial value of China under Japan would much more than overcome any imagined sentiment we might have for the integrity of China. In the meantime the Japanese-American war, the Russo-Chinese troubles, the Mexican-Japanese alliance, the great reforms to be made in China tomorrow, will be well worked in the international press, that Western nations may have something to think of or at least think they are thinking.

Always tomorrow. But on some "today" the world will realize that while Japan has been making all these talked-of preparations to capture the United States, she has taken control of China and united the yellow race. And then what? The taxes paid by the Chinese may be reduced one-half, the revenues trebled or quadrupled, the government of the country, in which the Chinese will have a great share, administered in a firm, businesslike manner that will command the respect of the world, extraterritoriality abolished, and the yellow race received into the family of nations upon a national equality. But even now, if China can put forward a keen, strong, unselfish leader, one in whom the people will have confidence, she can yet work out her own glorious salvation. May God grant the quick coming of this "Master of Men"—The Outlook.

A MERITED REBUKE

The irreproachable politeness of the late Edward VII. of England, was not only individual and relative to persons; it was human and general as well. Once at Marienbad His Majesty and a few friends were having tea in a restaurant in the pine woods near the town. At a table close by sat another party, the host of which was a well known German prince.

The work of attending to the guests at both tables devolved upon a young English waitress, and the king did not fail to notice the rude, blustering manner of the royal German, who threatened to report the terrified girl every time she had occasion to answer his summons. Annoyed by this most unjustifiable behaviour, the king said to Sir Stanley Clarke:

"You are to convey my thanks to the proprietor here for the prompt and admirable manner in which my party has been served at this restaurant."

The command was instantly obeyed, much to the disgust of the adjoining table, a disgust which was intensified when the king gave the timid young waitress a gold piece.

NO-MAN'S-LAND

Far away down the river, beyond the docks and the wharves and the warehouses, the low banks of the Thames are left much as nature made them, and for miles and miles a dear waste of mud and swamp stretches out on either side. Here is the region known as "The Flats," and many a weird tale is told concerning it in the bar parlors of the river-side inns. Dark deeds are the most commonplace features of these wild, trackless wastes, where wooden shanties, half submerged in the mire, give shelter to coiners, anarchists, and the criminal outcasts of London's underworld. It is to be feared that many an undetected murder is committed in the heart of this horrible "No-Man's-Land."

ON THE DEFENSIVE

A distinguished novelist recently found himself traveling in a train with two very talkative women. Having recognized him from his published portraits, they opened upon him in regard to his novels, praising them in a manner which was unendurable to the sensitive author.

Presently the train entered a tunnel, and in the darkness the novelist raised the back of his hand to his lips and kissed it soundly. When light returned he found the two women regarding one another in icy silence.

Addressing them with great suavity, he said, "Ah, ladies, the one regret of my life will be that I shall never know which of you it was that kissed me!"—Ideas.

In a western university the dean of the institution was told by the students that the cook was turning out food not "fit to eat."

The dean summoned the delinquent, lectured him on his shortcomings, and threatened him with dismissal unless conditions were bettered.

"Why, sir," exclaimed the cook, "you oughtn't to place so much importance on what the young men tell you about my meals. They come to me in just the same way about your lectures!"

Not for many a sensation been of half sister to the hours before she waiting in St. F. London, S. W., of everybody, no place before the off hurriedly to the bride; friend but all to no efface Foljambe out a few hours on a shopping moment her move

When this path to the church, the family and their path was expressed. Rev. Ezekiah of Whitwell-on-undone the on and a half for the appearance. For speculation was Lady Constance were afloat as to had occurred. It at rest late in the fished by Lady C that she was somewhereabouts, how

Next day Lady ported to be in Y. But it was not of her disappearance then discovered in Paris. At 12.15 diff she left the house on the pre was then wearing trimmed with roses and a long grey Charing Cross, leaving by the 2.15 arriving in Paris a dence of a friend, to where she succeeded in meeting

Here, for the affair rests. When actuated Lady C now be disclosed family are natur

DEAD

It is recorded a squadron of cavalry under cover of a regiment. The assault of the bers had been infantry. While the field, the charge with drawn in close order half way they met works in front of on their flank. A sabre drawn, was leading in the swerved to the rider kept his seat. The other troops earthworks by the retreating force.

The dead troing with white his wound. Under received neither his own way to now advancing the soldiers saw one hand in a d the other still h. It was a slight noping horse w mounted and lo not until the rid the spot where h off his horse.

A similar tale delivered the fact historic charge seen on the field hills where the the quarter where The charge began Nolan was seen centre of the field riding well. Su the rider toppled were nearest r from the ground had been shot horse had carried reach of the p Chronicle.

A LITTLE

Since Morocco is the "order of telegrams" word and eyes. For many of regular and, is a body a military chief roccan govern