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The Middle Kingdom.

THE peace of the world in 1894 has been broken in the far East. The armies of China and Japan have confronted each other on the old battle fields of Corea. Japan is as yet victorious. What the outcome of the present struggle will be, no man can foretell. But we can be assured that one result will be the opening up of the vast empire of China, with its over 300,000,000 of people, to the civilization of the West in the way of railroads and introduction of steamboats to a much larger extent on the many navigable rivers and canals that intersect the country in every direction.

China and her dependent territories contain over 4,500,000 square miles—rather more than one-twelfth part of the entire land surface of the globe. The Chinese government, like many other oriental countries, is despotic and corrupt. The present dynasty is of Mongolian

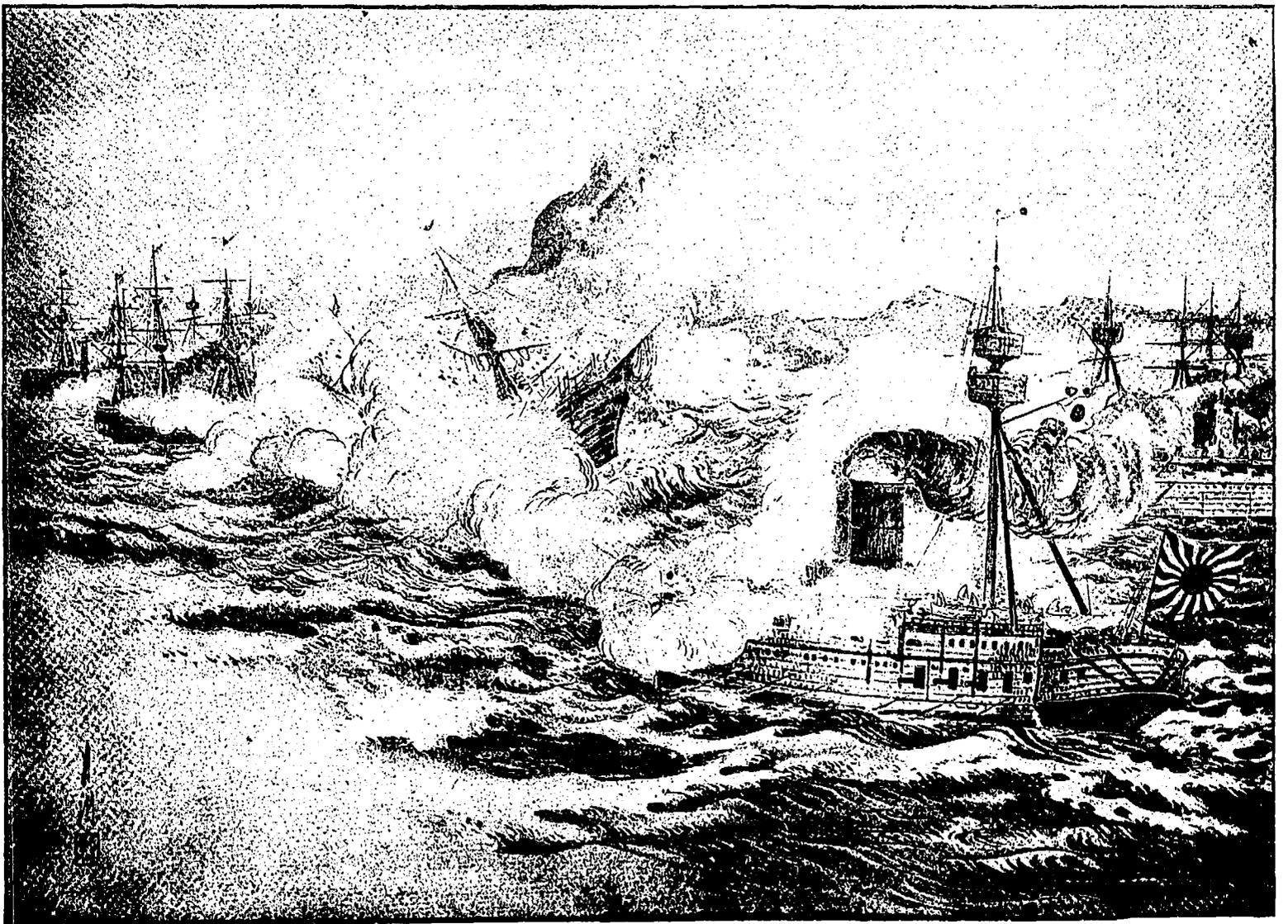
descent; but among the native population there is great discontent, and powerful secret societies, extending throughout southern China, are agitating the restoration of the native dynasty, deposed about two hundred years ago, of whom it is claimed descendants are living, waiting a favorable opportunity of proclaiming themselves. But the Chinese are a peace-loving, inoffensive, thrifty and industrious people, and so long as not too harshly treated, are easily kept in subjection by a few thousand Mongolians.

The people of China are one of the strongest in the world. Keen copyists, they soon learn, and are very quick to adapt. Some who should know believe that in them lies latent the force able to revolutionize the world. Be this as it may, their ancient religious beliefs tend to restrain their progress. The faith of Buddha—now shorn of all that was ever good in it—teaching a passive non-resistance, finds its most faithful and devout followers among this people. The Confucian teaching of parental obedience and

ancestral worship helps to keep back any onward advance. Each tend to make them ready subjects to the warlike tribes of the highlands of Asia, "the roof of the world."

China is a strange combination of a despotic monarchy and a government of the people. It is as much a federation of states as it is a nation. The eighteen provinces into which it is divided each has its governor, who is appointed by the emperor, but whom the people can get rid of if they will. It is the same with other officials. The Chinese are long tolerant, but when an official squeezes too much, they will oust him from his office, and instances have been known of their stoning such out of the province. The government is very much afraid of the people, and it will not dare to overtax them during the present war.

It is hard to understand how these different provinces are governed. Each province has a governor, and in some of the larger provinces the governor is viceroy as well. In other provinces the governor is second to the viceroy,



THE JAPANESE MAN-OF-WAR "AKITSUSHIMA" CAPTURING THE CHINESE MAN-OF-WAR "YANG-KIANG."
As Illustrated by a Japanese Artist.