

PRESENT CHINESE AFFAIR

Ablly Discussed by Eminent News Correspondents.

William T. Stead and I. N. Ford Give Some Interesting Data Regarding China's Past and Future.

London, July 17.—The pope is said to have remarked as he saw the Italian troops departing for the far East that this was the first war since the crusades in which all nations had united to make war for the Christian cause.

The allusion is more apt than felicitous, for the struggle between the East and West which began when steel-clad Europe hurled itself upon the Pynim hordes which defiled the holy sepulchre, lasted for over 400 years, and at the end of that prolonged death grapple of continents the combatants were left face to face, very much as they were at the beginning.

It is to be hoped that we are not on the verge of another 400 years war at the other end of the Asiatic continent.

The gravity of the crisis in China hitherto has never been realized, even faintly, in Europe. Otherwise England would have long ago patched up any kind of a truce in South Africa which would have enabled her to have used her army for the defense of the threatened outposts of Western civilization. Even now, when the massacre of the legations has sent a thrill of horror through the world, few dream of the immensity and hopelessness of the struggle upon which they are invited to embark with such loud cries of vengeance.

The fact is that the whole world is face to face with a determined effort, by no means confined to China, on the part of the colored races, to assert their rights to live their own lives in their own way, without the perpetual bullying of the pale-faces.

The colored races have awakened to the fact that the supremacy of the white man is due to no inherent superiority, but solely to the fact that he has superior weapons. Hence the Chinese have provided themselves with the best artillery and magazine rifles, and have employed expert instructors.

Lord Wolseley told me long ago he considered the Chinese the very best fighting material in the world. They were better even than the Russians, because the Russian soldiers drink, whereas the Chinese are the most abstemious of men.

The destruction of the legations, however terrible as it may seem to be, was, nevertheless, natural. It was the result and inevitable corollary of the seizure of the Taku forts and the massacre of their garrisons. Human nature is much the same all the world over, and if we had been in a similar position the white men would have acted very much the same as their yellow-skinned brothers.

Christianity may be stamped out of China as completely as 200 years ago it was stamped out of Japan.

It will be well if this is all that we have to face as the result of forgetting the golden rule in our relations to the Chinese.

One of the awful possibilities of the near future is that the allies will quarrel among themselves and that we may have a world-wide war, which may lead civilization backward.—Wm. T. Stead.

Civilization is confronted with a terrible war with the forces of barbarism. One of the turning points of history has been reached. Peking will be erupted after an arduous campaign in the autumn, and the blood-stained dictator and empress, in sympathy with the anti-foreign movement, will be overthrown, but the only vengeance which civilization can carry into execution is the humane policy of governing China in an enlightened way through partition of the empire. The Boxers will gradually be dispersed and the assassins driven into the interior, but Japan, Russia and the other powers will be compelled to accept responsibility for conducting the administration of China.

The last engagement at Tientsin is a significant proof of the arduous work which now lies ahead of the powers. The Chinese are fighting with determination and skill which they never once displayed during the war with Japan. The fighting powers, equipment and marksmanship of the Chinese are spoken of by the Mail's correspondent as positive revelations.

It is rumored in diplomatic circles that the German emperor has advised the appointment of the French Gen. Dods as commander-in-chief of the

allied forces, but that the Paris government has not assented to the proposition. Unity of direction in the campaign is a source of weakness when there are so many contingents.

The only source of consolation respecting the Peking massacre is the utter worthlessness of all the detailed accounts which have been, or may be published. The true story of the closing scenes at the legations will never be told, for no foreigner is left to relate it and all the Chinese versions will be regarded with suspicion.

The enterprise of journalism has its limitations. I cannot bring the murdered foreigners back to life to startle the world with a record of their own suffering. It can only piece together dark hints and excited surmises of the Chinese officials, who were not witnesses of the tragic scenes.

Two facts beyond doubt are that the legations made a stout resistance and that the foreigners were massacred. The atrocities with which the storming and destruction of the last embassy enclosure were accomplished may be left to the imagination, if anyone who remembers the story of Cawnpore has the heart to picture the scene.

The South African war, with its daily lists of casualties and deaths from fever, may have created some insensibility to the pathos of human suffering, but the coolness and lack of excitement with which the most monstrous crime of the century was discussed were most remarkable. One explanation of this strange calm was the fact that all reflecting men had abandoned hope many days before the catastrophe was revealed by the Chinese officials and the public was prepared for the worst.

The press, with one or two exceptions, is avoiding hysterical writing about Nemesis and vengeance, and is displaying coolness and common sense. Thoughtful men perceive the gravity of the situation when the murderous Camarilla has usurped power, sent a horde of soldiers and fanatics to drive the allies from Tientsin and ordered 50,000 black flags to march toward the Yankste.

The British roll call at Peking includes the names of about 70 women and many children. There were many missionaries with their families in the doomed enclosure. Friends of the British minister remember sadly his satisfaction when he received his appointment and his telling to them that he was at last in great luck in receiving his promotion. Lady Hart is completely prostrated at her London home by the tragic death of her husband, for which his own dispatch prepared her.

The only journalist at Peking was Dr. Morrison, whose dispatches have been marvels of enterprise and Oriental cunning. He was an Australian who had traveled far and wide in China and perfectly understood the native character. —J. N. Ford.

China Geographical Names.

We are reading just now of many Chinese districts, towns and rivers. Many of these geographical names doubtless appear repellant and unpronounceable to all except a few persons who are familiar with them. But if we had a better acquaintance with these names and knew their meaning they would be found to be full of interest. They are often condensed descriptions of the place or feature to which they are applied. They are far more instinct with life than many geographical names in other countries. Suppose we had never heard of Shanghai, for example, but knew the meaning of the two words composing the name. We would know at once that the "City Near the Sea" must apply to a seaport. Yung-ho means "The River of Transportation," and we naturally infer that the water way thus designated must be commercially important. Yung-ho, in fact, is the Chinese name of the Grand Canal which plays so large a part in the freight service of East China.

However many syllables there may be in a Chinese place name it is composed of as many words as there are syllables, for all Chinese words are monosyllabic. If we know the meaning of even one of the words Ho and Kiang, for example, both mean "river," and when we see them on a map we know they refer to a river or stream. Many of the names of rivers are descriptive of them; Hoang-ho, for example, means "Yellow River," Tsin-kiang means "Clear River." Observe how definite is the idea expressed in the name of each of the three rivers which converge upon Canton. One of them is the Si-kiang or "West River," another the Pe-kiang or "North River," the third is the Tung-kiang or "East River." The names of these rivers tell the direction from which they come. They help to simplify the study of the geography of that part of China. When they unite they form the Chu-kiang or "Pearl River." The Chinese named their largest river in the north the Hoang-ho, because it cuts its bed through yellow soil from which it

derives its color. The yellow flood it pours into the sea colors that part of the ocean yellow and hence the Chinese call the sea Hoang-hai or "Yellow Sea."

The Chinese unite the words in a name so that they form one word just as we write Newton Hartort or Deerfield. Sometimes we unite the words in a Chinese name and sometimes we separate them but there is no reason for example why we should write Tien Tsin when we do not write Pe-Kin. Each of these names is composed of two words. Pe means "north" and Kin means "the capital" or the "king's household" and thus Peking means the northern capital. Tien means "heavenly" and Tsin means "place" and thus the name of the largest city in Northern China means "heavenly place"—a name it has borne for many centuries. When Marco Polo visited the city in the 13th century he translated its name into "Citta Celeste."

Many Chinese names we see in the newspapers and do not ever attempt to pronounce would give us much information if we could translate them as a long sentence might do. Hankow for example is the name of a very important city on the Yang-tse-kiang. There are only six letters in the name and yet any Chinese boy would know from the two short words composing it that it is the name of the town standing at the "kow" or mouth of the river named Han. The Han is the greatest tributary of the Yang-tse-kiang and plays a most important part in the commercial life of that teeming valley; and the city built on the spot where the Han mingles its waters with the Yang-tse is Hankow i. e. the town at the mouth of the Han.

The word Kiang means "ocean," tse means "son" and the name Yang-tse-kiang which the Chinese applied ages ago to their greatest river shows that they did not mean to depreciate its importance. Some writers say the early Chinese believe their largest river contributed more water to the making of the ocean than any other stream in the world and so in the name of the river they conveyed the idea that the ocean was its son. The name is often erroneously translated Blue river.

Peking has not always been the capital of the empire but Nankin a city far to the south was long the seat of government; and as the name Peking means "northern capital" so the name Nankin means "southern capital." "White River" is the meaning of Peiho near whose mouth are the forts just seized by the powers.

In some books and maps we see the words "fu" or "hein" added to the names of many towns. These words are not a part of the names and some of the best atlases omit them for they lengthen the name and make it more formidable to the foreigner. Fu means the capital of one of the departments into which a province is divided; in other words it is the residence of the official at the head of the department. Hien signifies one of the districts into which a department is divided and when attached to a place name means that the official in charge of the district resides there. It is better to omit these merely political designations. When we have more intimate dealings with China and better knowledge of the people and their country we shall have uniformity in the spelling of China's place names and know what these names mean; and we shall see clearly that these names show considerable imaginative and descriptive facility and that they are really helpful in the study of Chinese geography.—Exchange.

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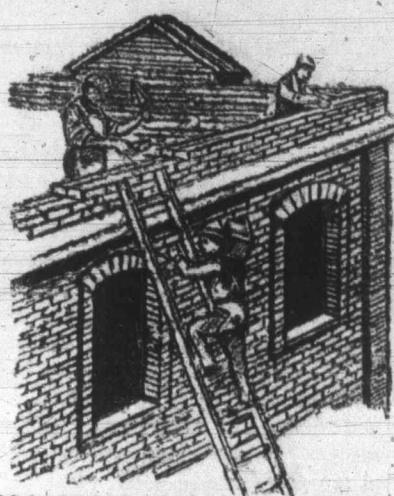
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