

The Awakening of China—The New Peking



A CORRESPONDENT of the London Times writes: For the student of political and racial questions, few places on earth can compare in interest with the capital of China today. To re-visit it after an absence of ten years is to realize something of the forces at work in and around the Middle Kingdom, something of the results of the deadly struggle for world-power which has made Manchuria and North China the cockpit of Asia, and of which the end is not yet. To those who knew the Peking of the nineties, the contrast offered by the city of today gives food for much reflection. There are other phenomena in this part of the world equally striking, such as the creation and growth of the Russian railway city of Harbin, and the grim, silent passing of China's sovereignty in all that region sacred as the cradle of the dynasty, but none of these strike the imagination so forcibly as the outward and visible signs of fusion and change that confront one in Peking.

Before the Chino-Japanese war of 1894, and even after the great Boxer upheaval, the Peking known to travelers and European diplomacy was much the same slumberous, dust-laden medieval city as that from which Nurhachu and his Manchu bowmen drove the effete Ming three centuries ago. Remote, deliberately inaccessible to all influence and intercourse, holding haughtily aloof from the ever-approaching clash of conflicting systems, Peking stood, above all, for the home and headquarters of the Bannermen (that conquering race from whom the instinct and power of conquest has long since departed), an anachronistic excrecence clinging to the walls of the Forbidden City. Long regarded by Europe (and particularly by Russia) with feelings of superstitious awe, by reason of a survival of respect dating away back to the days of Kangshi, the capital of China has come to be recognized since the exposure of 1895, as the home of an alien race of rulers, effeminate and slack after generations of tribute eating ease, the seat of a Government Manchu only in name, and unchallenged only by force of tradition. Despite the rude shocks of 1860 and the nearer perils of 1895, Peking at the close of the century had apparently learnt nothing and forgotten everything except its inextinguishable desire for seclusion, that desire which found its final expression in the Decrees of 1900 ordering the extermination of all foreign

ers. Isolated for want of all means of rapid communication, innocent of sanitation, police, and all other forms of civic administration, the capital of China slumbered on, only ten years ago, amidst the gathering forces of disintegration. Through her filth-strewn streets, axle-deep in dust or mud, still lumbered the rude vehicles of a primitive civilization; through her ancestral, battlemented gates, close-barred at sunset, long lines of slow-pacing camels bore the city's food supply with a congenial flavor of anarchy. Such was Peking in the nineties, a city well content in squalid isolation, brooding on her empty dignities, capital of the chiefest of earth's peoples. What need was there for the sacred city of the Dragon Throne to change any of her ancient ways because of the clamor of upstart nations on her borders; was she not still the centre of the universe, and suzerain of many great States, receiving tribute, as of old, from Tibet, Korea, Nepal, and many other vassals?

And today, as if by enchantment, the old order has changed, and the capital of China no longer typifies the mouldering traditions of the Manchu hierarchy, but rather the new national instincts and aspirations of the Chinese people. On the immediate causes of the transformation we need not dwell, for they are known to the world—the aftermath of the Boxer madness, which brought the railway and the outer world to the very gates of the Palace; the continued occupation of the city, and its road to the sea, by the military forces of the allied Powers; then, five years later, the amazed awakening of all Asia to the earth-shaking fact that Oriental armies had successfully challenged the boasted supremacy of the white races; last, and most vital, the creation and pressure of Chinese public opinion, articulate through the new Press, bringing to bear upon the hoary traditions of Celestial statecraft its unmistakable demand for new methods and new ideals. The keynote of this public opinion, born of "Western learning" and recognition of China's humiliating weakness, is "China for the Chinese," and its avowed object is that the Government should speedily put an end, by effective reforms, to a situation which thinking men have come to regard as intolerable, a situation which involves curtailment of sovereign rights, the presence of foreign garrisons, "spheres of influence," and extra-territoriality, with all its privileges for the alien. And thus the day of reform has been made to dawn in high places

and the Mandarin made to realize that the ancient house must be put in order, and that quickly.

So it has come to pass that today three railways bring their traffic and broadening influences to the very gate of the city. The tinkling camel bells are gone, their old-world music replaced by the indefatigable bugling from school parade-grounds and camps. No longer does the medieval watch patrol the midnight streets with noise of rattle and drum; the new police, with their foreign uniforms, rifles, and sentry-boxes in every quarter, have consigned it to oblivion. Well-paved streets, flanked by brick drains, now connect all the principal gates; the paper lanterns that accentuated the darkness of former days have been replaced by electric light; scavenging is no longer left to the unaided efforts of pariah dogs and pigs; broughams and jinrikshas ply in the place of sedan chairs and springless carts, and public buildings of suitable size and design are being provided for the various Government offices. Most remarkable of all—as indicating the change in social and educational standards—is the new zoological and botanical garden, whither large crowds of both sexes resort daily; a purely Chinese enterprise, of which the citizens are justly proud. All these manifestations of a new and energetic administrative faculty are the work of the past ten years, and to those who remember the Peking of the old regime the change is a matter of wonder and hopeful augury. If any one had predicted in 1900 that in less than ten years a foreign adviser to the Chinese Government would be driven in an automobile, in company with a member of the Grand Council, from the city to the summer palace, or that Chinese newspapers, printed in the capital, would freely discuss the necessity for constitutional government, his friends might reasonably have called in medical advice; yet these things, and others equally remarkable, have come to pass. To pressure of public opinion in the provinces the change is primarily due; the actual inception of reformed administration in Peking (frankly modelled on the example of the foreign settlements at Shanghai and Tien-tsin) must be credited in great measure to the wisdom and courageous initiative of Yuan Shih-kai, Prince Su, and other prominent progressives.

Nevertheless, and while these evidences of reform are entirely hopeful and reassuring, there remains inevitably in the mind of the close observer a sense of peril in the very sud-

denness and feverish haste of the changes that confront him on all sides, a feeling justified by all the history of the East. The flower of reform is certainly in full bloom, but what of the roots? Some millions of souls have been, and are being, spent on proving to the civilized world that modern municipal administration is not beyond the powers of Chinese officialdom at its fountainhead, but there are already signs that the strain of this unusual expenditure is beginning to tell heavily on the boards concerned. When looking beyond the immediate present, it is therefore natural that one should seek to find in the financial policy of the Central Government some proof that these reforms are the result of a definite and deliberate plan of reorganization, and are not merely due to the spasmodic activities or transient influence of a few progressives. Considering only what meets the eye in Peking itself, it is evident that for the permanent and satisfactory maintenance of police, public lighting, and other things hitherto undreamt of in Chinese philosophy, there must first be devised a system of municipal taxation, sanctioned by law, with definite allocations of revenue, and there must also be a public service composed of officials specially trained and permanently employed for this class of work. In other words, the old hand-to-mouth, happy-go-lucky methods (methods which find the solution of every financial problem in a new loan from a foreign bank, and by virtue of which every Mandarin leaves "maintenance and repairs" to his successor) must be replaced by an efficient and business-like system, if the beginnings of reform are not to lead to worse chaos than before. The metropolitan boards themselves require to be reorganized in fact as well as in name (of which there is as yet no sign), and the Central Government could, therefore, give no better earnest of its intentions than by disbanding forthwith its army of inefficient and insecure officials, that locust horde whose immediate interests have hitherto been stronger than all the counsels of progress. It is too much to hope that the Mandarin of China will follow the example of the Daimios of Japan in a general and patriotic surrender of his class privileges, but in the absence of any such altruism it may safely be said that, unless the Government is prepared to face the thorough reorganization of the country's civil service and finances, other reforms, however outwardly impressive, can be at best but face-saving make-shifts.

And when, wandering in the streets of this new-decked Peking, so often rough-handled in the past because of the ignorance or weakness of its rulers, one sees the military garrisons of seven foreign powers philosophically accepted by this patient, peace-loving people as part of the established order of things; when one remembers what this incorrigible, apes-moi-le-deluge ignorance has already cost China, and what forces are already now gathering on her defenceless borders; when one realizes that it is this very weakness of the Chinese Government which perpetually threatens the peace of the East, one cannot but fervently hope that all these sudden evidences of patriotism and public spirit may prove to be the first fruits of a genuine and permanent awakening; that all the many current schemes for constitutional government, a reorganized army and navy, opium abolition, State education, and the development of the country's wealth, which exercise the minds of the Grand Council, may become accomplished facts while yet there is time, and may commence with a radical reform in the methods and personnel of the administration. For the writing stands clear upon the wall today, deep-graven by the events of the past ten years, so that he who runs, mandarin or mule-driver, may read and understand the law which decrees the survival of the fittest. Time alone can show whether the lesson has been learned in China as it was learned by the patriotic people of Japan 40 years ago. For the present, therefore, while welcoming every sign of progressive change at the capital, we must inevitably suspend judgment as to the permanent value and effect of the initiative shown by the central and provincial Governments.

A strong China, wise in council and resolute of purpose, would ensure the peace of the East and the postponement of many perilous questions; a weak and inefficient China means perpetual unrest and the constant harassing and shrinkage of her frontiers. Every well-wisher of this inoffensive, law-abiding, and industrious people, every one interested in the peaceful development of their commerce and well-being must hope for permanent and practical results from the present awakening of the national consciousness. And, since it is within the yellow-tiled walls of the Forbidden City that these results must first take form and life, the march of events at Peking, political, financial, and administrative, deserves the closest attention of the civilized world.

Canada and Its Destiny

I FOUND the feeling of the leading Canadian people who have thought upon the question of Imperial co-operation more in favor of the establishment of ships than of cash contributions to the Admiralty at Home. The universal feeling was that any ships provided by Canada should, in time of war, be under the entire control of the Admiralty and form part of the Imperial fleet. This, in effect, is the conclusion arrived at by Mr. Howard d'Egville, hon. secretary of the Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee, who has just returned from Canada, says the London Standard, where he has been on a short tour of investigation, on behalf of the committee as to Canadian opinion upon co-operation for defence and representation of the Overseas nations in Imperial affairs. Mr. d'Egville has visited Quebec, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Hamilton. Owing to the Law Term beginning yesterday Mr. d'Egville was compelled to curtail his journey and to decline many cordial invitations extended him to address further meetings.

Seen by a representative of the Standard yesterday at his chambers in the Temple, Mr. d'Egville first of all expressed himself as greatly impressed with the potentialities and productiveness of Canada. "Of course," he continued, "the result of my investigations will be embodied in a report to my committee, but I think I am entitled to say at this moment that I have been greatly encouraged by all I have seen and heard regarding the great question of Imperial co-operation with which I was specially dealing in the Dominion. People told me before I went out that I should find very few Canadians in favor of closer co-operation for defence, but having met and talked with those whom I think I am entitled to describe as leading citizens of the Eastern towns of the Dominion, I have found a strong feeling in favor of increased efforts on the part of Canada towards the maintenance of the naval supremacy of the empire. While I was not so concerned with the views of the politicians, with the main tenor of which I was already fairly well acquainted, I think I may say that I met most of the leading men in commercial and educational spheres, and was greatly struck with their enthusiasm for the empire, and their strong determination to regard the destiny of Canada as bound up with that of Great Britain and the sister self-governing States. Regarding my actual talks with leading politicians, I would rather not speak at present, as, owing to the elections now taking place, I think it would be improper for me to touch upon matters controversial."

Asked as to the success of the meetings which he addressed, Mr. d'Egville spoke enthusiastically. "Though I have addressed

many meetings in England on Imperial questions," he said, "I have seldom, if ever, met with such hearty responses to every point made in dealing with the desirability of closer union. At the Canadian Club in Halifax, and at the Empire Club in Toronto, one could not have desired more hearty support to all suggestions thrown out in the direction of co-operation; while at a well-attended meeting of the Board of Trade in the commercial capital of Montreal I can only say there was one greeting, that of 'whole-hearted support for closer union and a more direct assumption by Canada of the responsibilities of empire.'"

Mr. d'Egville here remarked that he did not visit Canada to advocate any particular policy, but to find out Canadian opinion as to the form of representation in Imperial affairs likely to be satisfactory to Canada, and the lines of co-operation upon which the people of the Dominion were prepared to proceed. "So that my addresses were not dogmatic assertions as to what should or should not be done. I naturally threw out some suggestions, upon which I had the advantage of receiving many valuable opinions."

Questioned as to any practical results likely to accrue from his visit, Mr. d'Egville said he felt he ought not to speak until he had consulted with his committee. "But," he added, "there will be some practical results I have little doubt, and, if allowed to go so far, I may say that I think they will be more satisfactory than I ever anticipated before I left England."

COUNT TOLSTOI

The following letter appears in a recent issue of the London Times:

Sir,—Dr. C. Hagberg Wright has now returned from the mission which he undertook to Yasnaya Polyana, on behalf of the British Tolstoy Celebration Committee. The extremely interesting letter which he addressed to The Times on Tolstoy's 80th birthday, and which you published on the 17th of last month, described the welcome which he received, and also gave some idea of the storms which Tolstoy's jubilee provoked throughout the whole of Russia.

When Dr. Wright wrote, he had just arrived at Yasnaya Polyana. He stayed there several days as the guest of the Count and Countess Tolstoy, and he has brought back to us several very interesting details. He was the only stranger present. Communications are not always easy in Russia, and they were certainly not facilitated on this occasion for the fervent votaries of Tolstoy. It was fortunate for us that we were able to prevail upon the zeal of Dr. Hagberg Wright to take the British address in person, since that of the

French Committee (of which M. Anatole France was the chairman) and that of the German committee did not arrive at all, so long as Dr. Wright was at Yasnaya Polyana.

In his letter to the Times, our honorary secretary mentioned that Tolstoy was then still confined to his bed. But on the day following his birthday he rose for the first time for many weeks, walked by the help of a stick into the living room, and sat there while his family dined. He even engaged, with vigor, in a discussion upon ethical subjects, with one of his disciples, Mr. Ge. He was none the worse for his exertion, which he repeated on successive days, listening to music, playing chess, and enjoying conversation. His convalescence may now be looked upon as begun, although his weakness is extreme.

On the day that Dr. Wright left, Tolstoy called him into his bedroom, and said, with much earnestness:—"Mind you tell all my English friends that I am exceedingly grateful to them for the address which they sent me by you. I am deeply touched by the proof of so much sympathy," and the tears sprang to his eyes. At the same time, he gave Dr. Wright the following letter, which he had dictated to his private secretary, M. Tchertkoff. This letter is sent to me, but I regard it as equally addressed to every one of the hundreds of English men and women who signed the memorial:

To Edmund Gosse, Esq., Chairman of the British Tolstoy Celebration Committee.
Yasnaya Polyana; 12 Sept., 1908.

Dear Sir,—Leo Tolstoy requests me to write to you on his behalf, as he is still too weak to write himself, though he is getting better and stronger every day.

He wishes me to thank you most heartily for the address on the occasion of his 80th birthday, which his friend Dr. C. Hagberg Wright, the hon. secretary of your committee, so kindly brought over to him, and for the sympathy which you have shown as chairman of the British Committee.

Tolstoy has been exceedingly touched by this expression of English sympathy. Dr. Wright will give you details of the conversations he has had with Tolstoy on the subject.

Tolstoy requests me to forward to you his portrait, on which he has written his autograph; it accompanies this letter, and he begs you to accept it from him, together with his best wishes for yourself and for all his British friends.

Yours sincerely,
V. Tchertkoff.

The signed portrait is a magnificent heliogravure from the latest and best of photographs. If I were a disciple, and worthy of the master, I should share this admirable work with the other members of the committee. But I am still unregenerate, and I shall keep this portrait jealously to myself in precious memory of a unique and fortunate occasion.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,
EDMUND GOSSE.

October 6.

Duties of the Imperialist



MR. WALTER LONG was the guest of the evening at a dinner given recently by the Junior Imperial and Constitutional League at the Holborn Restaurant. The president of the league, Viscount Castlereagh, M.P., occupied the chair, and among those present were Sir Henry Samuel, Sir J. Runtz, and Messrs. H. M. Imbert-Terry, Percival Hughes, Thomas Cox, and G. O. Borwick.

Mr. Long, in replying to the toast of the "Unionist Cause," proposed by the chairman, spoke on the subject of Imperialism and the House of Commons. He said it was the first gathering he had ever attended in the course of his political life where the average age of those present was as small as he believed it would be proved to be that evening. Their chairman had reminded them of their obligations to the great Empire of which they were citizens, and it was to the young men of this country that we must look for the carrying on of those traditions which they held to be true. The young men of the country, however, had no right to take any credit to themselves for the Empire of which they were citizens; they had no right to boast of its greatness, or its strength, or its might in the councils of the world. That those things are as they are the result of the work of their fathers and grandfathers (hear, hear). They had no right to boast until that time when they took off their armor and could show that they had been worthy sons of their sires. The duty and responsibility of the Empire were with the young men of this country.

He had just left the House of Commons, and with respect to the work which was then being done, he observed that in the present political situation many Unionist members could, he thought, better serve their country by going out and addressing meetings of their fellow countrymen, when asked to do so, than they could by being present in that House, because the present procedure in the House had really been reduced to a farce (hear, hear).

Dealing with the Children Bill, Mr. Long said that, while not denying its usefulness in the majority of its clauses, it was an instance of the Government fiddling while the State was burning. They knew that there were at the present moment terrible difficulties facing the wage-earning classes of the country (hear, hear). Yet, instead of the Government directing their attention to the social questions which moved all hearts and filled all with anxiety, they were directing their attention to adding further penalties to those who found it hard enough to live, and placing in their path greater difficulties even than those with which they were at present confronted (cheers). It was a case of the Government paying attention to comparative trifles when

there were great questions which must be solved if the State was going to maintain its high position (loud cheers).

Social questions must be dealt with, because if we had a people discontented, suffering, and knowing that they were exposed to evils capable of remedy, they would be a poor foundation upon which our Empire was to be raised (hear, hear). While it was necessary for a government, and for every thoughtful man in the country, to turn attention to those social questions, they were compelled, whether they liked it or not, also to turn their attention to the great Imperial questions with which we were, as the greatest nation in the world, day by day confronted (hear, hear). He rejoiced that the League should be asked to bear in mind such great Imperial questions. They were told to rely upon the fact that our Colonies were devoted to the Mother-country, and that they needed no special ties to bind them to us. He thanked God for the unselfish devotion of the Colonies to the Mother-country, without which the severance of the ties would have come long before this (hear, hear). It was the splendid devotion of the sister nations to the old stock that had kept the Empire going as long as it had been kept going (cheers). But were they certain that would always continue? It had hitherto been to a large extent a case of the Mother-country and the sister nations living, as it were, a separate life of their own, united by affectionate ties, but not bound by any commercial bond. The proposition that the Unionist Party had made, and with which they were identified, was that there should be such a reconstruction of our fiscal system (loud cheers) as would give greater freedom to the industries of our own country, and at the same time bring into partnership, not foreign countries who were jealous of us, but our own sister nations who were proud of us (cheers). Was that an unworthy ideal? Yet the present Government slammed the door, and would have nothing to do with it. That was their record in Imperial statesmanship.

When they came to the defence of the Empire they were told by the Government that they had been compelled to make reductions, not because they wanted to, but because they were bound to cut their coat according to their cloth, and that they must economise. Before any British government made that statement they ought to be perfectly certain that they had made every possible investigation into the opportunities for increasing income, and until they had exhausted all those methods no government should say that the cloth was so little that this nation could not cut the coat it wanted to cover decently the whole of its body (loud cheers).

Other toasts followed, the speakers including Mr. Percival Hughes and Mr. H. Imbert-Terry.