



Life, Literature and Education.

"What They Fought Each
Other For."



The Czar of Russia.

Since peace negotiations are at last under way, a short recount of the causes which led to the great war which has been raging since the 8th of February, 1904, may not be at this time amiss.

Russia in Asia, it will be remembered, is composed of an immense territory, extending from the Arctic on the north to the Altai mountains on the south, and from Europe on the west to the great Pacific Ocean on the east. But with all this vast territory, there was, for many years, no available stretch of sea-coast. Ice-bound for the greater part of the year, and possessed of no sheltered harbors, Russia's Pacific coast was of little value. To the southward, along the east of Manchuria and around the Korean Peninsula, on the other hand, there were many harbors, and many towns which only needed development to make them strong factors in the commercial world, while to the south of Manchuria, again, the Gulfs of Corea and Hootung crept up alluringly, yet, to the Russians, like the lake of Tantalus, distractingly. Ports and harbors there were in plenty, with a traffic lasting, not during a short summer, but all the year round, with but one limitation—they did not belong to Russia.

Russia, however, could find it politic to be patient. There was then no great Siberian railway for rapid transportation of troops, and to arouse China's hornets' nest of 400,000,000 under such circumstances would have been madness itself. There were other means of attaining the desired end, and to these the big Northern Bear lent ear, following them out by an insidious policy of creeping, which for persistence and cunning had seldom been equaled in the history of the world.

OPPORTUNITIES APPEAR.

The first opportunity of obtaining a foothold offered itself in 1860, when, at the price of pretended

favors to China, the stretch of territory which contains Vladivostok was ceded to Russia. Russia now had one fine harbor, useful during the summer, but hermetically sealed during the long winter. A harbor clear all the year round must be secured—and, again, Russia could wait.

The next big opportunity was afforded by the events which immediately followed the occupation of Corea and Manchuria by the Japanese in 1894. Japan, then, it will be remembered, for the furtherance of her interests in Corea, attempted to enforce certain reforms upon that kingdom, just as, recently, for similar reasons, France attempted to enforce reforms upon Morocco. Neither in the case of Japan or France, it may be granted, was unadulterated selfishness the motive power. When one nation becomes overly-zealous for the good health of another, it may usually be surmised that a big plum is to be picked out somewhere. Corea, backed by China, resisted, just as Morocco, backed by Germany, has done, and straightway Japan landed troops, imprisoned the king, pushed on to Port Arthur and up through Manchuria, making a clean sweep at every turn, and finishing up by the capture of Wei-hai-wei, across the gulf from Port Arthur.

China now became alarmed, and the foxy old statesman, Li Hung Chang, made haste to make peace, without, it may be necessary to say, having the slightest intention of letting the matter rest there. Immediately on its conclusion he hurried to Peking, and applied to the Ministers of Russia, France and Germany there such forcible, and it may be surmised, profitable arguments, that these powers advised Japan, "in the interests of peace," to give up all her newly-acquired territory. Japan evidently knew how the wind was blowing. She had at this time an available army of only 67,000 men, and no battleships; hence, without a struggle, she handed over every acre of land she had won, receiving only an indemnity as compensation. Japan, too, could afford to wait.

As a reward for this little transaction, France obtained the right to build a railway in China, Germany got certain mining privileges, and Russia secured permission to carry the Siberian railway (which had been begun in 1891) across Manchuria to Vladivostok, also the right to extend the Manchurian branch down to Port Arthur, with permission to introduce troops for the protection of the line. As may be imagined, no fewer troops than necessary were brought in, and so the camel had its head, shoulders and fore feet into the tent of the Arab.

THE RUSSIANS LEASE SOUTHERN MANCHURIA

Before long events occurred which still further precipitated matters. China became embroiled with Germany over the murder of some missionaries, and as an indemnity was granted a piece of territory in Manchuria. This again was the signal for a game of grab. Russia, now thoroughly suspicious in 1897 sent ships into the harbor at Port Arthur, upon the pretext that she

wished them to remain there for the winter. Britain, suspicious of both Russia and Germany, but Russia in particular, also sent a couple of warships, which, however, Lord Salisbury, rather weakly, had withdrawn upon Russia's demand for an explanation. Russia's next step was to obtain a lease of the southern part of Manchuria, similar to that granted to Germany, with the added concession that only Russian and Chinese men-of-war should be permitted to enter the harbor at Port Arthur. This agreement was signed in March, 1898, and on July 1st of the same year England leased Wei-hai-wei, with its adjoining strip of coast, the lease to remain as long as the Russians were in occupation of Port Arthur.

JAPAN'S EYES ARE OPENED.

As may be imagined, the news of the Russian lease of Port Arthur and vicinity—the very spot Russia had advised Japan to give up—caused the greatest indignation among the Japanese, who were led to watch still more jealously the sliding advance of the Russians.

The next revelation came when, while the attention of the world was distracted by the Boxer rebellion in China, Russia attempted to make a deal with Corea for the lease of Masampo. Japan, realizing that such an arrangement would imperil Japan herself—just across the straits from the coveted town—objected so strongly that Russia gave up for the time. Nevertheless, Japan now knew that the eyes of the Russians were upon Corea, and that the day was approaching upon which she herself must fight for her existence.

THE ATROCITY OF BLAGOVESTCHENK.

In the meantime, the Legations at Peking were being besieged, murders of foreigners were occurring daily, and the force of British, Americans, Japanese, Russians, French and Germans were starting on their way from Tientsin to raise the siege, and while all this was occurring, an event was also occurring in the Far North, which as an example of ferocity stands almost unparalleled in the history of civilized nations. Near the boundary between China and Siberia, stood the town of Blagovestchenk, made up of Russians and Chinese, about one-fourth being the latter. On news of the terrible doings in China, the Russian Governor of this town ordered the Chinese to cross the swollen river on pain of death. This the Chinese, with neither bridge nor boats, could not do; but the Russians, nevertheless, drove them down—4,500 people—to the river, forced them in, and when they attempted to swim back bayoneted them on the spot. Fearing vengeance, the Governor's next step was to send for help. This was despatched, and the combined forces passed on into Manchuria, burned the town within a radius of fifty miles, and added a fresh strip to Russian territory.

Certain timber rights on the Yalu, which had been taken advantage of by the erection of Russian fortifications, were still further indications of Russia's extension policy, and, although, at the close of the Boxer war, Russia was compelled, under pressure of Britain and the United

States, to admit that her occupation of Manchuria was only a temporary one, it was well understood that she had no intention of relinquishing her hold on the territory.

THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE.

In 1902, however, an unexpected event occurred. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was formed, and straightway a new face was put on affairs in the Far East. Ready by this time, by long preparation, for the struggle which had long been foreseen, confident now with the support of Britain, who had promised to back her in case of a third party stepping in, in event of war, Japan now became firm in her demands towards Russia, who, immediately on the forming of the alliance, had promised to withdraw her troops from Manchuria, but had failed to do so.

Consequently, in the spring of 1903, the Mikado addressed a note to Russia asking when the troops were to be withdrawn. Delay after delay followed, and finally the demands of Japan, (1) that the independence and territorial integrity of China and Corea should be assured; (2) that the interests of Japan in Corea should be recognized, as also her right to protect those interests, similar concessions to be granted in regard to legal Russian interests in Manchuria; (3) that each should be at liberty to develop their industrial and commercial activities without interference from the other; (4) that Russia should bind herself not to oppose eventual connection of the Korean and Manchurian railways; in event of disturbance, only sufficient troops to quell the disturbance should be sent, said troops to be recalled as soon as their purpose was accomplished—these demands were presented for the last time.

Russia would not agree to all these terms, and counter proposals which Japan would not accept were presented. Japan waited, Russia still dallied; then war was declared, and the first shot was fired on the 8th of February, 1903. Russia's long policy of aggressive greed and duplicity was met by force of arms, and on sea and land alike Japan has triumphed.

Cultivating Conversation.

Nature has dealt kindly with some people by endowing them richly with the qualities that make for excellence in conversation. To this end she has given them good memories, alert faculties, distinct, good voices, abounding health and strength that laugh at weariness, and withal, a personality that creates an epidemic of good-comradeship. To those thus blessed conversation comes as naturally as heather to a Scottish hillside.

Yet, proficiency in the art of conversation is not wholly nor even largely dependent upon natural endowment. Indeed, there are cases where nothing but preparation stands one in stead. The garrulous must be restrained without offence, the timid must be encouraged without his being aware of it; company must be piloted away from a dangerous topic. The funereal silences of