

said to stultify any great national sacrifice of blood or treasure on the part of Russia. Here she may abandon her advance without any great surrender of either sacrifice or desire. But it is altogether different with the flanks of the line of advance. Russia did not span Asia—across illimitable snows—with the Siberian railway to connect her empire with the ice-pack in Vladivostock harbour. She has not brought her railways southwards towards India, across the waterless steppes, to stare at the Himalayan snows. She has not pushed another railway out to the Persian frontier to make Julfa the limit of her march across rich and fertile lands towards the tropic seas. Russia, during the long and arduous marches of her quest of ocean, has conceived a far greater and more wonderful ambition, which has inspired the ultimate intention of her Imperial policy. Her great strategic railway systems in Asia—east and south—are the huge arms of Russia stretched out to grasp not only the prize of ocean, but with it the mightiest of world-empires. The direction of these outstretched arms indicates the desires and intentions of her policy. This policy threatens the very existence of Britain and Japan as Asiatic Powers. And with Japan subjugated and Britain expelled from Asia, Russia would dominate it as its sole mistress. The vastest and richest continent of the world would then become a province of her gigantic empire. The efforts of Russia towards the consummation of this great conception of her ultimate destiny have been commensurate with its glory and ambition. In stretching out her menacing arms to enfold Asia from east to west, she has striven tremendously and sacrificed infinitely—seemingly in vain. For now her Island Rivals have interposed a wall of steel between her hands and all they sought to grasp. And though, undoubtedly, the final issues between these peoples lie with their future generations, an anxious and immediate question now arises :—will Russia surrender her sacrifices and arrest her advance towards the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and her campaigns against the other Asiatic Powers ; or will she seek some