

which a Chinaman is capable, was sent to Nanking as viceroy of the two kiangs, and is now engaged in building the railroad from his provincial capital to the Imperial City. The rivalry and jealousy existing between these two statesmen has caused the violent death of more than one poor missionary who devoted his life to the lifting up of China's enslaved millions, for Chang Chih Tung would gladly embroil the Grand Secretary with foreign Powers, that he might discredit him with the Imperial Court at home.

Remembering Li Hung Chang's education and the tendencies engendered by it, he must indeed be classed as the foremost Chinaman and a statesman of no mean power. Labouring under the disadvantages of the semi-religious sentiment known as ancestral worship, Li has shown remarkable liberality. That he is patriotic and has laid ambition aside has been repeatedly shown by his refusal of offers from foreign Powers to place him on the throne of the Manchu. In how far his present experience will influence China's awakening to the march of progress will depend upon his vigour when reaching home. If his health allows, he will impress upon his imperial master a sense of the wealth and power of foreign nations and obtain the Dragon Seal upon edicts guaranteeing life and immunity to the foreign residents of the Middle Kingdom.

That Li Hung Chang's principal object in undertaking this journey in his old age was to provide for alliances in case further attacks upon China's integrity are made may be taken for granted, and it is not improbable that he has taken measures to frustrate Japan's hopes for future aggrandizement. At the same time Li will have observed and examined closely into whatever came within his sphere of contact, and will understand and appreciate occidental progress as compared with Chinese conservatism. He knows that reforms must be made to prevent China's dismemberment. Will he prevail upon his associates to embrace his views? That is the question, and it involves the welfare of the Middle Kingdom.

In person Li Hung Chang is about five feet eleven inches tall, with a commanding presence. His usual dress is a gray silk robe and black silk cap, but on state occasions he wears the jacket of imperial yellow silk and the peacock feather. Li has three children, two sons and a daughter. One of his sons, Prince Li, a fair English scholar, accompanies his father as interpreter on his present trip. He is likely to succeed to his father's ability as well as to his estates. Li's daughter was married to Chang Pei Lun, who, in 1889, was banished to the Russian frontier on account of excessive speculation. All Li's influence, powerful as it is in foreign affairs, has not been able to obtain a commutation or pardon.

Li Hung Chang owns several large cotton mills and silk filatures, as well as the rich coal fields in Manchuria. He has a body-guard of 35,000 fairly drilled troops, successors of the Black Flag army of 1860. Their loyalty, and they acknowledge no master except the viceroy, insures him against the intrigues of rivals at court. His full title now is, Viceroy of the Province of Chihli, Senior of the four Grand Secretaries of State, ex-Grand Guardian of the Heir Apparent, President of the Board of War, Superintendent of the North Sea Trade, Count Shinn Ki of the First Rank.

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England's Position.

IF one reads the English daily papers, he must infer from them that there is only too much reason for concluding that England's agricultural, manufacturing and commercial interests are not in the most satisfactory condition. Some years ago her farmers were driven to the inevitable conclusion that she was no longer a wheat-growing country. Uncomfortable as this conclusion is, that she has to depend on outside sources for the staff of life, little less satisfactory is the knowledge that is dawning on her farmers that, in supplying butter and cheese for the bread of the million, they are "not in it."

"The whole world," say the papers, "is pouring supplies of butter and cheese into the country, and these supplies are produced under conditions that render competition almost impossible." The growing of cereals, cattle-raising, and dairy-farming—if we except the supplying of new milk

to large towns—through excessive competition have become practically unremunerative. What remains to the farmers, save to convert their farms into kitchen-gardens? "Why," the dailies ask, "are the British farmers unable to hold their own? Are they deficient in enterprise and appliances? etc., etc. . . . Then they had better send representatives to the successful countries to see how it is done." The sad irony of it all and the sweet innocence!

When it is considered that the English farmer pays as much in rent per annum as would buy the land in Canada, Australia or the United States, it does not require the aid of a search-light to discover why the English farmers are unable to hold their own. Although the population of the world has steadily increased, the quantity of land under cultivation has enormously increased. New means of preservation and transportation of supplies have kept pace with ever-increasing demands, and have made the English market the objective market of the whole world. Meanwhile, the rents of the English farmers have increased, or, at best, stood still. Thus, the patient English farmer has been and is bearing a double burthen; and broad as his shoulders are and sturdy as his legs are, he must, perforce, succumb; for, in addition to his own family, he carries his landlord on his back. Listen not to the plausible politician or to the visionary doctrinaire, but ask the farmer himself. He knows. He pays his rent; he spends a little fortune in manure to stimulate the worn-out soil; he plans and contrives, watches and works; then carts away his produce and is beaten out of the market.

If things go on as they are at present, the question for England will be, not "What will our farmers do?" but "What is to be done with our farmers?" And this will be a sore question for England.

Of the growing impression that the trade of England—if not actually on the decline—is, at least, being closely pushed by German and other competition, there can be little doubt, when we know that Mr. Balfour informed Sir Howard Vincent in the House of Commons, that both the Colonial Office and the Board of Trade were making investigations as to the growing commerce of England's foreign rivals. This rivalry is of two kinds; in manufactured goods and in the shipping trade; but, it is difficult to see in what other spots English prestige and commercial supremacy could be so materially and injuriously assailed.

From different quarters comes the intelligence of the successful rivalry of specific lines of German and American goods over British in the markets of the world; and though the English manufacturer at home may smile derisively at the brand, "Made in Germany," it by no means follows that these Teutonic articles of merchandise will be viewed with the same self-complacent contempt in foreign markets, especially when stamped with the brand of cheapness. Apropos of this, a Sheffield file manufacturer tendered for an Egyptian contract. He instructed his agent to demonstrate the superiority of his own article by cutting through a German file with a Sheffield one. The experiment was successful, but the German tendered lower and secured the contract.

Mr. Cave, the British Consul at Zanzibar, also bears upon this point in a recent written report under the not very encouraging title, "The Decline of British Trade with East Africa." He attributes this decline entirely to foreign competition. Reliable advices are also to hand that England's supremacy in the quick carrying trade is to be challenged in the near future by German shipping companies. When it is contemplated to build vessels designed to beat such ocean greyhounds as the *Lucania* and the *Campania*, it is time for England to awake to the fact that her persistently aggressive German rival means business.

Taking, in conjunction with these facts or possibilities, the jealousy of other powerful nations, the recent international complications in which England has been involved, the very plain and unmistakable spirit of opposition, if not, indeed, of hostility she has met with on both sides of the Atlantic, and her very unusual hesitancy or timidity to take the bull by the horns, which has caused her friends and admirers to fear for her prestige amongst nations, it behoves Britannia to put her best foot forward in this rapid century-ending march and movement of events.

If England, to-day, stands alone against the world, what then? She has stood alone against the world before, and