

THE RUSSO-CHINESE THEATER OF CONFLICT.

The Amur Region, Where the Celestials Have Clashed With the Forces of the Czar.

While Russia has been posing in Peking as the greatest and the only friend of the self-deposed government of China and haspounding that the troops of other allies shall be withdrawn from the capital, a series of events has transpired on the northern frontier of China which

while the bear draws in the slack and tightens the coils around his dearly beloved Chinese brother until the great wall and Peking will more nearly approximate the northern frontier than the present boundary line, which is in fact vague and indeterminate. The military governor of the Amur

held by Russia, the erecting of a cross on the right bank of the great river may be taken as the apotheosis of this consummation and insisted that it would come about. The great commercial artery and strategic line of communication in this region is, of course, the Amur, 2,400 miles in length, and navigable for river steamers all that distance, even in winter forming a frozen highway for sledges from its mouth to the head of navigation. Its banks are lined with forests of oak, pine, maple and cork wood, and its waters abound with excellent fish. The first steamer to ascend the Amur, by the way, was built in New York in 1857 and called the America.

has been phenomenal, but the hopes indulged in respecting it have been somewhat dashed since the short-cut was projected across Manchuria, making Port Arthur, on the gulf of Pe-chili, the eastern terminus of the Transiberian line. Respecting Khabarovsk, which is situated at the junction of the Amur and its southern affluent, the Ussuri, less is known, for it has not long occupied the commanding position it now holds as the administrative center of the Siberian littoral. Here the great railroad takes a sudden turn southward to the sea, leaving the banks of the Amur and following the course of the Ussuri. It is a flourishing city at present, though its population of about 12,000 is fluctuating.



FLOTILLA CUGHT BY THE ICE, IN THE UPPER AMUR.

OUR FLEET IN THE ORIENT.

Vessels Which Will Safeguard Uncle Sam's Interests In Asiatic Waters.

IT IS now nearly 40 years since the Americans taught the Europeans a lesson they have taken to heart and showed them how useless and antiquated were their navies. That single fight between the Monitor and the Merrimack revolutionized naval warfare and gave birth to a breed of vessels which may at any time turn upon the putative parent, Uncle Sam, and rend him.

However, the United States has held its own pretty well, except in the matter of swift torpedo boats and destroyers, and when the fleet recently ordered to Chinese waters shall have assembled we will have no cause to hide our heads. For reasons of state, the president has decided that, while withdrawing the major portion of our land forces from Peking and Tien-tsin, he will augment the number of warships to be gathered within hailing distance of China's coast. Admiral Remy had already a gallant fleet, since the repairs to the Oregon have been made, but after the arrival of those ships that have been ordered to the Asiatic station he will have a squadron of which no commander need feel ashamed.

In the armored class there will be the first class battleships Oregon and Kentucky, the armored cruiser Brooklyn and the monitors Monadnock and Monterey. In the protected cruiser class are the Newark—flagship of the senior squadron commander, Admiral Kempf—and the New Orleans. Of small cruisers there will be the Concord, Bennington, Manila, Castine, Yorktown, Nashville and Yosemite.

There will be 25 gunboats, the flotilla consisting of the Callao, Don John of Austria, Isla de Cuba, Isla de Luzon, Annapolis, Marietta, Monocacy, Vicksburg, Princeton, Petrel, Gardough, General Alvala, Basco, Dorothea, Manila, Leyte, Nashan, Mindoro, Pampana, Panay, Paragua, Quiries, Samar, Wilmington and Villalobos.

Besides these there will be seven supply ships and as many colliers, bringing the grand total up to 53 vessels of all kinds, with at least 15 of that number real sea fighters, able to hold their own in almost any kind of tussle that may be precipitated. Nearly every name cited is a tribute to American prowess in some field of peaceful or warlike achievement. The majority of names applied to the gunboats attest a Spanish nationality and recall the heroic deeds of 1898 in Manila bay, while no one needs to be told what interest attaches to the Brooklyn, the Oregon, the Monadnock and Monterey. Each has performed its service in defense of this country, and performed it well.

The giant of them all, the Kentucky, which has been ordered to join the fleet with dispatch, is considered the finest battleship in our navy at present completed, the superior of any foreign warship now in Chinese waters, and probably the peer of any that will be sent. She was launched at Newport News in March, 1895, and at her trial, in November, 1899, showed a speed of 17 knots over the official course between Boston and Cape Ann.

She, and the Kearsarge, a sister ship, were built on a plan which provided them with superimposed turrets. This even now may be considered experimental, as neither has been in action. Should any occasion arise by which the Kentucky might test the efficiency of her novel double deck turrets, the experts will be greatly relieved, as the disposition of her batteries and her general armament have caused no end of discussion. While, however, there is a difference of opinion as to the special features mentioned, there is no doubt as to her capabilities when opposed to any vessel afloat, for her armor is almost impregnable, and her batteries are exceedingly powerful.

Next to the Kentucky ranks the Oregon, which has been styled the "queen of American battleships" and which won the love of the entire country when she made her unprecedented run of 14,000 miles, from California to the West Indies, in order to be in at the death on the coast of Cuba. It is quite unnecessary to detail her gallant achievements at Santiago, when she helped chase the fleeing warships of Cervera's fleet to shore and destroy them with her shells. There seemed to the American people then a special Providence in the unparalleled voyage of the Oregon, arriving as she did just in time to take part in the destruction of the Spanish warships. As Secretary of the Navy Long

cabled to her commander, when she had the misfortune to run on a rock off the China coast last July, the people regard her as the Constitution of the present time.

Repaired at Nagasaki through the courtesy of Japan, the Oregon has returned to the station for which she was steaming at the time of the accident, and has already been greeted by her quondam companion, the Brooklyn, flagship of the commander in chief, Admiral Remy.

We might recall in this connection certain features of that cyclone race off the Cuban coast between the Spaniards and American warships, when it was to secure the mental picture of the between the Brooklyn and the Oregon. They meet again now, the ships of world famous exploits, and each is surrounded by a halo of prestige that redounds to the glory of our country and will command the respect of all the allied fleets.

When the Oregon was launched, in 1893, she was said to be the heaviest armored ship in the world, and was of the same size as the battleships Indiana and Massachusetts, the latter being then the largest our navy could boast. Her displacement was 10,200 tons, length over all 264 feet, draft 27 feet and coal capacity 1,594 tons.

The Brooklyn, Commodore Schley's flagship at Santiago, developed on her trial trip a speed of 21 knots an hour, and under forced draft exceeded that, making her the fastest ship of her class in the navy. Her length is 40 feet over all, mean draft 24 feet, normal coal capacity 1,650 tons and engines 16,000 horsepower. The Kentucky has a water line of 398 feet, draft of 25 feet 6 inches, displacement 11,225 tons, with engines of 16,000 horsepower and can average 16 knots per hour. The Oregon and the Kentucky were not built for speed, however, but for the floating fortresses, against which the attacks of any vessel of ordinary powers shall prove unavailing.

As for the old Monadnock and Monterey, monitors of a class at one time considered impregnable, there are few ships afloat that can make more than an impression on them. Cannon balls and shells rolling off their armored decks, almost flush with the water, like raindrops from a duck's back. They are not good sailing vessels, and for speed are veritable turtles. But when it comes to fighting they are there to stay to the finish.

The armored ships will constitute the fortresses, the etatades of defense, of our navy in the China sea; the cruisers will form the rapid moving, fleetly batteries, and the gunboats will act as scouts and skirmishers, penetrating rivers and bays where the larger ships cannot go. While it is necessary to have a line of unassailable battleships and cruisers along the coast, at the same time there will probably be more real need of the light draft gunboats for patrol and river work.

The moral effect of this fleet cannot be doubted or its value as a peace promoter be overestimated.

MATTHEW R. LATHROP.

ROYAL OAK DAY.

Although every one knows the origin of Royal Oak day in England, perhaps it may be a new historical light to see that King Charles owed his safety to the only exalted position he then occupied more to an owl than an oak. For as it happened, on that tree climbing occasion he was accompanied by his faithful fowler, who had with him a pet owl, which he let fly as the Round heads, chanting their surly hymn and peering around, passed beneath the foliage's hiding place. They took for granted that if a man were hidden in the oak the fowl would have flown on before; so they went on their way oblivious of their quarry overhead.

When the king, who was grateful as well as merry, came into his own again in remembrance of his escape he granted to his fowler and his heirs the right to wear an owl as crest. He also caused a few 5 guinea pieces to be struck showing the owl and oak on the reverse side, one of which he bestowed on his quick witted servant, whose descendants preserve it to this day as a most precious relic.

CHINA'S FOREIGN DEBT.

No statement of the revenues and expenditures of China ever has been made public, but it is estimated that she collects and spends about \$45,000,000 annually. China has an outstanding foreign debt of about \$70,000,000.

gives a sinister coloring to her evident, though unannounced, intentions.

Notwithstanding the fervent protests of the Russian bear to the effect that he desired no further acquisitions in China, his ambitions being satisfied, these events give the lie to whatever pacific proclamations he may have issued in the past. The first occurrence of importance was at Blagovestchensk last summer, when it was announced that this capital of the Amur province had fallen a prey to a savage horde of Chinese and Mongolians from the south. Two days later came reliable news that the Chinese had been driven from their positions with great slaughter, losing 2,600 men and 17 guns, and that the right bank of the Amur opposite had been occupied by Russian troops. The crux of the situation was explained later, when official Russian reports announced the "killing and putting to flight" of 5,000 Chinese, with no casualties whatever to the troops of the czar. This bloodless victory, it was later ascertained, was nothing more or less than an atrocious massacre of Chinese, 5,000 of them having been disarmed, stripped of their belongings, escorted to the river's bank and ordered to cross to the other (the Chinese) side. The Amur is a mile wide at this place. No boats were provided, and when the poor wretches protested, it was reported, men, women and children were flung into the stream, stabbed and shot, not one of them escaping alive.

To those unacquainted with Russia's relentless policy for the past hundred years and more, such a massacre might seem incredible, as well as inexplicable; but to one who has followed the trend of events in this region it forms only a single stone in a structure built of the bones of countless victims and cemented in blood and tears. That structure is Russian dominance throughout all Asia. This advance of Russia across Siberia to the Amur is no new movement, but has been going on ever since the vast possibilities of this "Mississippi of the Pacific coast" were proclaimed by a Russian traveler early in the seventeenth century. The Russo-Chinese frontier was delimited by treaty in 1689, and in 1858, after continuous agitation, all Siberia north of the Amur was ceded to Russia.

At last the Russian bear had not partly into the Chinese tent, and the left bank of the Amur reported his nose. He put a foot inside when China, helpless in the grasp of the allied armies in 1860, gave him the entire seaboard country of Manchuria from the Amur's mouth to the boundary of Korea without the loss to the czar of a single life or the expenditure of a hundred rubles.

Any other nation than that ruled by the remorseless descendant of Muscovite would have been satisfied apparently, for he had now obtained his heart's desire—an outlet on the Pacific for his Transiberian railway, including Vladivostok and numerous other natural harbors below the line of perpetual frosts. But, no; the ursine appetite was only whetted by the absorption of this vast country, and he made poor John Chinaman virtually cede another province when the latter allowed Russia to project the southern branch of his transcontinental railroad to Khabarovsk, and at last to Port Arthur, on the Yellow sea. Now he had an outlet within 500 or 400 miles of Peking and had secured a port always free from winter ice.

But was he satisfied? Oh, no! He still desired a little more. Having secured a lease of Port Arthur, after compelling its retrocession from Japan, which had won it as the spoil of war, the bear became paramount in Manchuria by means of his railroad concessions, and now regards as a fact which has long been recognized in effect—the annexation of Manchuria and occupation of the right bank of the Amur. Now, the right bank of the Amur, being the southern bank, will probably be extended to include all the territory between the Amur and the southern boundary of Manchuria, which was conquered by its former rulers, whose descendants occupy the throne today.

That fugitive Russo-Chinese boundary line has been advancing southward for centuries, and now, like the great wall of China, trails its terminus in the gulf of Pechili on the Yellow sea. There it will be anchored for a period, gives a sinister coloring to her evident, though unannounced, intentions.

has already published elaborate regulations, placing the entire province and both banks of the river under Russian law and authority. All Chinese, such as are not permanently planted there, are forbidden to dwell on the left, or north, bank, and they are informed that the annexation of Manchuria would be a fit punishment for the attack upon his capital, Blagovestchensk. At one fell swoop the schemes of venturers were consummated, and Russia became in fact, as well as in name, ruler over all northern and northeastern China, probably aggregating 400,000 square miles of territory, with a population of perhaps more than 13,000,000, chiefly Chinese.

"China is a sea that suits all the waters which run into it," says an old proverb, and this has been proved true, especially as to the northern frontier country. There is another proverb also particularly apropos at the present time: "A host marches, and stones of provision are consumed; the hungry are deprived of their food, and there is no rest for those who are called on to toll." These are utterances attributed to Confucius, and the great Chinese sage must have foreseen just such an exigency as the present, for the Russian invasion of China may be compared to a sword that cuts both ways. It will be next to impossible to feed and supply the vast forces necessary for future conquest, unless time is taken for recuperation, colonies planted and harvests gathered; and in carrying out this scheme there will surely be no rest for those (Chinese) who are called on to toll. As to the danger to be feared from the isolation of a comparatively small body of Russian troops within the confines of a country that may mass millions for its defense, a competent observer says, "The saying that Providence is on the side of the largest battalions is one of those aphorisms which does not apply to Chinese battlefields."

With the Siberia-Manchurian coast in Russian possession as far south as the river Tumen, which separates it from Korea, and all the country between that point and the Amur also

Adjacent Manchuria, which may hereafter be known merely as an appendage of the Amur province, has vast forests and valleys, in which swarm various valuable fur bearing animals, and immense plains which support herds of cattle, horses and sheep. There is gold in both provinces, besides the equally precious ginseng, and great deposits of iron and coal in Manchuria, while the climate ranges from frigid to temperate, the temperature in summer rising to 80 degrees and in winter falling far below the freezing point.

The two objectives for which Russia of late has been fighting are Blagovestchensk, on the Amur, and Newchwang, on the gulf of Liao-Tung, far to the south, the only treaty port in Manchuria. Russian troops have been victorious in both places, but only after the commission of atrocities which, perpetrated upon any other nation than the Chinese, would have excited the sympathetic horror of the civilized world. Indeed, while from his mouth the bear has breathed nothing but the gospel of peace, sweetness and light, with his paws he has been clawing his way into the heart of the enemy's country. Like the wolf in the fable, he accused the Chinese lamb of rolling the waters of the Amur near its source, though the witless lamb was many hundred miles nearer its mouth than he; and another similar fable—the lion and the lamb—is called to mind by the simultaneous quietude of the two parties in question, giving rise to a strong suspicion that they may have lain down together—with the lamb inside!

The centers of population on the Amur most prominent in connection with the latest Russian advance are Blagovestchensk, the provincial capital, and Khabarovsk, 270 miles nearer the mouth of the river and 200 miles distant from Vladivostok, the two last named places being connected by a portion of the Transiberian railroad already finished. With Vladivostok, Russia's great port on the Pacific, readers are pretty well acquainted, since it has been placed prominently before them as the eastern objective of that vast transcontinental railroad. Its growth

consisting mainly of soldiers and government officials. It has many houses, however, a museum, a church, a school for cadets, two alleged hotels and a military hospital. Daily trains run regularly between the port and this city, accomplishing the journey in about 30 hours, and connecting with steamers that ply up the Amur to St. Petersburg, to which place the great railway has been completed from Moscow and St. Petersburg. If international complications do not prevent within two or three years Russia will have the easier and shorter route from Port Arthur in operation, by which Peking and St. Petersburg will be placed in indirect communication by rail via Mukden. It is doubtful with this contingency in view that the Russians have seized the railway from Peking to Tien-tsin and Taku, connecting with Shan-hai-kwan, where it passes through the great wall, with a comparatively insignificant gap undisturbed between its present terminus, or rail end, and ancient Mukden, through which the main line has been projected.

Those who have looked upon Siberia as a country of unmitigated cold and barren wastes will be surprised to find here such cities as Blagovestchensk, with an estimated population of 40,000, great department stores well stocked, two large hotels, telephones and telegraphs. The Amur here, as at Khabarovsk, is about a mile in width, and the city is visible for a long distance before it is reached. On the way up from its sister city the gloomy convict barges conveying prisoners to the Siberian coast are met with frequently, even though the czar has recently proclaimed a liberal policy of emancipation. There is a cathedral here and several Greek churches, a big market place a thousand feet across, and the capital boasts one garden, that attached to the governor's house, which stretches from it to the river bank.

"As we sat on the veranda after dinner," writes a recent visitor, "I was surprised all at once to hear bugle notes within a few yards of us. That music came from the other side of the river," remarked the vice-governor, who was sitting next me and noticed my

mounting in swift circles high into the air until the pursuer is tired out, or, having gained a sufficient height, by making a headlong drop in a slanting line for cover. This battle in the air is full of excitement, besides furnishing plenty of walking in the open air for the falconer.



GOVERNOR OF BLAGOVESTCHENSK AND HIS FAMILY.



DISTANT VIEW OF BLAGOVESTCHENSK.



MILITARY HOSPITAL AT Khabarovsk.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW.

Dr. Bachmann of Shanghai has recently stated in a letter to the Governor that Emperor Kwang Su suffers from cancer of the throat and is unable to reign. The same view is taken by Dr. Deherre, a French physician, and by Dr. Shang Lian Feng, both of whom have examined the emperor.

In Italy the Southern Railroad company is going to have built 18 locomotives, 121 passenger cars, 22 baggage cars and 1,000 freight cars. Foreign concerns will be allowed to compete.

The Church of England pays the archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Temple, \$75,000 a year, while his colleague of York and the bishop of London are paid \$50,000 each.

In China the coinage is pierced with a square hole in the center, and in place

of a purse John Chinaman carries a piece of string, on which the coins are strung.

Forty-two inventions relating to bicycles were taken out by women during the last year.

The Vanderbilt system of railways is now the largest in the world—covering 20,495 miles, against 10,382 of the Pennsylvania and 10,018 of the Canadian Pacific.

A Syracuse woman brought suit against her sister because she would not go home after her six weeks' visit was "up."

The death list of the British peacocks last year included three dukes, one marquis, five earls, three viscounts and ten barons.

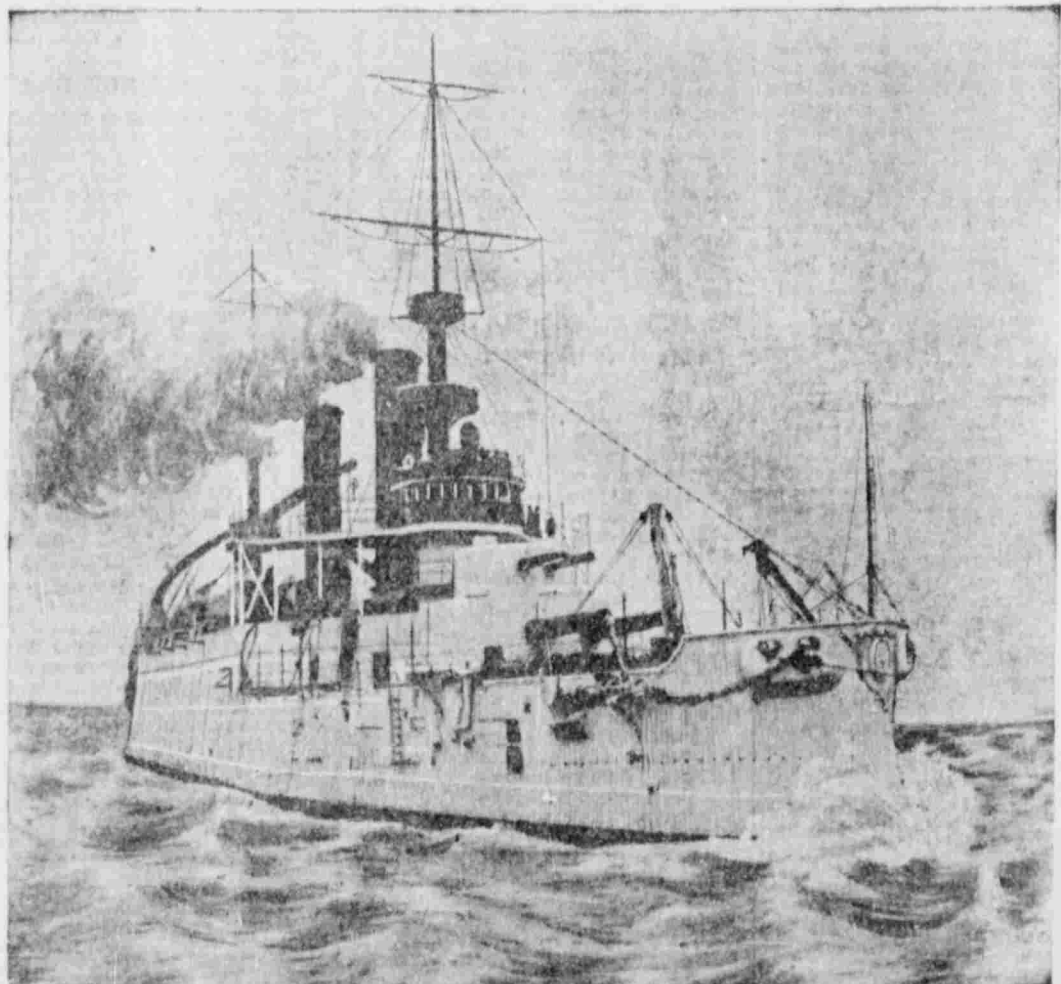
The largest orchard in South Dakota is in Turner county. It covers an area of 150 acres.

A careful analysis of the statistics of British mortality in the Boer war shows that of the British officers in South Africa 721 per thousand have been killed or have died from wounds and 344 per thousand have died from disease. Of the men 19 per thousand have been killed or died from wounds and 313 per thousand have died from disease.

The dikes in Japan cost in the aggregate more money than those of the Netherlands.

Seventy dollars per square inch was the price paid to the Duke of Marlborough for Raphael's "Madonna Ansidei" in the National gallery at London.

In days long gone by when a man was going on an ocean voyage he as a general rule, wore his old clothes. Now, when one takes passage from this country to any port in Europe on one of the great steamships, he wants as many different changes of clothing as he does at home. He wants bathrobes, shooting jackets, negligee breakfast



THE BATTLESHIP KENTUCKY.