THE PARTITION OF CHINA.

The Hungry Nations of Europe Which Are All Anxious to Have Their Fingers in the Pie.

The Various Spheres of Influence and the Section Which Is the Real Bone of Contention.

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"THE partition of China" is a phrase so familiar that we no longer remember its real significance. Just what this great Mongolian kingdom will have to undergo such an operation is never considered. It is enough for us today that it is the United States, with her new possessions in the Pacific, who is more concerned about this so called partition than is China herself.

At the time when the crumbling Turkish empire was dying of dry rot it was known that in the faraway east lay a great kingdom so enveloped in mystery and so secure in its strength that no imperial Cæsar dared even dream of its conquest.

Adventurous travelers vanished into the darkness of that mysterious east, and at times faint reports came back to Europe telling of the wonders of Chinghwa, the Flowery Kingdom, whose kings were descended from gods and whose civilization was called no less than 3,000 years old.

From the day of these first traditions to just one century ago the world's knowledge of Cathay was a fixed quantity. Not only was it fixed, it was infinitesimal. Then English missionaries, the first to cross the borders of the Celestial empire, invaded the terra incognita, and in 1792 the British received official permission to touch on its land and carry on trade with the ports of China. Three years later Russia sued for a like privilege, but the petition was refused by the great Kien Lung. From that time until 1834 all trade between Europe and China was in the hands of the British East India company. Then came the "opium war" and the intervention of France just at the time when the Russian bear was poking a tentative but determined paw into Manchuria.

Since then strange changes have taken place, but it was not until audacious Japan, at the battle of the Yalu, tore the dragon mask from the unknown face of China that a quiescent Europe knew the actual weakness of that great empire of the orient which lay ready to be carved up and passed around to the powers.

But, notwithstanding the fact that the "partition of China" has become a very common phrase in our end of the century ears, the kingdom of the great dragon has not yet been divided. Europe, with its collective mouth watering for eastern territory and with an appetite pungently sharpened by thoughts of "spheres of influence," has in some mysterious manner discovered that a nation cannot be cut up offhand and passed around like pieces of cold pie. One nation jealously watches the other, while neither dares act, and in the meantime China herself goes on her heathen way rejoicing.

New interest, however, now attaches to the eastern question from the fact that Italy has taken a hand in the matter, and the complications which have followed that venture have forced several of the powers to show their hand. In making her demand for a sphere of influence it seems that Italy has the support of France, Germany and Russia and what might be called the diplomatic opposition of the United States and England. The attitude assumed by the different powers interested in this question is important, in so far as it signifies the "eastern" policy of each country involved. England has never longed for the carving up of China. In fact, her policy has been one of direct opposition to such action. The nation that Napoleon dubbed "shopkeeping" merely wants to go on doing business at the old stand. "I care not who holds a country's laws," says the Britisher, "as long as I can build her railways."

All that England asks of the east is the privilege of carrying on her trade under conditions equal with those of every other nation. This attitude, of course, our own country believes, and all that the United States is claiming as the present moment is the right of carrying on business with John Chinaman unmolested by native or foreign interference. But the chances for the preservation of the "Hermit Empire" grow more and more remote, and it is not extremely improbable that the partition of China will take place even against the wish of united Anglo-Saxondom.

Russia, in her rapacity and greed for the acquisition of oriental territory, has held sacred no promise and has avoided no international duplicity if by strategy or dissimulation she has won her way toward acquiring an additional inch of coveted transcaspian territory. The Asiatic possessions of Muscovy are cold and sterile, but just to the south of them was a rich region that was well worth a risk or two to acquire. It was from dreams of such a southern acquisition that was evolved the idea of the colossal Transsiberian railway. That railway was to shoot its Polesteed itself, pushing on through the desolate east, skirting the northern border of China and rounding the curve down to the Pacific port of Vladivostok. That port, it is true, is closed during seven months of the year, but further down the Liao-Tung peninsula lies the long coveted Port Arthur, the goal of the greater Russia.

When China and Japan became engaged in their struggle for supremacy, that one nation realized how weak clearly and decisively by the power that he. At that time Russia had already extended her dominions from the Ural mountains to the Pacific ocean and was marching down dangerously near to Peking. Great Britain, intrenched in her Indian empire, stands at the entrance from the east and south, not unwilling to move a little toward the northeast should the preservation of the balance of power demand any such action. Eastward of the English possessions was Cochin China, already in the hands of unsatisfied France, remembrance of the Asiatic adventure forgotten, waiting for the opportune murder of a missionary or two as an excuse for landing her marines.

It was no matter of surprising principle, then, that the Russian bear should prance down upon Port Arthur as soon as that war was over and that the English bulldog should follow by seizing on Wei-Hai-Wei. Then the German emperor stood on his number of monosyllables as a known and recognized ally of Russia, which practically means that Germany will some day get up a claim for the central zone of China.

Such was the beginning of the end. So far Russia has had a decided advantage, but she has won it at the price of the deep seated resentment and distrust of England, whose she directly and indirectly deserted in her abrogation of diplomatic and treaty promises. There has indeed been an element of deep mystery in all Russia's late moves in the land of flowers. So far it has never been officially announced that Russia obtained any cession of territory by her recent secret treaty with China. Indeed the very existence of a treaty is stoutly denied by Russia, who protests that the Central concession was merely for the purpose of arranging for connections in connection with the Transsiberian railway extension through Manchuria. But it is known that the Witt (Count Cassini, the Russian minister at Peking, for book or by crook secured the certain privilege of placing Russian cavalry and infantry along this Chinese railway where it ran through sparsely settled districts. Such a concession is equivalent, obviously, to a direct transfer to the care of the territory so guarded by Russian troops. In Asia it is the early bird that catches the territorial worm. Manchuria, therefore, is already pointed out as Russian ground and to all intents and purposes may as well hereafter be shown on the map in the same color as Russia itself.

The result of such developments, accordingly, is peculiar. We are China, still nominally and outwardly intact, undergoing an actual dismemberment and subjugation, almost without war and doing so with unexampled rapidity. This disintegrating Chinese empire is thus in name up of six central territory, which is China proper, and its numerous outlying dependencies. Manchuria, together with its central provinces, forms the bulk of this wheel of many dissimilated fragments. The district by district these different outlying territories are passing out of Chinese control. Burma has gone to England, Tonkin and Annam to France, Siam is a good as British, Thibet and Korea still pay their little tribute to the emperor, but Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan are now practically beyond the pale of Chinese jurisdiction, Asiatic in spirit French. As has already been said, Russia practically owns the whole of Manchuria. Hongkong is British, and so also might as well be called the entire valley of the Tang-tse-Kiang, through of late Russia has been most vigorously disputing this fact. It is this last mentioned territory which constitutes the actual China. This wide fertile valley is studded with large cities and contains a population of 50,000,000. It is the garden of all Asia and is worth a score of entire Manchurias. But at the present moment Russia has the upper hand in Asiatic affairs, and consequently her present denial of the British claim is of unusual embarrassment to the statesmen in London who control the destinies of the empire. But Russian officials have fallen under the thumb of Russian ministers, and the result is that if there is to be warfare in the east it will in all probability be over the possession of this same rich, broad valley of the Yang-tse-Kiang.

Russian prestige in China began just after the Japanese war. At the end of that struggle China lay helpless and weak. Just where to Russ a friendly hand she could not decide. Great Britain stepped forward with an offer of assistance. But for 10 years the Englishman had dominated central China, and she was not long also in great awe by naval demonstrations and actual warfare. While France for years has been attempting to get to the possession of a foothold on the empire. But Russian officials have fallen under the thumb of Russian ministers, and the result is that if there is to be warfare in the east it will in all probability be over the possession of this same rich, broad valley of the Yang-tse-Kiang.

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exhaustible deposits of coal and iron, to say nothing of other valuable minerals, such as copper, gold and silver. When once Kiao Ssu's ports open to commerce, the province of Shangtung will become one of the great manufacturing centers of the world. But the moment the door of China is opened to all Europe England and the other powers realize that a great change will come over the character of their trade with China. Instead of importing coal, iron and steel, machinery and manufactured goods there will come a change in the line of trade, and all these things will be exported to the rest of the world. When this takes place, the orient, on account of the extreme cheapness of labor prevailing in that quarter of the globe, will be able to compete with her younger rivals of the west. This fact England and America realize, and as these two nations combined control over 80 per cent of the total trade carried on in China they are, naturally enough, anxious that such a golden opportunity should not be ruined by the

THE GREAT WALL WAS FOR CENTURIES THE PARTITION OF CHINA. THERE IS A NEW SORT OF PARTITION NOW.

lost treasure before she will agree to the construction of any such line. Her reluctance has got to be overcome, which under ordinary circumstances would long since have been counted to be done solely to her passionate clinging to the policy of "the open door." But while Great Britain has been keeping the door of China open other powers have been climbing in over the back fence and carrying away household furniture. Each power has taken in hand as much of China as it can deal with. Britain and France have British capitalists shall not, if they can help it, carry on trade in their appropriated areas. Now there is a strong element in England, even in Conservative ranks, who have decided that the "open door" policy has been a bitter failure. They advocate a policy more solidly protective and hold that England and Lord Salisbury should throw international morality to the dogs and no longer struggle for the maintenance of the Chinese empire. "One might as well," they say, "try to keep out the ocean with a mop." So far Salisbury has done nothing more than to dispatch Sir Claude Macdonald to inform the Chinese ministers that England will protect the empire should any foreign power at any moment grow violent because of favors granted to England. But Russia, her worst and most ominous enemy, China dares not fling off. And there the matter stands.

The report of Germany's seizure of Kiao-Chau and the surrounding territory has been said to be not so much due to his desire to have a harbor and coaling station as the fact that the rapacious province of Shangtung has its existence of continental monopolies and territorial restrictions and concessions. Italy has the right to trade freely and equally with whomsoever the Chinaman may desire is everything that is implied by the now familiar term of "the open door." "Live and let live" is altered to read "trade and let trade." This is the secret of the recent mission to the orient of Lord Charles Beresford, where he has been looking most thoroughly into the condition of commercial affairs. His final judgment on the matter is that America and England should unite and "cut up and divide" China, lest some angelic from the greedy hands of Europe.

Since the Philippine islands have come into our possession we have been forced to look upon the eastern question with new eyes. The ultimate fate of China is now a matter of great moment with us. The events which we have witnessed, accordingly, have been of great dramatic interest to us. We have seen the Chinese empire, "the sick man of the east," the Chinese empire, "One might as well," they say, "try to keep out the ocean with a mop." So far Salisbury has done nothing more than to dispatch Sir Claude Macdonald to inform the Chinese ministers that England will protect the empire should any foreign power at any moment grow violent because of favors granted to England. But Russia, her worst and most ominous enemy, China dares not fling off. And there the matter stands.

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known about, it certainly was not to be celebrated.

But as the strain of the Puritan's rigidness relaxed and with the influence of the English church it gradually became the custom all over the country to grow something for Easter, still manacles in the south indeed watched their calles. If they appeared in the forward, they were discreetly hidden away in a dark place to retard their growth, and when it was feared they would be backward they were diligently sprinkled with hot water and coaxed into bloom by the sunshine. When on Easter day they blossomed, "Ye de Lord dere was much rejoice."

THE MOHAMMEDAN EASTER.

Bairam is the name of the Mohammedan Easter. It follows Ramadan, which corresponds to Lent, and lasts three days. During this time visits are exchanged and presents made in much the same spirit as that which characterizes our Christmas. At dawn people the streets are thronged, and bands of music parade day and night. The decorations of the boats in the Bosporus are striking and beautiful. The sultan celebrates the day by worshiping in the mosque, after which he gives an informal reception to his friends in the palace of Dolmabatchi. During this reception the sultan occupies a throne of great splendor placed in the midst of the vast and beautifully decorated audience hall.

There are no free schools in the Philippines and illiteracy is general.

THE EASTER LILY ISLAND.

Fields and fields of Easter lilies all in bloom—only imagine the sweetness of the air, the tall, stately clusters of pure white blossoms! Too lilies that come to us are usually gathered when buds and open on the way, or after they arrive.

Their island home, Bermuda, is about as far from New York as Chicago, and is reached by a voyage over waters as exquisitely clear, as wonderful in color, with the green of the malachite or the beryl, the splendor of the opal, that it seems like fairyland.

The island itself and the cluster of smaller islands near by are of coral formation. If we could look down into the sea, we should find these islands the tops of great coral mountains or peaks. They have very little soil, almost nothing but powdered coral, but there must be a richness about it from the wealth of flowers. Some of the lily fields are 30 or 40 acres large. Then, in the forests are marvelous orchids, looking almost as much alive as the glittering butterflies that poise themselves on gauzy or velvety wings above them; air plants, ferns, fungi, and the wonderful mosses that drape the trees and all kinds of rare fruit trees as well as blossoming shrubs and vines.

Everything that blooms and grows in these islands is partly an air plant in the sense of drawing a large part of its food from the delicious warm, moist sea air. Even our little drink it in, and thrives and feed upon it. Air plants are, after all, only accidental. The roots are stilled in the dark of the tropical jungle and its thick growth. It climbs higher and higher to reach air and sunshine. Meanwhile its stemless and tendrils take in nutriment and moisture from crevices of rotting tree trunks, and the lower part, grows useless, dies away. In time these plants, thus growing, get a fixed habit of air nurture and are then truly air plants.

Lily raising is one of the largest industries in Bermuda. The long, white buds on the stately stems are most carefully packed for the ocean voyage, and then, on Easter Sunday, how many churches are made beautiful by their white and fragrant presence!

Islands make good homes for flowers. Not only the tropical islands, but Sicily and other islands near the English coast, are full of little farms for raising the early spring blossoms—daffodils, jonquils, etc.—for the London market.

UNCLE SAM'S BIGGEST GUN.

There is now being constructed at Watervliet arsenal a monster gun that is the largest of its size to be made for Uncle Sam, and it will also probably be the last. The huge implement of destruction when finished will be 5 feet in outside diameter at the breech and 2 feet 3 inches at the muzzle. Its total length will be a few inches under 46 feet.

The powder chamber will measure 18 inches in diameter by 9 feet in length and will hold for a full charge over half a ton of brown powder.

The projectile that will be sent starting over space by this gun will weigh 2,370 pounds. Its velocity when it issues from the mouth of the cannon will be 2,600 feet per second and at this tremendous speed will have a striking energy of 4,081 foot tons, or sufficient to lift 64 of the biggest freight locomotives ten feet in the air.

At the muzzle the shell would punch a 16 inch hole through an iron plate over a yard in thickness, while after flying for two miles would force its way through a similar plate 27½ inches thick.

In spite of the great power of such a gun it is exceedingly unlikely that another will be built, for, while its superiority was incontestable a decade ago, so great have been the improvements lately made in gunnery that it does not compare in efficiency with ordnance of the modern type.

By building 12 inch guns Uncle Sam can for the same amount of money as the other