LION AND BEAR AT ODDS

An International Tangle, With the Possibility of War, Over a Small Railroad Concession In China

England and Russia Are Both Determined--Land and Sea Strength of the Two Nations.

BRITAIN SHOULD BE VICTORIOUS

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The "eastern question" has again made its appearance in diplomatic circles with a dark and gloomy scowl for two of the most powerful nations of Europe. The dread war cloud is forming, and the war birds are hooking on their swords. All this, too, ever which seems to be a trifling matter. The question has as yet not taken an imminently dangerous turn, but the nations most interested are preparing to maintain their positions taken by them and to hold them by means of armed force if necessary, while the others look on with mingled anxiety. The eastern question has been the one absorbing topic of argument between the several European powers since China was opened to them and has been the means of causing strained relations on many occasions.

The latest bone of the far east which has caused the peace of Europe to be disturbed is between England and Russia and is over a concession for a railroad in China given to a British subject. Just what the outcome of the trouble will be cannot be ventilated, but from the way matters stand at present they look serious, and a war between these powerful nations seems eventually inevitable, as both are proud and neither is willing to give way to the other. It is also to be remembered that both are constantly "on the grab" and will take advantage of every point to acquire desirable pieces from a power which is not in a position to resist. It was partly the inroads Russia has made into China to the exclusion of the other powers that have counseled friendly relations between each that government and England, although the latter has been anxious to get satisfaction for fancied wrongs done by the former in times gone by.

After the war between China and Japan had been concluded and a treaty of peace satisfactory to Russia was signed China was in no condition to hold off the nations which were desirous of gaining points of vantage in the eastern waters. Russia was anxious to complete the Siberian railroad and to have it run into China. She also wanted stations for her Asiatic fleet, and when the Russo-settlement was made between China and Japan the time was ripe for Russia to show her hand. This she did by occupying several desirable points. England already held some strong points in China and naturally did not take kindly to the czar's grasping in and monopolizing everything. Then under the protection of Russia Germany got in her fine work, and before the world was aware of the fact she, too, had "occupied" some of the more important seaports. Up to this time England had acceded to every demand made by the powers, but when she wanted her subjects to enjoy some of the benefits of opening up a new country the Russian bear growled and was not willing to have any concessions granted to any but those upon whom she might select. This of course caused the relations between the two countries to become strained.

Whatever else may be said of England, it has been her policy to open the doors of China to all nations; but, as she is looked upon as the lion, she naturally wanted the bear's share, though not in any sense to the exclusion of outsiders. Russia, to the contrary, wanted everything and meant to have it even if it had to be gained at the mouth of the cannon or the point of the bayonet. In China matters were comparatively easy for her, and she set about increasing her strength in the east by hoodwinking her enemies out. This she has been unable to accomplish, as England has done than a football and to just as determined not only to keep what she has, but to add more.

When the concession for the troublesome railroad was granted to an English subject, Russia objected and washed it excluded. For one in the new enterprise a rival for her Siberian road which was to enter China. The profits of this with a formidable rival would be materially decreased, and the improvements that would be made by the English would to a great measure lessen her hold on the Chinese government and ultimately weaken her position. Then, too, Russia has not forgotten the stand taken by England when she wanted a foothold on the Mediterranean sea, which had Russia the chance she had longed for for so many years. In fact, Russia and England have not been on the best terms for a long time, and she has only waited for an opportunity to "get even."

The objection to granting the concession to a British subject, it is said, is really the heart of Russia's grievance against England, and while she has in many ways tried to prevent the line from gaining points of vantage and has made covert attempts to drive her into a quarrel she has not yet been able to do so. England stood for concession as long as it was possible, and when she finally made the stand against the granting of any concessions to British subjects the government could tolerate it no longer, and Lord Salisbury in the house of lords and Mr. Balfour in the house of commons stated that they would permit no foreign interference with the policy mapped out for improvements in China or with concessions justly granted to British subjects, and unless consideration would they allow them to be revoked.

This was a direct blow at the policy of Russia, which was to permit no concessions to be granted by the Chinese government without the approval of the czar. Russia is especially determined that no concession shall be granted to the English lion as she can prevent it, and also that the one already given must be revoked, while England has declared that she will not stand any foreign interference and that the concession must stand, no matter what Russia says. This is the situation at present, and it is gradually growing more strained. One of the other most glaring way if war is to be granted. Both are powerful and haughty and do not care to show any weakness to the other powers which are looking on expectantly. Neither wants to give way to the other. They are cousins, and both have made every effort to maintain supremacy. If either will yield, the matter will have to be settled by force of arms, and both seem to have always been ready to settle matters in that way. War between the two nations is therefore far from unlikely. Russia is one of the greatest powers of the continental nations and is the land and mouthpiece of the dual alliance. England stands alone and will make her own terms. Should war result the Russian is likely to extend beyond the two countries and where it is concluded other European nations would be all possibility to be drawn into it. As it is the condition is anything but encouraging, and as the cloud becomes more dense the feeling of safety among the nations decreases.

Both Russia and England can put large forces in the field. These are not only powerful as to numbers, but are well disciplined and are equipped with the most modern weapons, capable of great destruction. Their armies are considered to be among the best in Europe, and should they be brought together for the purpose of deciding the question of supremacy the peace of all Europe will be in the balance. Just what are the resources of these nations, or at their land forces are concerned, is not known, but it is said that the armies are about equal, and it needs be over-zealous men could be put in the field by each power. It is conceded that the English are a superior race to the Russians and that the man who composes her standing army have the advantage of practical military knowledge, as there are few of the English regiments that have not seen service in the field. This alone is a decided advantage to the English army over those of Russia. Then, too, England can mobilize her forces much more quickly than Russia can, which is of course a strong point.

On the sea England is supreme. She has nearly twice as many fighting ships of all types as has Russia. Not only this, but the English vessels are capable of throwing several times as much weight of solid shot and shell in a given time as the ships of the czar. The fleets of both these nations are composed of some of the finest fighting vessels in the world, and while England is the "queen of the seas" Russia would be able to give her many good licks on the water. A comparative table of the efficiency of both nations on land and sea and on a war footing is given below. The figures are taken from standard authorities and are as nearly correct as is possible.

Russia's standing army on a war footing would number 4,300,000. It is composed of the regular army mobilized during times of peace and the reserves, which are composed of the Cossacks and a number of men from the nonmilitary tribes that inhabit Siberia and other portions of the Russian empire. While many of these make good soldiers, they are not to be trusted, as they are not friendly to the government or its policy and are simply supplied to fight or suffer exile. The forces that England could put into the field would number about 1,500,000, and the majority of them would be taken from the veterans and those on the reserve and volunteer rolls. Most of the men have seen service at one time or other, and they are well disciplined. A number of the natives of India would also be taken into the service, and while they are not equal to the white soldiers of the regular standing army they are more than a match for some of the troops that would be called in by Russia from the frontier. The peace standing of the Russian army is 1,100,000, while that of England is but 200,000.

The naval list of Russia and England is as follows:

	England.	Russia.
Armored ships	60	31
Unarmored ships	122	32
Armored gunboats	2	4
Unarmored gunboats	60	46
Dispatch vessels	4	3
Torpedo boats	134	175
Torpedo boat destroyers	176	96
Total	558	338

This list does not include auxiliaries or some of the older vessels that, while obsolete, could be used for harbor and coast defense purposes, of which, and especially the latter, both countries have many. Of auxiliary vessels Russia has few, while England has more than 100, all of which are modern ships, each capable of mounting a number of small guns. They are in the majority fast ocean liners similar in type to those used by the United States in her war with Spain and which proved that they were good either as transports or fighting vessels.

Both nations are abundantly supplied with naval stations distributed throughout the world, and the ports of each are well fortified and protected. Should war be declared it would take Russia nearly six weeks to mobilize her forces, while those of England could be got together in less than two weeks time. This would give her a great advantage over her antagonist, as she would have troops on their way to the points to be attacked before their enemy would be ready with their defenses, so far as those are concerned.

If it is however, unlikely that any attack would be made on the defenses of the home country at the beginning of hostilities. As the question to be settled is supremacy in the east, it is more than likely that fighting would be begun in the Asiatic seas, and the powerful fleets of the contending nations would be brought together in all probability off the China coast or in the harbors in that section of the world which are controlled by either England or Russia. The former, as matters stand at present, would have a decided advantage there, as she holds an almost preponderance of power, as far as naval strength is concerned, and it would be with great difficulty that Russia could strengthen her fleet there after war was declared, as the vessels would have to pass near the English coast in order to get to the Asiatic station. Her vessels are not allowed to the Mediterranean, and the entrance to that sea and also to the Aegean sea at the south of the Dardanelles would be blockaded by powerful English squadrons. It is for this reason that Russia has been anxious for years to get a foothold in the Mediterranean, as she would then be able at all times to keep her fleet on the Asiatic station in good shape, and it is for the purpose of securing to Russia the use of the Port cassad that the English have kept her out of the Mediterranean, much to the annoyance of the czar's government. The only method by which Russia can at present strengthen her naval forces in Asia is by sending her ships into those waters by the way of the Cape of Good Hope, which is a long, tedious and dangerous passage.

Once war was begun, there would be a busy time in the east, which would only be equaled by the brethren Chinese. The strong forts held by England and Russia are not overwell fortified, and before hostilities were concluded many of them would probably change hands more than once. The forts would meet and give battle to each other, and the question of neutrality, so far as the few remaining ports under control of China are concerned, would be a matter of no consideration, as they would be used by the commanders of the contending fleets for places of rendezvous in which to repair their vessels and take on provisions and ammunition from the neighbor references to the wishes of the Celestials.

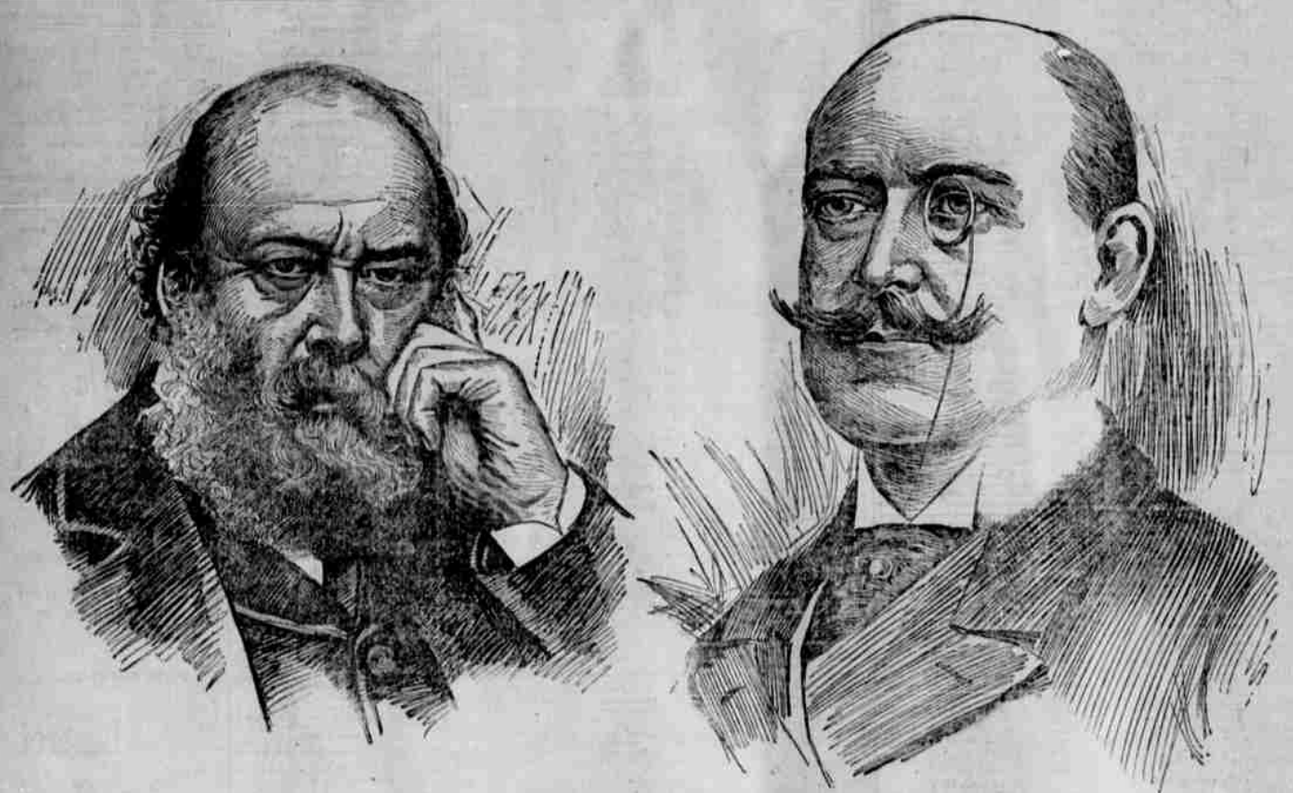
It is to be assumed that while there is an alliance between Russia and France the latter would, outwardly at least, act as a neutral power, and the contending governments would fight their own battles without the aid of any friendly power, although it is not unlikely that France would be prepared to act if they considered that their eastern interests were in any way interfered with.

Were such a war between these two countries would continue it is difficult to conjecture. Both have unlimited resources, and when they take the field they do so with the determination to settle the matter at issue for all time.

There is no doubt that an Anglo-Russian war would be a long and bloody struggle, especially on land, as these nations are about equal in strength. England's supremacy on the sea would give her a great advantage, and it is believed by experts that in the end she would be victorious. There is one thing certain—the eastern question would be settled for a long period, and the peace of Europe, if not of the whole world, would be brought to that state where the nations could use their energies in other pursuits than keeping up large armed forces on land and sea.

With England in power in the east others will have an opportunity to reap some of the profits that come with the opening up of a new country. Should Russia, however, succeed in maintaining her position, there will be little chance for any other power to enter the country.

ROBERT WARDIN WILCOX.



LORD SALISBURY AND COUNT MURAVIEFF.

The Marquis of Salisbury, the minister of foreign affairs for Russia, and Count Muravieff, the minister of foreign affairs for Russia, are the two men upon whom the eyes of the world are now fixed. They are responsible for the outcome of the present diplomatic game of chess between those respective governments with reference to the matter of railroad concessions in China. Lord Salisbury, as is well known to the great sports of the "open door for China" plan, while Muravieff desires that Russia, with France and Germany possibly, should be absolute lords. As it was Muravieff who succeeded in practically nullifying the effect of Japan's victory over China, it will be seen that he is an adept in that species of trickery which the world by courtesy calls diplomacy. Salisbury is supposed to be one of the sharpest aquaintance living, and the present complication in the east will therefore be as nearly as anything can be, "a struggle of giants," even though actual war should not be the direct outcome.

Then She Was Satisfied.

In one of the Ohio regiments mustered in during the war was a volunteer whose wife was bound he must stay at home. She pestered the captain of her husband's company until he referred her to Governor Dave Todd as the only man who could grant her wish. The governor was a great diplomat, and he awaited the assault of the bereaved with with calmness. He began by asking when she had finished her appeal:

"Your husband is not over 45?"

"Of course not! I'm only 41, and he's three years younger!"

"Nothing the matter with his health?"

"If there was, he wouldn't be any account to me in workin the farm. He's tougher'n a pine knot and the strongest man in the township."

"Then I can do nothing for him," said the governor, with a face as solemn as that of a judge pronouncing a death sentence. "but I can do something for you. If your husband doesn't come back, I'll marry you myself."

She smiled, blushed, bowed, backed out of the office and ceased to be troublesome.

Their Aims Are High.

In Paris a new society has just been established under the title of The International Union For the Realization of the Equal Rights and Duties of Man and Woman. The articles of the association are ambitious. They embody such items as the abolition of war, capital punishment, etc.; the suppression of the exploitation of workers; the advocacy of mediocrities, equal civil, political and economical rights for both sexes; that the means of existence and a thorough education should be guaranteed to all, and lastly a recognition of the duties of man and woman toward the animals.

Mrs. Alice Major, the president and founder of the union, is a member of the London Pioneer club and of various foreign organizations and is a recognized worker in the cause of feminism. The governing body is composed of both men and women, a fact which is eminently satisfactory.

Preserving Wood.

A new method of preserving wood from decay, known as the Haskin process, is being tried on a large scale in England. Instead of withdrawing the sap and injecting creosote or some other antiseptic substance, as is usually done, Mr. Haskin submits the wood to superheated air under a pressure of 15 atmospheres. By this process, it is asserted, the sap is chemically changed into a powerful antiseptic substance which, by consolidating with the fiber, strengthens as well as preserves the wood.

WAR'S AFTERMATH.

General Miles declares that the army which fled puts a large force of men on reserve will have a great advantage in the next war.

There have been many new little Americans named after Dewey, Schley and Hobson, but the latter is the first time a Spanish officer who has also seen service in the ranks of the British army. The son of a Warwickshire squire, he served as a "Tommy Atkins" before he came to this country.

General Shafter is said to have lost 30 pounds of his Falstaffian girth in Cuba.

Somebody in Texas has suggested that the Sunday school children of the state contribute a five cent nickel each to purchase a sword and a Bible for presentation to Captain John W. Philip of the battleship Texas.

An Iowa man who claims to have been Aguinaldo, the insurgent chief, in the Philippines, says he is "a bit of a chap, half caste, part Spanish, part Malayan—the worst combination that could be produced or imagined."

One of the volunteers encamped at San Francisco was recently reduced from the rank of corporal for being about without leave, for spending the soldier's money and for being drunk. A few days later he shot himself through the left hand and it is suspected that he did so purposely with a view to securing a honorable discharge. Even if the investigation which has been ordered should show that the shooting was accidental, the volunteer will be fined for criminal carelessness in committing a bullet to be fired through a camp filled with soldiers.

Attorney Frank H. Peck of Watertown, N. Y., was so anxious to fight for his country when the war broke out that he enlisted as a private, although he was a West Point graduate, had seen service on the plains and been instructor at the Military academy. It has not taken long, however, for his merit to be appreciated, and Private Peck is now Major Peck, in command of the Third battalion of the Ninth New York volunteers.

Captain Alfred S. Barker, who has been ordered to succeed Captain Clark, as the Oregon's first commander when she took her initial sea trips.