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Author(s): Baron F. von Richthofen

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precedence in this respect of Portugal, Mexico, and Cape Colony. Then, as now, Great Britain, America, Germany, and, with a larger share than at present, Japan will be the chief participants, unless it should happen that attempts—which sooner or later, as opportunity offers, are almost sure to be made, but which it may be the policy of the nations just mentioned to frustrate—should prove successful in placing the land under the dominion of a certain monarch, whose first act would be to strike a death-blow at the foreign import trade.

CHINA, JAPAN, AND KOREA.*

By BARON F. VON RICHTHOFEN.

THE universal interest aroused by the war which broke out between China and Japan in July last, and its necessarily far-reaching consequences, make it desirable to become acquainted with the geographical conditions of the theatre in which it is being waged. The two empires have fought many times before, and then, as now, Korea has been the chief seat of land operations; but unlike what was then the case, when Europe remained unacquainted with and unmoved by the course of events, she has now supplied the weapons to the combatants, and is closely affected by the issue of the struggle.

The author's acquaintance with Korea dates from a time (1869) when the country was still a closed land, and the neutral zone erected by the Manchus cut off all intercourse with China, except at the time of the markets held three times a year on the frontier. At one of these he was present, and thus gained the opportunity of personal intercourse with natives of the country. Others, both German and English, have since availed themselves of the increased facilities for becoming acquainted with the country, but the writer's intimate acquaintance with the northern Yellow Sea and neighbouring regions enables him to speak with authority on the theatre of operations as a whole.

The series of curves by which the Asiatic continent is bounded to the east have this general characteristic in common, that they possess on the whole a regular shape, convex to the east. Outside of them are the curved lines of islands which close the continental mass towards the deep basin of the Pacific. Just where the Japanese curve approaches the mainland, the coasts of the latter are more fully developed, and portions of an ancient mountainous continent project into the sea, composed mainly of gneiss, granite, and other archaic formations, which, in the long ages which have elapsed since the land was last covered by the sea, have become denuded into their present form. The lower lands between them have been covered by the gradually rising ocean, giving rise to the Yellow Sea, which stretches as a broad gulf 460 miles into the mainland. Eastward lies the peninsula of Korea, an anomaly in the structure of Eastern Asia, both for its south-east direction and its form. The ancient schists and granite form a watershed close to the east coast, rising to a height of over 6550 feet, and sloping south and west to the sea in gentle much-undulating hills. Thus Korea, like Italy, has an open western and closed eastern side. Although the west coast is steep and has many bays, the shallowness of the sea and the number of sandbanks left bare at low water make access to it a matter of difficulty. The continuation of the peninsula beyond a shallow strait 120 miles wide is formed by the west end of the Japanese islands, which, with

* Abstract of paper read before the Berlin Geographical Society, October 13, 1894.

a more varied geological history, far surpass it in diversity of form and in climate, as also in the greater development of human activity.

The Yellow Sea, with a breadth of 300 miles, has an evenly level floor, and the average depth of its muddy water is scarcely 100 feet. Opposite the mountainous coast of Korea lies the uniform alluvial coast of China. Further inwards the two mountainous peninsulas of Shan-tung and Lian-tung project from either shore, the former an isolated mass, the latter (equally with Korea itself) part of a more extended system, of which the "Long White Mountain," on the frontier between Korea and the Amur Region, is the culminating point. Both peninsulas have steep coasts, rich in bays. They approach to within 65 miles of each other, and divide the Yellow Sea into an outer and inner basin, the former open towards the ocean, the latter a broad closed bay stretching over 250 miles from north-east to south-west. While the southern half or Gulf of Pechili falls within China proper, the northern or Gulf of Lian-tung encroaches upon Manchuria, the cradle of the present Chinese dynasty. On the one side lies Peking, on the other Mukden, each 90 miles distant from the nearest point of the coast. The shores of the inner Yellow Sea are extremely unfavourable to navigation. Apart from the two peninsulas, which, though rocky, are—on this side especially—devoid of good harbours, they are composed of alluvial land with a seaward continuation in the form of banks and shoals. The rivers which bring down the silt allow, on account of the bars at their mouths, but doubtful access to vessels of slight draught. On two of them, however, are the ports thrown open to foreigners: Tien-tsin on the Pei-ho, and Newchwang on the Lian-chu. The roads off the eastern half of the north coast can only be used with a calm sea. From these geographical features, it is evident that the inner Yellow Sea affords an eminent basis of attack on the life-nerve of the Chinese Colossus in its present condition. It was only after the storming of Taku in 1860, and the subsequent taking of Peking, that the need of stronger defences for the coasts was recognized, and the narrow entrance guarded by the construction of naval ports on the two peninsulas, facilitated by the previous surveys of the British Admiralty. Of these Wei-hai-wei, on the north coast of Shan-tung, loses some of its importance by its too great distance from the straits; while Port Arthur, in the bay of Lushun, occupies a most favourable position in the extreme south-west of Lian-tung.

The division between east and west, which the Yellow Sea as a whole occasions, is repeated also in the direction of the interior of the continent. In the centre of the north-west coast lies Shar-hai-kwan, the last fortified gate in the great wall, and this forms the dividing-point between China to the west and Manchuria to the east. The latter begins as a narrow strip 40 miles wide, north of which, and divided from it by a palisade, is the higher land of Mongolia, stretching far westwards to the north of China proper. Where the coast bends to the south-east, the limit between Mongolia and Manchuria retains its north-east direction, subsequently bending northwards and following the Khingan range to the Amur. The latter country thus widens out, and includes both the great plateau traversed by the lower course of the Lian, and the mountainous land of which Lian-tung is the termination. The plain through which the river flows has a great importance historically. With an area equal to that of Westphalia, its surface includes some fertile tracts, alternating with sandy stretches and barren terraces, varied with extinct volcanoes, and forms the centre of the southern province of Manchuria. This it is which takes up the function of the Yellow Sea as a division between two distinct regions, lying east and west of one another. To the west soon begins the uniform, dry, and treeless plateau of Mongolia, the home of nomads and their flocks, bounded to the south by the rich cultivated lands of China proper; to the east is the broken mountain-land, in great part still covered with thick woods, and traversed by numerous streams, the valley

floors scanty, but formed of rich alluvium. The mountainous character is most pronounced to the south, giving place towards the Sungari, Ussuri, and Amur to a park-like landscape. The whole region is favoured with copious summer rain, though for the most part dry in winter, and, with the exception of the southern peninsulas, is a land for hunting-tribes and in part for agriculturists.

This difference in the character of the lands is matched by a contrast in the population. While the western uplands have always been the home of a Turko-Mongolian pastoral race, and the lands within the Great Wall have been occupied for at least four thousand years by the Chinese agriculturists, we find in the east a group of races known collectively as Tunguses. The vicissitudes of fortune have brought one or another of these into prominence at different times, that of the Manchus being the most important at the present day. To the south-east are still other races, settled as agriculturists, like the Chinese, who have developed a distinct individuality in their sharply defined habits. Such are the Koreans, and, in a still more marked degree, the Japanese. Whilst these have hitherto taken but a small part in the world's history, the case has been quite otherwise with the Tunguses. One tribe after another has occupied the valley of the Lian, assimilated some degree of Chinese culture, and, issuing forth either against China or Western Asia, has founded a world-empire of vast extent, though short duration. Such were the Kinin, or Siempi, in the second century A.D.; the Tuan-Tuan in the sixth; the Khitan at the opening of the tenth, whose western branch, the Karakhitai, gave the name Cathay to the empire of the Mongols; the Ruchi, who overthrew the eastern Khitans, and founded the Kin dynasty of China; and finally the Manchu, who, during the Mongol supremacy, arose in the forest region of the Sungari, and, gradually gaining adherents, overthrew Mukden, and in 1644 established the reigning Ta-Tsin dynasty in China. From early times an emigration of Chinese into the valley of the Lian has been maintained. This has increased more and more during the last few centuries, and has reached as far as the Amur. The cultivation of the soil, to which the Manchus have never been given, has fallen into the hands of the Chinese, who have also introduced their language and culture. Politically, however, the country has remained distinct, being directly subject to the emperor; all civil and military posts, as well as the possession of the soil, remaining in the hands of the Manchus, of whom the army also is exclusively composed.

Manchuria thus stands as an intermediate link between China and the more distant kingdom of Korea, which in its turn forms a land-bridge in the direction of Japan. There have been few times apparently in which China, in the consciousness of being the central civilizing power, has not laid claim to Manchuria, as to all countries within the circle of her horizon. This claim has been justified when, as at present, a dynasty derived from the Tungus races has held the throne of China, or in the rarer cases when China herself has subdued those lands. A certain political, as well as racial, independence has, however, always been maintained, and has been fostered by the emperor in his own interests. His relations with Korea have been much more distant. They could only be drawn closer when China exercised an actual supremacy over Manchuria; and the claim that Korea has been a revolted state of China ever since, in the time of Wu-Wang (1122 B.C.), a prince of the previous dynasty fled thither and introduced agriculture and silk-production, can only be ascribed to the self-conceit of the Chinese.

Beyond this event, little is known of the early history of Korea. Among the numerous inroads made by Tungus races from the north, that of the Kauli, who subdued the whole land, and gave their name to it, was the most noteworthy. After this the heart of the land was little affected by these inroads, and the boasted

Mongolian conquest in 1264 can have had little solid foundation. An invasion by the Japanese in 1592 led to a five years' struggle, in which the Chinese were summoned to drive out the invaders, whose return home, however, was in the end occasioned by the death of their leader. Soon after, the isolation of Korea by the erection of the neutral zone took place, and the land has since borne the easy Chinese yoke, of which an annual interchange of presents and the maintenance of embassies on either side are the visible tokens.

It is interesting to observe the different ways in which the advent of European influence has affected the three peoples. China is a Colossus, which, in spite of change of dynasty, revolution, and other vicissitudes of fortune, has remained the same, and, with the exception of the coast districts, has been entirely untouched by intercourse with foreigners. The pillage of the Imperial Summer Palace did more than anything else to open the eyes of the rulers to the military superiority of Europeans, but in no single other particular was this superiority recognized, and even this defect was thought remediable by the introduction of European munitions of war, and instructors in their use. The requisite warlike spirit was not, however, to be supplied so easily, for the majority of the Chinese of the present day are wanting in every quality which goes to make a soldier. The merchant and trading classes, though possessed of some excellent qualities, need not be considered, as the army is not recruited from them. There remain the bulk of the working population—and as workers the Chinese are not to be matched; they are in the highest degree industrious, trustworthy, and contented with little—and the mandarins, both civil and military. The former do not, in the writer's opinion, at all deserve the ill name they have acquired in Europe. His relations with them have always been satisfactory, and on the whole the highest places are filled by the most fit. The same cannot be said of the military mandarins. The greater number are devoid of ambition, negligent in enforcing discipline, and fraudulent, especially in the particular of drawing pay for troops which do not exist. They exhibit defects which spring from the general characteristics of the nation, and unfit them for becoming good soldiers. The Chinese as a whole are wanting in active personal courage and chivalrous feeling. The inhabitants of the province of Hunan, truculent in disposition, and pre-eminent for their hatred of foreigners, undoubtedly make the best soldiers, and under good leading might supply a really effective contingent. This holds with still greater force of the Manchus, but it is hardly possible that the two races would combine for a common object. Even the best-drilled troops, who have never yet met an equally well-armed foe, would without doubt succumb to an opponent animated by a true war-like spirit.

Such an opponent is present in the Japanese. These are the exact opposite of the Chinese. Quick at seizing new ideas and adapting them to the peculiarities of their own temperament, they have transformed and carried forward on independent lines both the material and philosophical culture received from without. Thus they have of late years not only acquired scientific knowledge, but have also (in some cases) joined in the building up of the same; and in military affairs, too, they have shown the same readiness. With this is joined a chivalrous spirit, developed in the vicissitudes of the national history, an heroic devotion to duty, and an extraordinary readiness for self-sacrifice. Energetic in action, the Japanese show no trace of ferocity.

While the activity of the millions of China always keeps in the same groove, the modern history of Japan shows a constant inner development. Individuals and nation alike have been stirred by an ambition to advance, and, their own land being too small to give this ambition free scope, they have been compelled to look beyond the sea, and here the first land which presents itself is Korea.

In this country we find a race established which differs alike from Chinese and Japanese in features, speech, and writing. Whence it has come we know not. At the market of Kanlimon two types were observed: the one, to which belonged the merchants and officials, tall, well-developed, and intelligent, presenting a favourable contrast to the Chinese for the searching questions by which they manifested their thirst for knowledge; the other, including the working-classes as a whole, of small stature, with broad round Tungus faces, apparently inhabiting only the northern parts of the land. Those who have had the best opportunities of knowing the Koreans, speak highly of their fine physique, good manners, hospitality, and general culture. Whilst orderly and industrious, they are not given to excessive toil or arduous undertakings, and have no trading-instincts, but live an unambitious, contented life, ready to help one another, and attached to the land of their rulers. In the defence of their country they have shown a high courage and contempt for death. Still, the race has remained in a backward condition, which cannot be wholly explained by the want of fertility of the soil, and the attacks to which they have been exposed on both sides. Many elements of Chinese culture, *e.g.* silk production, the manufacture of porcelain, and cultivation of tea, in the transmission of which to the Japanese they have themselves acted as intermediaries, have been since lost; but that this is not due to want of intelligence is shown by the fact that, alone among their neighbours, the Koreans possess an alphabetic writing.

Korea has suffered, and not gained, by the advent of foreign trade, for the supply of the new wants developed thereby has drained the country, first of cash, and next of means of subsistence, there being no industries to supply other objects of exchange. In herself Korea does not possess the spirit of enterprise necessary to progress, nor is help to be looked for from China in this direction. From the influence, however, of an energetic race like the Japanese, who, in the present war, have shown that they have assimilated not merely the material advantages, but the humanitarian ideas of European civilization, both the material and moral elevation of the people might well ensue.

In the present war, the motives for which are now of small importance, China had the advantages of a land-route to Korea, while Japan could only send troops thither by sea. In the first engagements, however, between the opposing forces, the characteristics of the two nations at once made themselves manifest. Both by land and by sea the Chinese proved slow in their movements and wanting in any definite strategical plan. The Japanese showed themselves quick of attack, energetic in action, well disciplined, and well led; and this independently of the co-operation of Europeans, which was enjoyed by the Chinese at sea. A great contrast is visible, also, in the moral conduct of the war by the two combatants.

The results of uninterrupted success on the part of the Japanese cannot yet be estimated. The establishment of Japanese suzerainty over Korea would afford, as has been already said, what seems to be the only means of industrial development for the latter, and would coincide with the interests of the West-European powers. That the ambition of Japan would not stop here, but would attempt the subjugation of Manchuria also, is unlikely in view of the extent of Chinese settlement in that country. So long as the present dynasty reigns in China, the Manchus would resent any intrusion of a foreign power into their land, and in any case the difficulties in the way of its subjugation would be enormous. For China the taking of the capital might mean a change of dynasty, with the resulting violent convulsions, giving place in time to a condition of peace and new advance. To be beaten by Japan would be a more effectual lesson than if the victor were a European power, and would lead to the recognition of the fact that more is needed for the perfection of an army than the possession of war-

like munitions. The advance would be slow, but military effectiveness would be the result.

The independence of the Chinese empire is unassailable. Even were Japan, as other Asiatic peoples have done ere now, to establish a prince of her land on the throne of Peking, the new dynasty would be in reality Chinese, as has been the case with the Mongolian and other rulers of the country, which would still remain the old Chinese empire. The saying of a former American resident at Peking was a correct one: if one tries to overthrow China, and inflicts on her what seem to be the deadliest wounds, it is all the same as if one whipped the sea.

THE MONTHLY RECORD.

THE SOCIETY.

Edward Gibbon as a Geographer.—Mr. Clements R. Markham, President of the Society, made the following remarks at the conclusion of the technical meeting held in the Society's map-room on November 19:—

"I cannot adjourn the meeting without alluding to the part we have a right to take in commemorating the centenary of that great historian, the author of the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.' Edward Gibbon was a member of the African Association, the only representative of a Geographical Society which existed in his time, and which eventually merged into our Society. We may, therefore, look upon him as one of ourselves. As an historian whose plan extended over so vast an area, Gibbon was of necessity a geographer. His readers know that D'Anville and the other great geographical writers of his century were his constant companions. His sketch of the geography of Arabia is a masterpiece of description, and numerous allusions prove his familiarity alike with the geographical writers of antiquity and with the travellers of his own time. Without such touches—as, for instance, his pictures of Syria, of Persia, of the Bosphorus, and of the Ukraine—his narrative would lose much of its clearness and still more of its charm. No one but a deeply read geographer could have written the 'Decline and Fall.' It is, therefore, the duty of geographers to add their tribute to the commemoration of the centenary of our associate Edward Gibbon, the illustrious historian, and accomplished student of geography."

The Session.—In addition to the papers already announced, it is hoped that early in the new year, Sir William Macgregor, K.C.M.G., the Administrator of British New Guinea, will give the Society an account of the extensive and important geographical work which he has accomplished during his six years' residence on the island. Sir William has been home for only a few weeks during the last twenty years, and his present stay will be of short duration. Mr. Aubyn Trevor-Battye will, at the meeting in December, give an account of the results of his observations during his long stay on Kolguof Island. Mr. H. J. Mackinder, M.A., has promised a paper, likely to be of interest, on "A
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