

CHAPTER XVI

SEVEN PERILS OF HUMANITY—NUMBER FIVE. THE YELLOW PERIL

FROM time to time the terrors of the world have been aroused at the dreadful thought of the Mongolian race in arms against the rest of us passengers on the good ship *Earth*. As the barriers between nation and nation and between continent and continent become worn thin by science in eliminating time and distance and the strangeness of people to people, this fear must again and again rise to disturb us as we career through space, embarked with these yellow millions on this huge air-ship and doomed to sail with them willy-nilly, as long as *Earth* shall last.

Let us look the problem in the face. How many of them are there? Chinese, Koreans and Japanese, with their fringing outposts, 600,000,000—a third of all us passengers.

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Are they strong people or weak, intelligent or stupid, good passengers or bad? They are strong people. They are intelligent. As to whether or not they are good or bad passengers depends on what the future shall bring forth.

In the main and as to their masses they are backward in all that makes up a full and complex human life. They are very poor and if our beliefs are correct as to the validity of our sciences and arts and literatures as necessary evidences of enlightenment, and steps toward it, they are, except for a few thousand of them, unenlightened.

As they are poor and miserable, one expects to find them multiplying with great rapidity—and we do so find them. They breed like rabbits. The four hundred millions of Chinese have a birth-rate of fifty to sixty a thousand per annum.

The yellow terror, to us of the western world, has usually taken the form of fear of these numberless millions in arms against the white race, joined, perhaps by the browns and

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blacks of India and Africa. Just now the white race seems to have convinced itself that while the Japanese are invincible soldiers, the rest of the yellows are hopeless from a military viewpoint. And with the belief that the Chinese will not fight, goes the conviction that the Japanese have lost the confidence of China, and thus have forfeited their prospect of becoming the military teachers of the Mongolian race.

Both these optimistic ideas are fallacies. They are based on merely temporary and surface facts. Ten years hence may see the Japanese and Chinese cheek by jowl; and ten years are an instant only. There is no doubt that any power controlling China, and possessed of money to pay soldiers, can recruit them in any number of millions desired from the sturdy masses of the Flowery Republic; and the deeds already done by Chinese soldiers properly trained, well paid and adequately officered, show that such an army is quite as capable of subjugating the Eurasian continent as were any of the old-time migra-

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tions westward from China, of yellow men in arms.

There is more reason to fear the yellow race in arms now than ever before. Japan has mastered our arts and sciences. China is on the way to pass through the same sort of awakening. This yellow peril, therefore, has what the Mohammedan peril lacks—knowledge of the modern game of war, finance, science and exploitation.

But the military threat in the yellow race is not its most fearful portent, daunting as it is. Its greatest danger to the rest of the world lies in the demands on the earth's surface by the yellow men, by reason of their tremendous rate of multiplication. They are like a gas in a closed vessel—enlarge the vessel, and the gas fills it immediately. The Chinese already are in a constant state of famine from mere pressure of population on the power of the land to feed it. There are many unused opportunities for supporting population, but the moment the usable land is increased by a square mile the awful birth-rate will people

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it in a moment of the nation's life, and the case is as bad as before. The case of Japan throws light on this. By bringing into use all lands having a slope of less than fifteen degrees farms may be provided to accommodate the population for the empire until it reaches 86,742,388, instead of the present 51,742,398, without further crowding. The new lands will not be so good as the old, but maybe it will be possible to better the Nipponese farming practises, splendid as they are, so as to make the enlarged area support as many people to the square mile as the present cultivated area does.

But by the time this land can be reclaimed the people will be bred to fill it up. There are 3.4 people to every cultivated acre in Japan now. The average farm in Japan is 2.6 acres and supports a fraction less than nine people.

This means that as long as their birth-rate keeps up the yellow race must either find new lands or remain miserable. They will continue to murder their girl babies. They will still as now be able to think of little save

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food. They must still carry the excrement from latrines, mud from canal-bottoms, forest leaves from mountain tops and dung from roads to fertilize their lands. They must live lives stooped to the service of the rice and never have "the upward looking and the light." And they must continue looking out over the world on the lands of Australia, of New Zealand, of California, of Mexico and South America, with longing and with need—a need which must bring on wars, perhaps the greatest the world has seen, when they try to supply them. This pressure of population on land is the real and portentous yellow peril.

And there seems little hope of any let-up in the birth-rate for generations to come. The ordinary tendency of poor and benighted peoples to spawn is intensified by the beliefs of the yellows—and beliefs have more to do with birth-rates than does the Spencerian factor of plenty of food. The ancestor-worshiper must have a son to offer sacrifices to the gods or he can not be happy in the spirit world. So he thinks. They breed here that they may not

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be lost hereafter. So long as this pernicious belief persists we can be sure that there will be in the world a yellow peril—a peril that may fill the seas with armadas, crimson the waves with blood and send hosts greater than those of Attila, to the very hearts of Europe and America. Enlightenment must come or danger will remain.