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### THE WHITE INVASION OF CHINA

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*"It is not dense population but the causes which prevent social organization from taking its natural development . . . that keep millions just on the verge of starvation; and every now and again force millions beyond it."*—HENRY GEORGE, "Progress and Poverty," p. 109, ed. 1881.

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Treaty Ports—Self-government of White Merchants—The Open Door Policy

CHINA'S earliest experience of a permanent settlement by white men within her jurisdiction was nearly four centuries ago (1557) when Portugal secured a lease of Macao near Canton, and, therefore, within the tropics. Their last experience was in the North, when the German Empire acquired a lease of territory at Kiao Chow in 1897. The English occupation of Wei-hai-Wei, in 1898, may be regarded as a direct consequence of Russia's seizure of Port Arthur, to say nothing of Germany's action.

The Portuguese occupation of Macao was originally regarded with unconcern, because the supremacy of the Chinese Government, as landlord, was not questioned; and the little bit of land occupied (formerly an island, but now a peninsula) never represented more than a trading station to the Government of Peking. Even when, in 1881, Portugal was granted sovereign jurisdiction in that then decrepit port, the

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concession represented no menace whatever to the Chinese Government.

In 1841, England, as a war measure, seized the barren and practically uninhabited island of Hong-Kong, in the immediate neighborhood of Canton and almost in sight of Macao. In this instance no Chinaman had occasion to feel that the soil of his country had been profaned, for the bulk of the islands which stud this section of the China seas had been a species of freebooters' Paradise, and the presence of England was the immediate signal for such a restoration of commercial confidence that this inhospitable rock was quickly peopled with such a swarm of Chinamen as seriously to embarrass the authorities on the subject of elbow-room. After the war of 1860, in which French and English troops marched jointly to Peking over the road once more occupied in 1900 by a white military combination, England added to Hong-Kong a small strip of territory, where now ship-building yards, vast dry-docks, storehouses, and steamship wharves testify to the commercial character of this annexation. But even this proved inadequate to the commercial needs of this marvellously successful colony, and in 1898 another strip was added to it, about equal to that which Germany had occupied at Kiao Chow the year before.

Whatever the mandarins may have felt—for, of course, their corrupt system demands the total exclusion of foreigners—there is no doubt that the people in general, from the great bankers of Canton to the poorest boatmen in Hong-Kong, welcomed the change as a promise of better things.

Mr. Stewart Lockhart, an eminent sinologist, who

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was entrusted with the task of marking out this frontier, told me that during his delicate and dangerous mission he was, by all but the mandarin class, greeted with cordial inquiries as to how soon they might come under the British flag. We may take it almost as a proved proposition that, when a British subject is molested in China or the British flag insulted, the cause is to be found either in the instigation of native officials or gross tactlessness on the part of the victim.

On the occasion of my first trip to China (1876) the treaty ports were much alarmed by the recent strange murder of Margary, whose knowledge of Chinese and tact in handling the natives fitted him eminently for the task of crossing China to the frontiers of India. At the time of his murder the Chinese Government loudly disclaimed any share in it—on the contrary, pretended that he was the victim of mob fanaticism. But this brave man's subsequently published letters, coupled with the legal investigation that followed, prove satisfactorily that throughout his journey to India he had no occasion to take precautions regarding his safety, and that he was murdered on the return journey by official instigation.

White man's colonization in China is of two kinds—the one represented by France, Russia, and Germany, the other by Great Britain, the United States, and half a dozen other European nations which individually represent no great colonial ambition, but who silently support the policy of the Anglo-Saxon. I refer particularly to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, and the German element that is outside of official and military influence. France, in

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South China, introduces her own administrative system—just as she does in Algiers. The Russians at Vladivostock and Port Arthur shut out alien enterprise still more effectively. The Germans at Kiao Chow proclaim the open door in theory, but in practice they have secured a door whose hinges are very rusty save to Germans in uniform. The Anglo-Saxon forces, on the other hand, have colonized China from Hong-Kong to Tientsin, at so-called treaty ports, where the Chinese Government has at various times during the past sixty years conceded land and waterfront privileges for commercial purposes. These concessions were first acquired and exploited by English and American merchants, although under treaties that permitted the rest of the world to share on equal terms. All the world has profited by the expedition of Commodore Perry to Japan, in 1853, and also by the successive steps which England has subsequently taken in order to establish security for European merchants throughout the Far East.

Japan has abundantly proved that she is one of the great civilized powers of the world, and therefore white man's exceptional position there has been wisely abolished. But in China the Government still persists on so low a level of moral official activity that we have no guaranty for the maintenance of treaty rights excepting the perpetual presence of gun-boats.

It is due to the habits of self-government, instinctive in English and Americans, that such ports as Tientsin, Cheefoo, Shanghai, etc., present to-day pictures of excellent municipal government contrasting vividly with the filthy Chinese communities round about.

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The so-called "treaty ports" of my acquaintance need not fear comparison with settlements of equal size anywhere. These "foreign concessions," though nominally conducted by Consuls of the Powers and perpetually visited by war-ships, are, nevertheless, in practice, thrown back upon their own energies for the municipal government they enjoy, and, above all, for protection against sudden outbursts of native violence.

Shanghai, for instance, produces the impression of a model seaport town, whose citizens secure vastly more in return for the taxes they pay than do the voters of New York or Chicago. This beautiful metropolis of the Yangtse-Kiang Valley has its whole water front laid out as a pleasure garden, producing the happy result that we might enjoy in New York, did our Riverside Park extend completely round the island. In warm evenings the families congregate here and listen to beautiful music discoursed by Filipino performers, who in this part of the world are, musically, as eminent as are the Mexicans in the North American continent. There is a splendid "country club" for recreation, where a race-track is laid out, and where polo, tennis, cricket, and other sports furnish recreation to both sexes.

On the Woosung is an excellently appointed rowing and yacht club, and races are constantly being held, to which additional zest is imparted by international rivalry. The streets of Shanghai are, even in the slums, kept as clean as those of an European park, and the roads are patrolled by mounted men, whose vast turbans, flashing eyes, and mighty mustachios pro-

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claim them warriors from the hills of India—the redoubtable Sikhs. The Chinaman has a peculiar respect for these warriors, for they combine the stoicism of the English “Bobby” with an Oriental cunning superior to any other imported article of that character. There are also Chinese policemen, and, above them all, white inspectors.

Shanghai, besides, is thoroughly well organized in the matter of a local volunteer military force, fire department, benevolent societies, and the many unobtrusive institutions which reflect the self-governing citizen. It is an anomalous colony, this treaty port of Shanghai, for it is a government part Chinese and partly at the mercy of a committee consisting of the consuls of different nations. All the elements of discord and official chaos are present, every nation has its own post-office, and the utmost confusion might be anticipated under a system of this kind. The consuls are not only postmasters, but they also fill the position of judges over their own people, and in cases where Chinese are involved they sit on the same bench with a Chinese colleague.

To-day the system is manifestly absurd and should be abolished in the interests of the colonists themselves. Shanghai, for instance, should be endowed with enough territory to expand according to the growing needs of the white population—say a radius of forty or fifty miles inland. This would enable her citizens to control the sanitary drainage, the building of roads, and the safety of the port, with some degree of efficiency, and at the same time give them the means of dredging the bar at the mouth of the Woosung,

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which at present threatens to exclude ocean-going steamers.

This great port has been built up by the enterprise of white colonists, who have come to this part of the world with their families for the purpose of bettering themselves—just as others have gone to Calcutta or Durban or Demerara. The merchants of Shanghai sorely need more territory over which to exercise police control, and a removal of the many restrictions which now arise from having a committee of conflicting consuls to manage their affairs.

The Shanghai republic is ripe for local independence under a general European guaranty. It should, in the interests of trade, be raised to the position of a free port—a Venice of the Far East—a Hamburg, as it was before the Bismarckian era.

All classes of the community suffer under the present system—none, perhaps, more than the Americans, owing to the present and past manner of recruiting our consular force. When I visited China in 1876, the American Consul-General was a man who was regarded as a thief by the merchant community, and, shortly afterward, was sent to the penitentiary for having stolen money from the mails.

On my second visit to Shanghai, in 1898, the chief American Consul was one whose appointment had elicited the protest of every respectable merchant in Minneapolis, his native town. The only training for his high post had been gained as manager of a professional base-ball club; otherwise his career had been that of the average small politician.

He had been publicly slapped in the Shanghai club

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by his predecessor in office, under circumstances which occasioned no regret in the mind of the club committee! And be it said in parenthesis that, in the Far East, when a white man sinks so low that he cannot hold the good opinion of his fellow white men, he is not likely to prove a valuable public servant.

From our point of view, consuls have no business in colonies which are officially designated "treaty ports." If China is a civilized power, in the sense that we exchange diplomatic agents on equal terms, then our consuls should be sent to Chinese towns, and not to white settlements. If, on the other hand, our consuls are afraid to take up residence in the midst of Chinese communities, let us recognize the fact frankly, do away with the farce of receiving Chinese diplomatic agents, and treat the white communities in China as colonies in the land of the barbarian. To-day the white man is exposed to daily insult in the settlements which his energy has made prosperous. At Chefoo, Dr. Corbett, the oldest missionary, told me that no white lady could traverse the town alone because of the foul language she had to hear. In that port white energy has made clean avenues and built solid houses—yet the settlers are confined to a very small area and are, as it were, besieged by a vast Chinese army, through whose midst one must pass before the open country can be reached.

At Canton the white community is herded on an island little bigger than an Atlantic liner, and from one year's end to the other the wives of white merchants hardly know what it is to take a real walk in the country.



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Tientsin has been built up, like Johannesburg, through white enterprise, and yet that settlement on the Peiho, like its sister at Shanghai, in the whole course of its existence has received no aid from the Chinese Government in the way of keeping the water approaches navigable. In 1876 I steamed up to Tientsin as well as to Shanghai. In 1898 both these ports were unequal to furnishing the requisite water for sea-going craft.

In the present chaotic state of Chinese politics, where international rivalry makes the situation still more uncertain, the duty of England and America is clear—in so far as they are actuated solely by an interest in commercial expansion. They should at once arrange for the local independence under international guarantee of such settlements as Shanghai, Chefoo and Tientsin, together with such territory in the neighborhood as may be found necessary for the health of white families.

When Germany seized Kiao Chow no white people were settled there who might have furnished a pretext. She dispossessed the Chinese already there and proposes to create in Shantung a white community, German in government and German in speech.

But self-government is not likely to be tolerated by the Prussian eagle, and without self-government it is not likely that German merchants now established in Hong-Kong and Shanghai will move to Kiao Chow.

The international guarantee which I have proposed implies no menace to the integrity of China—certainly no more than is now involved in the pres-

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ent treaty ports. There is no probability that the white race will ever overspread China—or ever desire to—in our time. We entertain but a legitimate desire to enjoy with her people the same trade guaranties that we have with Japan. The people of the “treaty ports” ask land for no military object, and desire only what is absolutely necessary—for every mile means increased cost of policing. But what they demand to-day is justified by the fact that China is as yet incapable of governing herself, let alone affording a government fit for a white man. The white settlements, if they are to prosper, must partake somewhat of enclaves within the territory of the Chinese Empire, limited to half a dozen points easily reached by gun-boats.

In China the white man has not, and cannot for many generations, have social intercourse with the inhabitants—the gulf separating their domestic institutions is too vast to be bridged over in our time. In all China I know of no club in which Chinese and whites can associate on equal terms. In Japan, on the other hand, I have found happiness in the social atmosphere which they breathe, have felt myself surrounded with ideas regarding honor, cleanliness, woman, and morality, often superior to those we preach and try to practise. At the principal social club of Tokio, Japanese and Anglo-Saxons meet on terms of perfect equality—for myself I should say that the Anglo-Saxon in Japan feels, socially, more at home than in several places of southern Europe where the inhabitants are called white by courtesy.

It should not be the policy of the white nations to

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dismember China. Let us bear in mind that in 1900, when the allied armies entered Tientsin, the Christian nations all tolerated plundering. The Japanese General, Fukushima, alone set an example of soldierly self-restraint. It is time we sent missionaries to the barracks of so-called Christian soldiers.

I can recall the energy with which General Fukushima, as early as 1898, discountenanced all notions of a partition of China—insisting with a volume of cogent reasoning that her integrity should be preserved, and she should be led by persistent pressure to improve her government.

It should be manifestly absurd to work toward the disruption of a race entity like China at a time when history so clearly demonstrates the folly of similar movements. This century has been eminently one of national reorganization on the lines of racial affinity—the unity of Italy is one instance—that of Germany is but half-complete—Russia's experience in Poland but marks the folly of partition on such a plan. China is just now very foul politically, very helpless as a fighting force, and strangely dull to all national aspiration. But these are conditions that are in process of change, and we may be sure that a partition of the country between the great military powers would result in a Chinese Poland against which many Russias would prove ineffectual.

To-day, with the help of Japan, the Anglo-Saxon element can do in China a great work for civilization—one that will earn us the gratitude of the Chinese themselves. We can guarantee their integrity at the same time that we guarantee that of our colonies on the Yangtse, the Peiho, and elsewhere. We can take

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over in trust their postal and telegraphic service, as we have already earned their gratitude by administering their customs. We can build their railways and high-roads, without in the least impairing their sovereign rights, or displaying a hostile flag. This service will necessarily employ an enormous number of natives, who will thus familiarize themselves with honesty, punctuality, and justice in the conduct of great enterprises. All those who supervise these departments of public improvement will be, as in the case of the maritime customs, nominal officials of the Chinese Government, and all the revenues will be credited to the empire or spent for its benefit. In the same manner the canals of China must be cleaned out and once more made navigable, and here again the enormous number of coolies that will find employment promises to rally in support of the white man an immense public sentiment.

We know how much has been done for security in Mexico by the invasion of the American railway, with its army of employés trained to punctuality, honesty, and fair play. It is little exaggeration to say that the locomotive has been worth, to our neighbor beyond the Rio Grande, as much as a gigantic police force—an element against which revolutionary agitation proves futile. People don't quarrel with their bread and butter, as a rule, and in China the white man will find little obstacle so long as his progress is marked, not by missionary stations and the graves of soldiers—but by the industrial triumphs in which the Chinese themselves have a share as wage-earners. The locomotive will conquer China yet—all depends upon the coolness and courage of the driver.