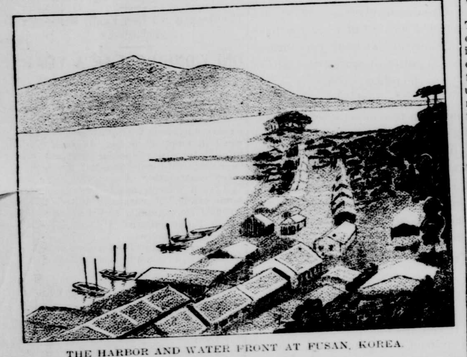
The Asiatic Coast from Cheefoo to Vladivostok

A Pen Picture of the Scene of Naval Operations in the War Now Raging in the East

TO most minds the north of the Asiatic coast, beginning at Chefoo and including the Island of Saghalien, where the war now rages, is a sad and depressing region, a fact that even birds, supporting this view, have discovered, for I have pulled about for a day in a canoe in Barraconta harbor (which might be an unmolested Eden for them so far as man would be concerned) without hearing a sound to break the silence resting on the millions of acres of pines and the still, calm waters.

I have somewhat carelessly named Chefoo, though it lies far north of the doubling round end of Korea, for the reason that it is opposite to Port Arthur, and not far from the mouth of the Pei-ho, the Taku forts, Tientsin, and Peking, a region more than once the scene of naval attempts—Seoul and Chemulpo over the way; Mongolia to the northwest, Manchuria north—a vast region inside the Russian littoral.

Chefoo, sometimes known as the Brighton of Shanghai, has a fine beach and the relations here with the Chinese seem pleasant enough. The winter in the Gulf of Pechili, and such periods when the "stormy winds do blow," is rather a subject for travelers' tales as to the junks and mariners lost in the typhoons. Let us go south and east; Port Hamilton has now ceased to be England's, and no one else seems keen on getting it; I have seen a Korean tribute boat there, but the amount collected was probably of little use to the exchequer—if it ever reached the treasury—the people being poor and degraded.



THE HARBOR AND WATER FRONT AT FUSAN, KOREA.

Quelport is a big island, which we will pass. Tsusima is Japanese, though the people seem different somewhat, and taller. On turning the corner of Korea we come to Fusan, a place open to all trade; it is very accessible, and possibly the most satisfactory place at which to stay, in Korea; at the head of the harbor is the Korean walled city, a poor place, and only significant as containing the royal granaries of rice. The scenery here, especially the view through the door of the Japanese temple, is good. As we go north it comes to us in varied ways that the west of the Korean peninsula is cut off from the east by a ridge of mountains. Along the coast we find Song Cain, Ping-yang, Mokpo, all coming on as trading ports until we reach Gensan (Worsan) with its Japanese settlement; the soil here is good, the cattle fairly so, and there is a road to Chemulpo; it would be a bold cyclist or motorist who would face it. The people inland are unsophisticated and inoffensive.

Here more than elsewhere the Jap is the cock of the walk, the Korean being in comparison, tall, leggy, and "hopeless," with the mild repose of decadence, suggesting, in comparison, the Cochin-China and the Bantam. At Gensan, a Japanese inside the compound rudely went for a big Korean trumpeter who dared to move, from curiosity, while I was sketching him Here is, however—or was—a Korean official residence decorated with some taste, where I with some others was entertained to luncheon, cooked by a Chinese ex-man-o'-war cook, and including plum-pudding, with copious libations for those who desired, principally of sweet vermuth. The star comique of the district performed on the tight-rope, and mimicked many kinds of men, hunters and priests included, with much skill; geisha sang, poems were composed—all these delights were in honor of the king's birthday.

No one seems to say "Poor Korea," yet it is a poor, distressful country, and deserves, for what it is worth, some sympathy. And now we slide into the Russian littoral. Over the large bay lies Vladivostok, its latitude being that of the Gap (Straits of Tsugaru), between Japan proper and Isle of Yeyo; Hakodate, with its storm-stones on the roof, being on the south of the latter. Vladivostok has a long and narrow harbor—a reason for it being described as the Golden Horn is stated to be that gold lies in the hills; but the more poetical and usually accepted one is that it embodies the idea of the long-coveted Golden Horn of Constantinople. One may state that many of the places, headlands, bays, harbors, have four or more names—the native, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, French, English, and Russian. Vladivostok was of old, to us, Port May. Much of its beauty has gone with the trees on the surrounding hills. It possesses one good graving dock and a floating dock, and it is understood that the Russian fleet is much handicapped by want of additional docking facilities.

Of late many substantial buildings have been added; on my last visit there plank was still much in evidence in buildings, pathways, everywhere—and "ramshackle" would describe most things. Dust, again, was a prevailing nuisance. The navy was, on the whole, supreme; the governor being an admiral, the band that played in a kiosk in the official gardens (the Russian Alameda) was a bluejacket band, pickets were "blues," and smart naval officers in uniform, and much on duty, were mounted. The club is naval. There was, as at Portsmouth, a military governor, but he seemed overshadowed by the sailor. I think any fair-minded foreigner who did not arouse suspicions—a point, too, on which I don't think the Russian is fussy—will bear witness to the kindliness of the average Russian, not only here but even more so at the smaller settlements where the advent of a stranger is a God-send—possessing tobacco, some spirits and dollars for barter for "little veals" and potatoes.

Although in politics—territorial expansion—we may clash, the Russian is only doing what other nations have done or are doing, and admitting that he certainly has not a very straightforward mode of gaining his ends, still, as an individual, he possesses virtues, kindlinesses, an absence of bitterness, and resignation. Personally one gets in touch with the best of the Russian officers; whilst with the Japanese, plucky and efficient little fellow as he is, when not on duty he becomes a typical Japanese in his home, and consequently out of sight. The Russian soldier is stolid and uneducated, still he is a contented, merry, and singing animal, with much of the dignity due to bearing his hard life with pathetic uncomplaining. At Vladivostok mufti is not seen, and some of the ladies affect the velvet tiara and much-embroidered national dress. There is an appearance of poverty over all, in stores and equipment, even clothing with the men; fortunately they are hardy, and numerous enough to admit of the weaker members going under.

Fatalism and consequent resignation reigns through the East. Nicolajewsk is at the extreme north where the river Amur divides Russia from Manchuria; some thirty miles up is the settlement where the river's width is nine miles; it has a cathedral and official buildings. However, Vladivostok has taken the narrow island of Saghalien is opposite. The coast between Nicolajewsk and Vladivostok has numerous ports, small and large. Possiet, a horse-breeding place, Pique, etc., Castacei Bay, Olga Vladamir, and numerous isolated posts one with a pathetic little graveyard in which lies a British naval officer, accidentally killed whilst shooting. Barraconta Harbor lies in an enormous region of pines, but some of the other places are comparatively bare. On the whole of this coast we found small animals, as well as long-haired tigers, deer and wild hog, and hunters, usually poor and squalid, are ready to barter, through a Chinese middleman, their skins, otters, etc., the best of which go, I believe, to St. Petersburg, as those they have seen poor, though I have seen some finely-dressed tiger skins in the stores for sale.

Stillness, with a restful calm, which certainly had its charm to me, is here in excelsis in the summer; and I believe that at ports stillness must be perennial, as if one's foot gets caught on mechanically lifting it over a fallen trunk the toe will tear away in powder, a half of it, it apparently having lain to silently decay for many years, possibly centuries. A carelessly-flung match may make a fire of leagues, and there is a tradition of such a fire being caused by a naval chaplain.

Such is this more or less pine-clad solitary region, its desolateness accentuated when in the ice grip of winter. The necessity to cut wood for fuel building, including boats (for the Russian is proverbially clever with his axe) must be a godsend to the inhabitants. The little black piggie is not unknown.

BERNARD ESPINASSE.

"Who do men say that I am:" "The question shows that Jesus had been thinking of His past ministry and its results. He had come to the conclusion that He was practically without reliable following outside the disciple circle, and that conviction is the key to all that follows in this memorable scene."—Bruce. He knew that all the better classes were hostile. He knew that the common people felt kindly toward Him, were glad to eat of His bread and be healed of their diseases, but—anything more? He did not think so. And how about the Twelve? He believed it was different with them, but at any rate the time had come to talk it all over with them, and so He asks the question. "John the Baptist:" So, Herod (Mark 6: 14). "Elijah:" Malachi (4: 5) had preached that he should return. "One of the prophets:" Matthew adds Jeremiah. But notice that no one so much as hints that anyone believed Jesus to be the Messiah. It was much to think Him a good man and prophet, but not enough.

"But who say ye that I am:" With the emphasis on "ye." Think of the importance of the answer to Jesus. "Peter answereth:" We are not surprised; it was like him. "Thou are the Christ:" Christ in Greek; Messiah, Hebrew; both mean Anointed. "Tell no man:" The announcement would have been understood to refer to the Messiah of popular expectation and of course would have made trouble.

"The Son of man must suffer:" Even to the disciples this news was a blow. "And be killed:" That the Anointed One had to do His work at such cost to Himself and then be cut off by a violent death in the very midst of it, was almost unthinkable to them. "Spake the saying openly:" He wanted the disciples to be forewarned; it would be test enough of their faith even if not taken by surprise. "Rebuked Peter:" Who was spokesman for all. "Get thee behind me, Satan:" The words Jesus is said to have used in the wilderness temptation. In both cases He was putting down real temptation; Satan, figurative in both. "Thou mindest not the things of God:" Peter was tempting Jesus to avoid death by avoiding duty; was thinking of Messiah's work from the human point of view.

"If any man would come after me:" That is, become my follower. "Let him deny himself:" Not for the sake of denying himself; there is no virtue in self-denial per se; but for the sake of living for his fellow men and for God. "Take up his cross:" There can be no reserve, no limit to the principle. If the service involves the giving up of life itself, it must be done—that is, if one would be a follower of Jesus. "Whosoever would save his life," etc.: His life is himself. The person that is niggardly of himself, his energies, his service for others, or refuses to put them to worthy uses, wastes them. That life is as good as lost. "Shall save it:" Not "shall escape death," but shall make life worth living, and "what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world," if he fail of this? "When he cometh:" Taken by some as referring to a spectacular, physical return of Jesus to earth for a glorious Messianic reign, such as the Jews expected; others take it as oriental imagery describing the wonderful coming of the winning Spirit of Jesus into the world.

Continued from 1st page.

The door flung open and Errol, with her cloud of fair hair, stood in the doorway.

"But he did not tell me that he loved me and wished to marry me." Marianina told herself in the middle of the night, as she turned over her pillow wearily. "But there is no need for words when two beings are as perfectly in sympathy as we, and he understood," she thought.

Letters came at long intervals from Steve, and were not of a preeminently encouraging nature. One morning toward the end of the sixth year, Marianina received the following:

"Marianina:—I am coming back to the old home. I have failed. In all these six years I have not even gained a foothold. The whir of the urgent city presses upon me and crushes me down. Life is too tumultuous here; I cannot think. Even now I am on my way to you, Marianina. Oh! I have thought of you many, many times. How I long to hear your voice! I see other women about me, but to me they are as if they were not. They are strange; not one of them is like you. They chatter like magpies; they are tawdry; and neither do they like me, for when they see me they stick their tongues in their cheeks and laugh.

"So before many days I shall see you and Errol and the good old man. Do you remember, Marianina, I said I would fight the world? I did, but I could not conquer it; instead, it conquered me.

"I enclose in this letter a little pair of white silk stockings for Errol to wear on Sundays.

Stephen Balfe."

"Steve's come!" cried Errol one morning, leading a great, bearded, shabbily clothed man into the tidy little kitchen.

Marianina held out both hands, and choked and could not speak. It was an exquisitely keen pleasure to see him; it was also an exquisitely keen pain. She noted the downtrodden shoes, his elbows ready to push through and her heart ached. She stood tall and sedate, a divinely excellent foil, beside her glittering sister. Errol was tall, also, and of a beautiful slimness. Her hair was the color of ripe corn, and her eyes were blue with the blue old china teacups.

Steve talked to Marianina, but his eyes were full of Errol. And Marianina saw and took counsel with herself.

"Marianina," said Steve one afternoon several months after his arrival, "will you walk up and down the old path with me?"

He drew her arm through his. He had always been very gentle with her. When they reached the end he stopped and turned to her.

"You must know, Marianina, how I respect you, how sincerely I admire and care for you; do you think, dear, you could ever make up your mind to throw yourself away on a worthless thing like me? I think you love me. Do you not, Marianina? Or have I mistaken the character of your kindness?"

Her gaze fell away from his. It was so different from what she had always borne for, and the bitter part of it was he was trying to be kind to her to blind his own eyes to the true dictation of his heart. She felt rebellious and wanted to tell him all. Instead, she turned from him and swallowed hard.

"Forgive me! Forgive me, Marianina!" he cried. "I see I was mistaken. You thought of me as a brother only. I ask you to forgive me for being so delicate."

Each word was like the turning of a rusty weapon in her breast.

"Let us begin to walk again," she said, quickly.

She could not help but hear the note of gladness, or relief, that crept into his speech. Great, hot, pitiful sobs rose up in her throat. Presently she raised her head and looked at him with her calm eyes.

"Do not let us speak of this again, Steve," she said gently, as she twisted nervously at the frilling in her sleeve.

They heard a soft outbreak of laughter, and their eyes took the same direction. Errol with the teasing gayety of child romped under the trees with her pet spaniel. A great bar of sunlight cut through the branches like a golden glaive, and fell across her bright head.

There was an unutterable tenderness in his eyes as he looked.

"Isn't she beautiful, Marianina?" he asked. "She seems to me like a being from another sphere."

"Go and talk to her, Steve, or play with her; I must go into the house. I think Uncle Lucien wants me."

She found the old man in his customary corner, and threw herself down beside him, and, folding her arms over his knees, rested her face on them. Her pretty, soft curls breaking from restraint, tumbled about her shoulders and over his shrunken old knees. Her little white hands that came out of her black sleeves worked convulsively. Shortly she looked up, and her thoughtful eyes were dry and glittering.

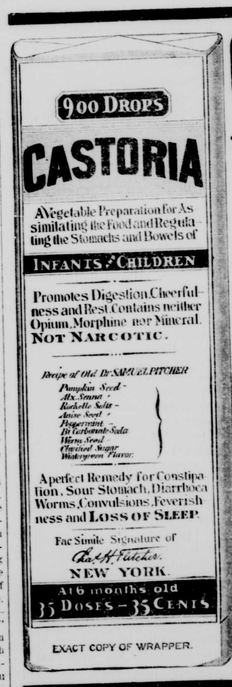
"Uncle Lucien," she began.

He pressed her head down again, stroking it gently with his withered hand.

"I know! I have seen it all, all, dear child," he said, huskily.

The afternoon sunlight a pale irradiance, came in through the window and spread across the white bed, bleaching the whole room with its light. The summer breeze stirred gently through the branches outside, setting the leaves in a gentle clapper. The little room was very still, save for one sound. The sound was Marianina's sobbing.

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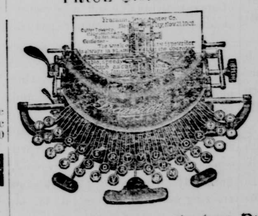
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