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WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 1905.

TOGO'S VICTORY.

Every telegram that arrives confirms more and more the completeness of the Japanese victory. The capture of Admirals Rodjestvensky, Niebogatoff and Foe'kersam, with thousands of prisoners, and the extraordinary way in which the Japanese fleet has escaped scathless from the mighty combat, serve to show the thoroughness of Japan's naval success. It would be premature to hazard a conjecture as to the immediate consequences of Admiral Togo's prodigious victory. Even now the Tsar may hesitate to decide for peace, while it is improbable that the revolutionary movement will become immediately stronger than heretofore. But that the main issues of Saturday's fight for the world at large will be enormous it is easy to foretell, and to find a historical parallel we must go further back than 1805, for such a world-historical sea-fight deserves to be compared not with an international combat such as was Trafalgar, but with an intercontinental event such as Salamis. Even yet perhaps Europe scarcely recognises how prodigious an influence this rise of a new Power on the edge of Asia, in the ocean which must decade by decade increase in importance till its freedom will preoccupy all maritime nations as the freedom of the Atlantic does now, will exercise on her policy, her ambitions, and her commerce. Throw aside all apprehensions about the "yellow peril," leave China out of the calculation as sunk in irredeemable dotage, assume Japan to stand alone, and still Europe has to reckon with a Power which ten years hence will have twice Togo's fleet, and which has proved that wherever she can land, an army double its strength must be called out to render defeat of the defenders improbable. Of the ideas, aspirations, and ultimate plans of that Power nothing, it may be said, is known; but of her capacities and her strength we now at least know something. We know that she can keep a secret for years, that her people will fight to the death at the word of command, that she has the European belief in science, and that she counts among her statesmen and soldiers men of the intellectual capacity to control and guide huge masses of trained men to any end she has decided on. No King thinks that he can conquer Japan; no statesman imagines that he can set aside her vote in the Pacific or the Indian Ocean as a negligible quantity. She may not govern China, but all the long-devised European plans for gaining dominant influence in China or in the Archipelago must, without her permission, be abandoned. No State can hope to make of Kiaochow a capital, or to announce that the valley of the Yangtse River is closed except to her own traders. The "open door" has a terrible guardian, all Asia a potential advocate, whose voice if lifted, say in protest that yellow men and white men must be treated alike, must at least be heard.

Tremendous as the blow is to Russia, and far-reaching as its consequences must be, we hesitate to believe that the Tsar, unless coerced by the volutionary forces, will make peace. His army has apparently recovered from the defeat at Mukden and doubtless he believes that the continuation of the struggle, however hopeless, will involve less danger for his dynasty than a peace on severe terms. It will not shock the Army or paralyse diplomatic action, and, besides, it evades some dangers. While there is no peace—even if there be only an armed truce instead of a victory—no indemnity can be asked for, and the thought of the indemnity galls the ruling group at St. Petersburg as scarcely any territorial cession would do. The cession of Manchuria, and the relinquishing of all claim to Korea, will not diminish the resources of Russia, while the payment of a hundred millions will weaken them further in their weakest place. Therefore the hopeless struggle will continue indefinitely until the complete erosion of the established state of things in Russia. The extraordinary rapidity with which events are passing blind us to their real significance. Only a few months ago Russia seemed one of the most formidable and deep-rooted of the Great Powers. After Great Britain, she was the largest owner of the surface of the globe. Her vast land possessions were on the eve of a development which was believed to be unparalleled in modern history. She appeared to have gained her desire, a warm-water port, and the commerce of the Far East was about to fall into her hands. Her diplomacy was dreaded by all, and seemed to have been crowned with a singular success. To the ordinary spectator she appeared to have been pursuing for generations one policy, biding her time in patience, and striking relentlessly when the moment arrived. Russia, we were told, was the *beau idéal* of an Imperial Power. She had no captious democracy, no critical and independent Press, to tie her hands or compromise the continuity of her work. Her great bureaucracy were inspired by a single aim, and passed it on unweakened to their successors. Her methods, to be sure, were somewhat Machiavellian, for her conscience was not bound by promises, and the policy of encroachment had been raised by her to the rank of a fine art. But it seemed justified by its results, for other nations grumbled but submitted, since there was believed to wait behind her Ministers the glacier-like power of a resolute and undivided nation. It was left to Japan to put this hypothesis to the test. Once upon a time, as the story goes, a certain King rode out unclothed among his people, and the obsequious crowds applauded the beauty of his Majesty's garments. But a child who was watching suddenly cried out: "Why, he has nothing on!" and at the word every one's eyes were opened, and the nation proceeded to revise its constitution. Russian diplomacy had some resemblance to that Monarch. It succeeded because no one dared to question it; but when the question came it went down like a house of cards. It is strange that our democratic Western world should so long have held its breath in admiration of a game of bluff which, according to its creed, could have no intrinsic strength. The first lesson for the spectator is that the day is past when success can be won merely by a militant diplomacy. It needs only to be questioned to collapse, and the issue is transferred to that other field on which the strength of a people is more radically tested.

So also, with Russia's military and naval power. A few months ago she was thought to have not only a splendid navy but the second or third finest Army in the world, an Army trained on the most scientific lines, officered by experts, and armed with the latest weapons. Being a military autocracy, it was believed that she could make war with her whole soul, regardless of any difficulties which a democratic régime might interpose in its conduct. Numerically she vastly excelled her rival; she had more and better guns; she had greater available wealth; and though she had to fight six thousand miles from her capital, yet she had so developed Eastern Siberia and Manchuria as to have created an advanced base close to the enemy. In Port Arthur she had an impregnable fortress, fortified with a strength and ingenuity hitherto unknown in war. She had a larger navy than Japan, and an infinite capacity for increasing it which was denied to the other. Moreover, she was a military Power of old experience; she had generals trained under Skobeleff; while Japan was in war a *parvenu*, with no record behind her save a trivial contest with China. What has been the result of the past sixteen months? The Russian soldiers have fought with all their traditional courage and obstinacy, and more than one of their leaders have shown high qualities of generalship. Russia is still a great military Power, but the prestige is gone. Japan has succeeded by science, intelligence, a purer patriotism, and therefore a more indomitable spirit. The materialism which had been creeping over Western Europe, the creed which believed only in great armaments and big battalions, has, we believe, received a shattering blow. Victory in war, as in other things, falls to the stronger spirit.

In Russia herself we are faced with the same disillusionment. A year ago men spoke of her as an impregnable bureaucracy, under competent administration, broadly based upon popular acquiescence. Liberalism in Russia, we were told, was a vain thing, since nobody wanted it. The semi-divine prestige of the Tsar was the keystone of the Constitution, and this personal loyalty, combined with the well-known Slav fatalism and patience, would make her in war a crushing Power of irresistible strength. A few months' war gives us no proof of such assurances. We find no such fire of patriotism as inspires the armies of Oyama; the Russian fights splendidly, but as a machine, with a dull and homesick fidelity. We find, on the contrary, a growing antipathy to the war, based upon the terrible demands made upon the people in life and property. Were the nation really roused, all such grievances would be forgotten in the patriotism which desired above all things to win battles for its country. But the nation is not at war at all, but only its Government; and since that Government has no part in the national life, the Russian people look upon the contest as a gladiatorial combat which does not really concern them, though they are called to sacrifice their all in the arena. At the same time, the people are awakening to self consciousness, and are struggling in the throes of a new life. The strikes in every province, the St. Petersburg massacre, the petitions of the educated classes, are serious enough in themselves, but their significance is not an isolated thing. The war has been a chemical process, and from the crucible there seems to be emerging a new national spirit. Will the destruction of the fleet force the Tsar and his incompetent bureaucracy to resist the claims of this new national force? They may; but it will go hardly with Russia if they do. For they will continue to wage war, while the Russian people will continue to look on; and it is very clear that only when the national spirit is in arms can a nation win victories.