

LITERATURE.

China Breaking Up.*

It is scarcely more than a year and a half since we reviewed Mr. Colquhoun's "China in Transformation," and here comes another contribution from his pen to the question that, above all others, is agitating the international world. The bulletins are talking of the gallant fight of a company of diplomats, marines and missionaries against the hordes of Boxers, and the capitals of Christendom grow sick at heart as they realize the almost absolute certainty of another holocaust—to rival in its horrors that at Cawnpore forty-three years ago. As we read the telegrams and look over this new book, the conviction forces itself that if the author's warnings in his other books had been heeded the present disaster might, almost assuredly would, have been avoided. What is the message of the present volume?

Mr. Colquhoun is a perfect Gradgrind in the matter of facts. He has theories, as what well informed man has not, but it is not so much his theories that are prominent as his facts. Not content with what he already knew, which would have furnished ample capital for many men, he started out to trace for himself the routes that have been followed by the influences so potent in the China of to-day. He thus devotes one-third of the book to Siberia, its history, character, needs, opportunities, as seen by him from an unofficial trip along the wondrous new railway. He then describes Manchuria, and the reasons for its dominance in the Empire, and gives an account of Peking. This is by far the best that we have seen, and cannot fail to be read with great interest by all who are concerned with the fate of Minister Conger and his family, the venerable Dr. W. A. P. Martin and the devoted band of missionaries at the mercy of the rabble.

From Peking to and up the Yangtse Valley Mr. Colquhoun carries the reader, interesting him not so much in the

scenery, for that has been vividly described by Mrs. Bird Bishop and others, as in the potentialities of the region, its opportunities for trade, its possibilities for Empire. Then he passes through Yunnan, that much talked of yet little known province of Southwest China where England and France are supposed to be measuring swords, or, rather, surveying rods, and closes his trip in Tongking, anxious to see what French enterprise has accomplished during the sixteen years since he was there as war correspondent for the London *Times*.

Having completed the survey, the author sums up his conclusions in the assertion "that China is breaking up at lightning speed;" the Government has lost its supremacy, its vitality, and its ability to defend its own possessions; the interior provinces are passing into a state of anarchy; while on every side the foreigner is making himself evident in seizure of land—Manchuria, Kiao-chau, Wei-hai-wei and Kaulung—in securing railway, mining and commercial concessions. These, however, he shows are valuable just in proportion as they are supported by actual power. In time past, and still, theoretically, the better informed Chinese look upon England and the United States as their best friends. They look to the north, however, and see the great Russian railway extending across the Continent and entering their own dominions; they see French Catholic priests usurping the position and rights of magistrates, and France keeping up claims for indemnity for injury done to Catholics; while England and America remain quiet, and when their people are injured, instead of demanding immediate reparation, institute a long course of inquiry. For this the Chinese may be grateful as indicating more courteous consideration and fairer dealing, but they seem to see in it a lack of power, whereas the others make that power very manifest. If they must yield to some one, it is better to yield to the one that can visit strongest penalty in case of resistance.

* OVERLAND TO CHINA. By Archibald R. Colquhoun, author of "China in Transformation," etc. New York: Harpers, \$3.00

The actual power of Russia and France Mr. Colquhoun does not consider so great now as to give occasion for much anxiety provided it is met promptly and effectively, especially as England and America can certainly count on the support of Japan, and very probably of Germany. The Siberian railway is not yet completed, and is far from being in first-class shape. France has questions of her own to look after in Tongking, not to speak of Africa. The present, therefore, is the moment to form an intelligent decision and unite upon some clear course of action.

Coming at this moment when its prophecies are being proved true in so marked a degree, the book should have a cordial reception. It should be read carefully by all interested, not merely in *China itself*, but in *our relations to that* unfortunate Empire. Its information may be relied upon, and accurate knowledge is always the best basis for sound judgment. The book is well gotten up with good illustrations and most excellent and valuable maps.