

## Russia's Wise Diplomacy.

The St. Petersburg correspondent of the London Times, discussing Russian affairs, says that particular attention is now being bestowed upon England by the minister of finance in the way of advertising the work of his department and the material condition of Russia. No pains or money is being spared to produce a favorable effect by the proposed Russian section at the international exhibition to be held next spring at Glasgow. This attention toward England has been especially noticeable, says the writer, since Mr. Witte's recent visit to Paris, which is said to have left behind a very unfavorable impression.

'At the present moment,' he continues, 'the shareholders of French metallurgical companies in Russia, several of which, it appears, will shortly have to liquidate, are extremely angry with him on account of the losses in which they allege that his policy has involved them. Having put their money into Russian iron works on the strength of promises of government orders and the prospect of enormous profits to be made out of the forced development of industry and railway construction, they now complain that the minister of finance has fixed his own prices, that payment for executed orders has not been promptly made when due, and that they no longer receive all the support to which they consider themselves entitled. Extensive disaster is therefore prophesied, and stock is depressed on the market in consequence.'

It is said that the dividends paid last year by the Belgian companies in Russia did not amount in the aggregate to more than 2 1/2 per cent, on the whole 600,000,000 roubles of capital invested, and seventeen of these companies paid no dividend at all. It is the old story of the government undertaking to do everything and to support everybody instead of releasing trade and industry in the country from all official tutelage and dependence; and when necessity drives the Government to retrench, to curtail railway work, to reduce orders, and make people wait for their money, then private individuals who put themselves into such a position naturally have to be sacrificed. At the very beginning of the boom in foreign metallurgical enterprise it was predicted, on the basis of calculating how long Russia could afford to go on spending such a large amount of money on railways, that it would probably not last longer than ten years. The unforeseen cost of Russia's share in the Chinese imbroglio, from which the government on this account would like to be free as soon as possible, will no doubt contribute largely toward the fulfilment of this prediction.

Turning then to Russia's foreign politics the correspondent points out the essential differences between the conducting of it and that of England. When Englishmen are dissatisfied with their government's diplomacy, they generally reproach it for the inferior qualities displayed in comparison with those of the Russian. But it is pointed out that while the foreign policy of England is probably more difficult than that of any other European power, that of Russia is perhaps the easiest.

'There is nothing,' he said, 'so remarkably clever and astute in the conduct of Russian policy apart from the exceptionally favorable conditions in which it is formed, of which its directors are easily able to enjoy the full and enviable advantages in maturing and carrying that policy into effect. The first and foremost of these conditions are undoubtedly mystery and silence which are not allowed to be penetrated or broken on any account, unless and until the contrary suits the purpose of the government.'

'There is no cabinet of St. Petersburg, except that of the Emperor, which is merely one of the offices of the Ministry of the Imperial Household, unconnected with politics of any kind. Russian foreign policy is guided nominally or really, as the case may be, by the Czar himself, with the assistance of his one obedient minister in that particular department. Among all the 120,000,000 of his majesty's subjects, not another single man's opinion is of the slightest consequence, unless it is asked for, and not often even then. The Emperor Paul once said that no man in the Russian empire was of any importance except the one to whom he spoke, and then only so long as he was speaking to him.'

'If any official blunder is made it is rectified without anybody outside knowing that it ever has been committed. No damaging criticism is tolerated in the press and no explanation is allowed to be asked for. Adverse comment on the acts of the

or Nicholas I, created such difficulties for his government by discussing his startling proposal to dispose of the property of the Sick Man on the Bosphorus with Sir G. H. Seymour in 1854. It is not surprising in such conditions Russia has been able to score successes and to spring surprises on the world.

'There is, however, one difficulty and thorn in the flesh with which Russian diplomacy has to contend, and that is the occasional opposition of the powerful military element. The extent to which the party dominates in the country may be estimated by the fact that a great part of European Russia is under the rule of military governors general, while everywhere in Russian Asia generals of the army reign supreme. On the eastern confines of the empire they have always been on the lookout for profitable opportunities and their military superiors in St. Petersburg have seldom been slow to back them up. In spite of the attempts of the Foreign Office to preserve peace and quietness. This conflict between Russian diplomacy and the military authorities in Asia, of which there have been many historical examples, has never been more conspicuously displayed than in connection with the present campaign in Manchuria. From the very commencement of it General Grodekoff and Gribsky had evidently made up their minds to annex the right bank of the Amur, from which the Chinese had so treacherously attacked the Russian at Blagovestchenk. Their published orders on the subject show that they regarded that annexation as a duty bequeathed to them by the greatest of all their predecessors in that region, Count Muraviev Amursky; but the emperor, siding with his diplomatic adviser, put his imperial veto upon it. Exactly the same thing was done by the first Emperor Nicholas in a similar case on the very same line of frontier in 1852, when the territory at the mouth of the Amur was annexed by a naval officer, Capt. Nevelsky, who acted in contravention of his instructions. The annexation in that case was finally maintained all the same.

'A recently published account of what occurred to the disobedient, but successful officer in question is highly interesting at the present juncture. Nevelsky was disgraced by being reduced to the ranks of a common sailor, and soon after his return

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to St. Petersburg the Czar Nicholas I. sent for him to come to the palace. The Emperor received him with a severe frown of displeasure and after a minute's pause said: 'It appears, Nevelsky, that you dare to undertake expeditions of your own, and to change your instructions to suit yourself. I have here,' continued his Majesty, holding up a paper, 'an order reducing you to the ranks. What have you got to say in self defence?' Nevelsky was too much afraid to answer, and remained perfectly silent. The Emperor then took a map and began to run his finger along the line of the Amur River from its source to the Pacific. 'Here,' said the Emperor, with apparent signs of beginning to relent, 'here, at this point, you are a simple sailor, further on a Lieutenant, still further on a Captain, then a Commander, and here, at Nikolaievsk, you become a Vice-Admiral. But no, Nevelsky, not quite so fast, you must first of all be punished for disobedience.' The Emperor then rose from his chair, embraced Nevelsky, and decorated him with the Order of St. Vladimir, 'Spaseeba (thanks), Nevelsky,' said his Majesty, 'thanks for your zeal, but in future be more careful and do not exceed your duty.'

'Subsequently the Czar wrote on the report of the special committee, which advised the surrender of Nevelsky's acquisition of the Amur delta, to avoid possible war with China, the following words: 'The committee will meet again under the Presidency of His Imperial Highness the Czarévitch. Wherever the Russian flag has once been raised, it should never again be lowered.' These Imperial words are inscribed on Nevelsky's monument at Vladivostok, as a stimulant, prob-

bly, to future Russian heroes on the Amur. Those of today have certainly not lost sight of the lesson. The Russian flag was distinctly hoisted with much ceremony and bravado, this time on the site of the new Russian military settlement on the right and Manchurian side of the Amur, and the commanders under whose orders it was done had been thanked and decorated. Figuratively speaking, that flag was afterwards hauled down by the diplomats in the official declaration that the Russian troops would be withdrawn from Manchuria as soon as there was no longer any necessity for their presence. But Russian military authorities have a diplomacy of their own, and it is yet too early to judge whether the parallel with the case of Nevelsky, as far as it goes, will be carried any further.'

### CHINESE PRINCES HAVE TO WORK.

Greatly Impresses the Common People—Rising to the South Abating.

Included in the advices received at Victoria, B. C., by the Empress of China are translations of Chinese accounts of the conduct of the allies at Peking and other happenings there taken from interviews with late arrivals from the capital and printed in the native Shanghai papers. Of all that has occurred in Peking that which seems most to impress the average Chinese is the fact that nobles and high officials, even princes of the royal line, have been compelled to perform manual labor. The bitterest reproaches are heaped upon these because they did not possess sufficient courage to destroy themselves rather than submit to such degradation, a degradation which has fallen not upon themselves alone but upon the country.

While the trouble in the south seems to have abated, it is by no means over for the Empress brings news that over one hundred boats, all of which were 'commandered,' containing Black Flags have arrived at Canton to demand wages and many outrages are reported to have been committed by these troops. They made a determined attack on the roman catholic church at Lok Cheung, but were repulsed with heavy loss.

The annual popular fete of Toshi-Noich, in the Kanda district of Tokio, was scene of a terrible accident. Great crowds attended the festivals and when the affair was at its height, heavy rain fell. A rush was made for shelter and twenty people were crushed to death. Kerosene lamps fell to the ground and exploded, the burning oil running over the floor and setting fire to the building. Three hundred and twelve wounded people were carried out of the building.

It is reported on good authority in Japan that the Russian minister at Seoul, Mr. Ravlobovas, advised the Emperor of Corea to place his country under Russian protection, since Manchuria has become a Russian possession. Along with this report it is said that Russian troops recently crossed the Korean frontier. A report comes from Seoul that several of the Korean ministry are under arrest and will likely lose their heads.

The following mail advices have arrived by the Empress of Japan:

The North China Daily News says it is strange that his Majesty the Emperor, Kwang Hsu, and the Empress Dowager should have selected the Shensi province as a place of refuge, a province which cannot be mentioned by name in the civilized world without a shudder, owing to the great calamity that has fallen upon it.

The latest news from the plague-ridden province of Shensi is that the market town, where their majesties are abiding, human flesh is being hawked about the streets for sale. The famine is at its acute stage and the death rate is appalling. The poor have no food but grass and roots, and many of them who have money have been driven to buy and eat human flesh.

The magnitude of the operations of the newly formed branch of the Standard oil company in Eiohgo, Japan, is astonishing inhabitants. Two special officials have been dispatched by the Japanese customs in connection with the handling of the company's plant. The company will project a line of delivery pipe forty five miles long. The Japan Mail says indications point to a combination of all the Japanese oil men.



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