

precisely like that of the "boxers" in China.

In circumstances like those we have imagined, the Joss houses would be torn to the ground and their inmates mobbed. Stories would be afloat which would drive the mobs to frenzy—horrible stories of personal outrages by these dog-eating and rat-eating barbarians. The excitement would spread, gaining strength as it went, and no Chinaman's life would be safe. Even torture at the stake would be within the possibilities; and the government would be in danger for protecting the hated race.

To know the panicky disposition of the American character is to realize the insanely furious hatred of everything human with a yellow face and a pigtail, which such an experience with China as that we have imagined would engender. Very few Americans would have the self-command to rise superior to its influence. Yet whoever does know this, in the light of the history of the white man's unwarranted invasion of China, has the key to the situation in that great empire of the ancient east. The murderous uprising of the "boxers" is doubtless a tremendous popular expression of Chinese hatred of the white-faced foreigner who has disturbed Chinese conservatism and threatens to usurp Chinese authority.

We speak of the white man's invasion of China as unwarranted. To that sentiment it may be objected that the earth is for all, and that China, as part of the earth, is therefore in justice no more the Chinaman's than the white man's.

That the earth is for all we cordially concede. But China in her efforts to exclude foreigners has raised no land question. There is plenty of land, wholly unused, where China's invaders come from. If they believe that the earth is for all, why do they not demand that all have a share in what they now control? why do they allow most of it to be monopolized by individuals and corporations, while in city slums and countryside so many of their own race are landless and dependent?

The question that China raises, so far from being a land question, is a

question of association. The Chinese have the same right to shun white men that we have to shun Chinamen. They have the same right to preserve the integrity of their association, of their institutions, of their civilization, that we have to preserve ours. No land question can be thereby raised until our land is so far in use that there is no room at home, and our people must go to China in order to get land,—an emergency that has never yet arisen, and that will not arise for generations and generations to come. It is not for lack of land at home, for land among us is still plentiful though unjustly monopolized, but for power over Chinamen that white men's governments are pushing their sovereignty into China; and this the Chinamen have a right to resist as best they can, upon every recognized principle of patriotism.

There is no intention here of denying the principle, a perfectly sound one, that, broadly speaking, nations must advance together. It is entirely true that no nation nor any civilization can very long remain very far in advance of the others. It is also entirely true that the ideal civilization must be world wide.

It necessarily follows that it is not conducive to the best civilization for China or any other country to wall herself in. If she has a high civilization this will cause it to deteriorate; if a low one, this will hold its growth in check.

But isolation cannot safely be terminated by external force. Though such a policy of force might in the long run culminate in higher general civilization it would do so in spite of itself. It is not the natural way. Voluntary trade is the true civilizer. That will do away with all isolation and lead the world on to a universal and ever advancing civilization, without depriving any individual of even the least of his rights.

But it must be voluntary. To try to make "trade follow the flag," which is only another expression for making it follow the drumbeat and the rifle crack, is to disturb the natural order and outrage natural rights.

And that is what the white man has done in forcing himself into China.

He has made himself the aggressor, and become responsible for all the wrong that flows from it.

Whatever may be our feelings regarding the assassinations of white people in China by the furious populace, we must in fairness hold our own race responsible for having provoked the assaults. By a long series of invasive acts, beginning with the British opium war and leading on to the transparent schemes of the powers to dismember the empire for their own glory, with incidental profit to their influential financiers, the white race has goaded the Chinese on to this hideous revolt.

## NEWS

The center of the world's interest has shifted, for the first time in nearly nine months, from South Africa to China. This is not because the events now occurring in China are in themselves of greater magnitude than those of the South African war. So far as yet reported they would be of minor concern but for their tremendous political possibilities. Though massacres and forebodings of massacre of Christians by barbarians can never be matter of indifference to Christian nations, it is not these in themselves that give importance to the news from China. It is the fact that in this instance they portend the possibility of a dissolution of the empire of China through the action of foreign powers.

The Chinese complications in their present shape were brought to the attention of the outside world about two weeks ago, and at pages 122 and 135 we noted their beginnings. A secret society known as "boxers" (the Chinese name being "I Ho Chuan," which is translated "Righteous Harmony Fists"), was at first vaguely reported as having instigated a murderous movement against foreigners. On account of this the foreign ministers at Peking had jointly demanded the suppression of the society by the Chinese government, and all the foreign warships at Taku had landed marines. But the application of the marines for permission to go to Peking to protect their respective legations was denied by the Chinese authorities. The denial, however, was afterwards revoked, in response to an ultimatum

from the powers; and naval troops of Great Britain, Russia, Italy, France, Japan and the United States were reported to have arrived in small bodies at Peking. An imperial edict, moreover, had been issued by the Chinese government, which ordered the crushing of the supposed conspiracy; and at the time of our writing last week, news had just come to hand of a battle between the Chinese imperial troops and the "boxers" close to Peking. That was the situation as reported in this country down to the 6th.

Since then nothing has been heard of the battle near Peking, though there have been further indefinite reports of fighting between the "boxers" and Chinese troops. Railroad communication between Tientsin, on the Gulf of Pechili, and Peking, has been cut off; and at latest accounts 1,500 foreign troops having seized the Tientsin-Peking railroad, were repairing it, and 10,000 more were in readiness to advance to Peking. The missionaries there, in hourly dread of massacre, had gathered for safety in the Methodist "compound." "Boxers" mobs held the whole foreign population of Peking terror stricken. Assaults were made on some foreign attaches there, and on the 12th a secretary of the Japanese legation was murdered at a railway station. As most of the news dispatches are hysterical, and none of them are burdened with facts, it is impossible further to summarize the situation with fidelity.

Among the more or less trustworthy news reports from China is one to the effect that the dowager empress, who is the actual though not the nominal sovereign, has shown her sympathy and that of the dominant party—the ultra conservative—with the "boxers," by the friendly tone of the decrees, ostensibly against the "boxers," which she has issued under the pressure of foreign influence. She is charged, also, with discouraging the imperial troops in their operations for the suppression of the uprising. Other news dispatches indicate that Russia is preparing for military occupation with a strong force, the pretext being the destruction of a Russian chapel; while others foreshadow a war between Russia and Japan as the result of such independent action on Russia's part. Still other dispatches declare that the late emperor, the young reformer

whose career as a reformer on the throne the dowager empress checked nearly two years ago (See The Public, No. 26, page 7, and No. 27, page 11), and who, after abdicating under pressure early in the present year (See The Public No. 96, page 10), was made a prisoner in the palace, has solicited the powers to replace him upon the throne and to govern China through him, thus making of the empire a European protectorate.

Inasmuch as some of the news dispatches from China describe the "boxers" outbreak as having spread into the southern provinces, it is not at all improbable that the so-called "boxers" uprising is in fact an extension northward to the region of Peking of the civil war reported over a year ago (See The Public, No. 49, page 8) as prevailing in the provinces of Hoonan, Honan, Nganhoei, Keangsee and Hoopé, and as having then established revolutionary authority over an immense territory in that part of the empire.

Though the ragged news from China has displaced the South African war as the principal subject of general interest, that war still holds a place of importance. Our last report left the British in possession of Johannesburg and Pretoria, the Boers having surrendered these cities and removed their capital to Lydenburg, 150 miles east of Pretoria; and it told of Boer operations in the Orange Free State against the right wing of Lord Roberts's army. Their latest reported exploit in this region at that time was the capture of a British regiment—the Irish yeomanry—which occurred on the 31st. After that there was a long silence, broken only by occasional reports of unimportant and uninteresting events, until the 9th, when a body of Boers estimated at 2,000, with six field guns, was reported as having cut the telegraph and wrecked more than 20 miles of railway between Kroonstad and Roodenwal, which is about 30 miles north of Kroonstad. They held this point until the 13th, when a strong British force was reported as having moved southward and after defeating them reopened communications. No particulars were given of the fighting, except that the Boers had been completely routed.

From the Natal border, where Gen. Buller is still in command, it was reported on the 9th that after an action

on the 7th at Laing's Nek, in the extreme north of Natal, as a result of which Buller forced his way through the Botha pass into the Orange Free State, the Boers offered to surrender conditionally. But unconditional surrender was demanded, and they managed to withdraw with their guns to a point some 26 miles to the northwest of Buller. This was the situation there at latest reports.

Since that time nothing has been heard from that quarter. But on the Middleburg road, about 15 miles east of Pretoria, a battle was in progress on the 11th and was then undecided. Further particulars had not been received on the 14th when this paragraph was written.

The Boer envoys continue their tour of the United States. After their reception at Chicago, reported last week, two of them—Fischer and Wessels—went to St. Paul, where they were welcomed on the 7th at a large mass meeting at which Gov. Lind was the principal speaker. On their route they were greeted at the railway stations by immense crowds. Mr. Fischer received a popular welcome at Milwaukee on the 7th, from which place he went to Springfield, Ill., where on the 10th he addressed a large gathering. During his stay in Springfield, he placed a floral offering upon the tomb of Lincoln. Mr. Wessels had meantime gone westward, and on the 9th he addressed a mass meeting at Omaha, which had been called to express sympathy with the Boer cause, and at which William J. Bryan also spoke. Among other things Mr. Bryan said:

I trust that the day will never come when a nation fighting for liberty will look in vain to the American people for sympathy and aid. I do not see how one can do other than choose the cause of the two republics in preference to that of a monarchy. . . . There comes a time when the millions of American people have the privilege of rising and casting their ballots against that administration of government which fails to carry out their wishes, and when those ballots are next counted I believe that they will be an expression of the American people for these people fighting for their independence. . . . We should not be unmindful of our duties to the people of this world struggling for their liberty—we, the greatest nation on earth, founded on liberty. . . . We must keep inspired with that love and reverence for the blessed name of liberty till every American citizen