

**David and Goliath.**

**THE STRENGTH OF RUSSIA AND JAPAN.**

**A "DAILY MAIL" FORECAST BEFORE THE OUTBREAK.**

The position of Russia and Japan presents a deeply interesting study. On the one hand is a Power whose modern history constitutes something in the nature of an eighth wonder of the world; on the other is a Power whose destinies not the most far-seeing statesman can foretell.

Japan, the England of the East, consists of but a handful of islands of a total area of 162,665 square miles, and a population of 44,260,000. Russia's vast Empire embraces a sixth of the whole earth, peopled by 135,000,000 souls. The disparity between the two rivals is not lessened when their fighting forces are examined. Russia stands to the world as one of its greatest military Powers, and has, on paper at any rate, the men to justify the position. Her army on a war footing is capable, according to the estimate of its organizers, of being raised to three and a-half millions of men; and that without taking into account the last reserves. At a liberal computation the land forces of Japan in time of war would be about 393,000 officers and men, with 1100 guns, against the 3400 guns of Russia.

**THE FIGHTING FORCES.**

The appalling balance in favour of Russia is, of course, largely discounted by the immobility of the Muscovite forces, inevitable in view of the huge area over which they are distributed. From the days of Hannibal, who, entering Italy with but twenty thousand foot and six thousand horse, annihilated armies of twice and four times the size of his own, and overran the land, down to that of Napoleon, the world has from time to time seen the alert and skilful little army triumph over the larger, more unhandy.

But, in all likelihood, naval strength would be a great factor in a war between these two countries. Here accessibility to what would prove the battleground favours Japan sufficiently to counterbalance the numerical superiority of her enemy. Spread over the ocean area which she must cover, Russia has a great number of vessels, but how many of these could come to close quarters with the concentrated strength of Japan is a debatable point.

The navy of the greater Power has cost five times that of the lesser, but it is agreed by all naval experts that Japan has got a magnificent return for her money in the shape of one of the finest fighting machines afloat. The like consideration applies to her army.

A point which the onlooker does not leave out of his calculations is the important one that, should it come to land-fighting, the Russians, even with the difficulty of transport and food supply overcome, would be at a disadvantage, in that their troops would not have the incentive to utmost effort that would inspire the Japanese, who would be battling within sight of home, as it were, whose patriotism is fired by that spirit of devotion to their fatherland which has brought such amazing results during the last forty years.

Between Japan and Russia, although they are geographically associated, there is a great gulf fixed temperamentally, socially, constitutionally. Japan embodies the spirit of democracy and progress; Russia represents the worst phase of tyrannous autocracy. The Muscovite forces are reputed to be superbly disciplined; it remains to be seen for how much that discipline counts when the fighting has to be done far from home, and for a cause which cannot appeal very strongly to the imagination of the soldier who is little better than a serf. Pride of race with love of his land has a considerable place in the Japanese. He has borrowed the wisdom of the old-world West to enlighten and revivify the older-world East, but he loves those ancient traditions to which he may with propriety still cling.

**THE EMPERORS.**

The relations subsisting between governed and governing classes are altogether different in Russia from those which obtain in the Flowery Land. The Emperor of Japan, who has wrought the mighty reforms which have come about in our own day, enjoys the confidence and love of his subjects, to whom he has given a constitutional form of government. The Czar rules as he is ruled. With his gigantic army and his terrible system of secret espionage he has neither the confidence nor the affections of the millions over whom he is placed. The stringent discipline exercised throughout his realm does not render human life sacred, nor the rights of property respected. An attempt was made not long ago to organise a trade union at Slatoust. It was suppressed at a cost of 250 lives of the workmen. From St. Petersburg congratulations were sent to the governor of the district. The letter arrived two days after the Governor's triumph had been ended by his murder. While riot and bloodshed are continually resulting from collisions between the Russian authorities and the students, the course of study in Japan is made a national concern, and the system of education, compulsory in the elementary schools, followed by model university courses, receives not less attention from the Government than from the modelling of the army and navy, the building of railways, the rendering navigable of all watercourses, the opening of national ironworks and mighty arsenals.

The present Emperor of Japan is one of a succession of sovereigns whose dynasty has been unbroken for 2500 years. His first kingly ancestor ascended the throne when Manasseh, King of the Hebrews, was offering human sacrifices upon the altars of Jerusalem, and when the great Assyrian empire was in the death throes of dissolution. There remains in the land to-day no relic of old-time feudalism beyond that close binding of class to class resulting from a long period of inter-dependence.

**NATIONAL STRENGTH.**

Japan has got beyond the era of the vendetta and of all the appanages of feudalism, but the bonds of brotherhood remain to make the race one of wonderful unanimity for a national purpose, and it is conceivable that did war occur with Russia every one of the twenty-four millions of males comprised in the population who is capable of bearing arms would be willing and anxious to take his share in the heat and burden of the battle.

War can bring nothing but disaster to Japan just now. A few more years of such prosperity as she has enjoyed since her victory over China would make her a protracted war at this period of her history might break her. Her revenue to-day is nearly 28 millions sterling; a dozen years ago it was only 8½ millions. In 1895 to 27½ millions, and her exports, while still short of what is desired, have grown in the same period from 13½ millions to 25½ millions. Since the war she has spent six millions on her navy and two millions on education, has established legations and consulates all over the world, has aided great harbour works, assisted colonial development by railways and other works, has founded banks, and so forth.

She has unlimited coal and minerals, and abundant raw material for the manufacture of articles which should soon send her exports soaring above her imports. What she most needs is a little time to recover from the tremendous outlay she has undertaken. Of her imports, Great Britain supplies nearly eleven million pounds' worth. All these figures are again dwarfed by those of Russia, who has a revenue of 206½ millions, and an expenditure nine and a-half millions less. Her exports amount to 33½ millions, and imports to less than 6½ millions.

Considered from every point of view the threatened contest is one of a David against a Goliath, with all the forces of might on the side of the big battalions, but with victory not necessarily assured to the giant. E.A.B.

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