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EDITORIAL

ORIENTAL EXPANSION'S MANY SIDES.

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THE commercial authorities of this country are awaiting with great expectancy the settlement of the Russo-Japanese war. To them that settlement coincides with the beginning of a period of unsurpassed exploitation of the Orient. Already they picture every corner of that portion of the globe as throbbing with modern ideas and activities, and drawing upon the industrial nations of the Occident for capital and mechanical equipment in a manner that will dwarf the export figures of the past into comparative insignificance. Then they proceed to dilate upon the significance of Oriental development to this country: how it will enlist the resources and abilities of the nation, making industries now idle ring with the noise of operation, and piling untold wealth into the laps of Capital and Labor, as a result.

The picture is undoubtedly true, in some respects. The development of the Orient will give a great impetus to the industrial nations of the Occident, especially to the country in which Capitalism is most highly developed—the United States. The development of the Orient will press into service the plants and the men that are now idle and suffering depreciation and starvation, owing to lack of employment. “Prosperity,” instead of depression will reign once more. So far so good. But the development of the Orient will also give a great impetus to international competition, which, in turn, is bound to develop international Capitalism. The development of the Orient will compel the organization of national industry on a scale capable of international achievements and results. It is a recognized fact that to-day the success of international competition depends on large domestic corporate interests, with foreign ramifications. Without them, international competition is impossible; so that it logically follows that any impetus to the development of international competition, is an impetus to the development of large domestic and

foreign corporate interests. In other words, the exploitation of the Asiatic countries will hasten the evolution of the giant trusts. Such was the effect of the commercial invasion of Europe by this country; such will be the effect of the commercial invasion of the Orient by all countries.

In these days of extensive trust prosecution, it is almost needless to say that the further evolution of the trust will involve tremendous economic and social changes. It will accentuate all the old trust evils, while giving birth to new ones. The headlong tendency to concentrate capital and labor into fewer hands, will continue on a wider and bigger scale. The struggle for the control of huge railroad systems and half billion dollar insurance companies now going on among the Hercules of capital foreshadows what is to come. The power of a Rockefeller to dictate international treaties will be augmented as his power over international resources, and capital and labor increases. The dismantling of factories, the extensive and wide spread remodeling and re-organization of industry and finance on the plane demanded by the new conditions, will make the crushing out of the middle class inevitable. The demand for cheap products that characterizes international competition, will necessitate a more rapid introduction of automatic machinery and unskilled labor than heretofore. All over the country, especially in the Mississippi Valley, with its water routes to Panama, and the great West, with its command of the Pacific, will industrial centers spring up and bigger cities grow. Everywhere things will boom, accelerating production and inflating enterprise, until the unavoidable crash and "liquidation" comes on the scene to startle the whole world, and prepare the way for another industrial "readjustment." In brief, capitalism in the Occidental countries will take a leap forward with results too vast and appalling for the imagination to grasp. The Future alone will feel and realize their full extent.

And the Oriental countries—what of them? Will the tremendous upheavals in Europe and America leave them unchanged? Japan was transformed in a half century from a feudal to a capitalist country. As such it now has a place among the world powers. Will China, growing ever more self-conscious and less ancient, with the Western {sic} culture of centuries at her command, be as long in becoming an international factor as was the puny little nation that is attempting to make this

awakening giant its exclusive protégé and prey? Modern evolution moves with the momentum of past ages. And this Oriental renaissance—will it not react, in its turn, on those nations that have spared neither money nor blood to bring it about? Already apprehension upon this point is shown in the building of larger navies and the increase of national armaments. International complications and war, as a result of Eastern developments, are reckoned among the future possibilities. Preparations are being made accordingly.

Taken all in all, Oriental development will emphasize the vast contradictions so characteristic of capitalist development. Progress and poverty will go hand in hand on a more colossal scale than ever before. The foreign uplift will bring domestic wealth and misery. International capitalism will increase international relations and the dangers of international bankruptcy and war.

But nothing can be expected as long as capitalism prevails. Capitalism is based on class subjugation and robbery at home, making subjugation and robbery essential abroad. The members of the working class, robbed in the factory of the greater part of that which they produce, cannot buy back that of which they are robbed. The members of the capitalist class, who own the factories, live in luxury off of the plunder. They use it to buttress up their millions. They open up exports to get rid of the remainder. From Capitalism, accordingly, flows the economic evils which threaten the race.

To remove domestic and foreign subjugation, the subjugation of capitalism must be removed. For this Capitalism is preparing the way. Trusts are organizing industry and the working class for the time coming, when society will be forced to abolish their possessors, the capitalist class, and own and operate them for the benefit of all its members. Then will domestic and foreign peace go side by side with domestic and foreign progress.

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