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A RUSSIAN GENERAL . ON AMERICA AND JAPAN.

It is unfortunate that the cable connecting us more directly with America should be interrupted just at the time when Mr. Ishii is believed to be performing his pacific mission in the Eastern States, but it is probable that any conclusive results of that mission would be transmitted without undue delay by the longer route. At any rate, messages from San Francisco, the extreme west of the States, are getting through, those received to-day being dated the 24th inst.; and one purporting to give an interview by General Linevitch, the Commander-in-chief of the Russian forces in northern Manchuria, during the later stages of the war, is of peculiar interest. There will be some surprise that a correspondent, of the Tokyo *Asahi*, at San Francisco should have been able to give the first telegraphic summary of this remarkable Russian opinion, intimating that it had escaped the attention of news gatherers closer to Japan, but it would be idle to speculate on what, if the report be accepted as authentic, must be regarded as one of the unusual chances in the correspondent's chapter of accidents. But General Linevitch's opinions are interesting. He openly admits that Russia was defeated in the war, and for that result he openly blames America's financial and other help and the American President's mediation effecting peace at the earliest opportunity. He calls these things American blunders in Far Eastern policy. His proposition is this: America is a commercial country, Russia is not. Japan is beginning to develop a commercial strength and therefore if Russia had been let alone by America she would have crushed Japan or in other words would have crushed a commercial rival of America's. Now, he says, Japan, swelled by her triumph (to which she was assisted by America) proposes to swamp America with her labourers and if America resist this peaceful encroachment then Japan will fight and, according to this military pundit, America cannot hope to successfully fight Japan. Patriotism, men, ships, arms and money, he says, though possessed in unlimited amount by the Republic, would be as nothing in comparison to Japan's expertness. America would lose

the Philippines and would gain nothing. There is a good deal more of the same tenour, the general sense being an effort to encourage Japan to try a fall with her big neighbour.

All this is interesting as disclosing the view of a representative Russian General, but consideration will not induce much admiration for the common sense of that view. Nor will it make much impression on level-headed Japanese. It reads in fact like the narrow, cunning view, of the disappointed soldier and the economic ignoramus. He takes into consideration the fatuous Russian aith that national development may be "crushed" by physical force, but he has no conception (how could he have?) of nations recognising qualities of development which rely upon higher means than purely physical force. Among such nations must be regarded the two whom he would seek to egg on to war. Commercial competition may not seem a very ideal means of national development but at least it is on a plane above war, and General Linevitch cannot even conceive that America and Japan may prefer its peaceful means to the bloody horrors and uncertainties of a Far East dominated by Russian physical force alone. General Linevitch, as a soldier, knows nothing of true national evolution except in its rimitive phase of military aggression, and naturally credits, or rather discredits, Japan with the same ignorance. The possession of national force as a national resort is all-important, but the day has gone by when such crude ideas of the supremacy of force, such as this Russian General emits, have any effect on the counsels of enlightened nations. There is no need here, then, to enter into any detailed criticism of this Russian General's *a priori* comparisons of American and Japanese physical force, although we consider them entirely empirical, for we do not believe that that factor enters at all into the international question. We believe that the situation was fairly stated by Mr. Ishii, representing the Tokyo Foreign Office, and Mr. Straus, the U.S. Secretary for Commerce and Labour, at a meeting in San Francisco not long ago, and may quote extracts from the remarks of those representative gentlemen in point. Mr. Ishii said:—

"There is no race prejudice in Japan. When you, gentlemen of the Chamber of Commerce, go to my country, you will find every door open. You will

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find that my people look upon you as representatives of a great and generous nation where the spirit is fostered of true honesty, liberty, equality and justice.

"The Pacific ocean is destined to play in the present century a very considerable part in the commerce of the world. This ocean, as you know, washes the shores, among others, of Japan, the United States and the Canadian Dominion of Great Britain. These three powers are the very powers which have been the foremost in preaching, supporting and maintaining the principle of the open door and equal opportunities. Such being the case, we are firmly convinced that the Pacific ocean will be the scene of the ideal international market for fair, square dealing to the common advantages of both shores of the ocean.

The U.S. Secretary for Commerce and Labour reciprocated heartily, making the following points among others :—

"There are many important questions to-day with which all countries have to contend. While we are in that period which may properly be called the commercial period of development, we must not forget that it is in itself one of the most blessed, if not most blessed period of national existence. I mean in this way, the spirit of commerce is a spirit of amity, it is the spirit of fairness, it is the spirit of equity, it is the spirit of justice, and it thrives along the highways of peace. It makes for peace. It is for that reason that the great lovers of peace, whose representatives have so recently met at The Hague, feel such an encouragement that with our present enlightenment we can safely make decided steps onward in order to maintain the peace of the world. Nations are no longer interested in the downfall or in the poverty of other nations. The nations with whom commercial relations are established are interested in each other's welfare and in each other's prosperity. As the nations across the Pacific develop their resources, grow in manufacturing, agricultural and in commercial importance, they require more, their needs are greater, and their commerce will respond to those needs. And the trade with a wealthy nation is worth infinitely more than the trade with a poor nation. The more it produces, the more it can buy, and the higher it

advances up the steps of civilization, the greater will be its wants.

In the presence of such an enlightened community of reasoning it is evident that it will take much more provocation than the coarse variety furnished by General Linevitch to disturb the harmonious relations of America and Japan.