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CHINA'S MILITARY FORCES.

Her Preparations for Attack and Defense Both by Land and Sea.

China has two separate armies. The Imperial Army proper is known under the name of the Army of the Eight Banners. It is divided into eight corps, each being distinguished by a peculiar banner. This army almost forms a military caste, for it is composed exclusively of the descendants of the Manchus, Mongolians and Chinese rebels, who in 1601 invaded China and dethroned the old Imperial family. During peacetime the men of this caste are allowed to conduct any common business, being forbidden only to leave their city without a permit from the commanding officer. The officers excel their men only in gymnastics. According to the Chinese notions, no man is fit to be an officer unless he is an athlete. This army numbers 210,000 men; of these over one-half are stationed in Peking, and the rest in a few large provincial cities. This military caste can by no means be regarded as a regular army.

The second or provincial army is called the Army of the Great Banner. Each of the eighteen provinces of the empire is obliged by law to keep a certain number of soldiers, and their aggregate, according to the official statistics, is 650,000 men. There are eighty generals and over 7,000 officers. The provincial army is composed chiefly of mercenaries, while the majority of the officers are of the military estate. These two armies, amounting to 700,000 men, are all the force the Celestial Empire has to rely on in cases of war.

The Imperial Guard, about 18,000 strong, is the flower of the army. Or the Guard Infantry, 5,200 men, are provided with muzzle-loaders, presented by the Czar of Russia; the rest are armed with flint guns, lances and shields. Half of the cavalry, about 2,000 men, are armed with Chassepot rifles. The artillery has thirty-two bronze guns bought in Russia, and a few mortars. There are 1,750 educated artillerymen.

The army of the Governor of Ohjly, about 80,000 strong, is also reorganized. The men are instructed by English and French officers. The army has breech-loading rifles and Krupp steel cannons. According to German writers, up to 1879 Krupp had sent to China 150 heavy guns, and 275 field guns. The army of the Governor of Khan Zu and Shan Zee, 40,000 strong, is said to be supplied with all the modern arms, and to be drilled according to the principles of Molke and Mantuffel. This army fought successfully against Yakoub Beg, and, indeed, proved itself the best disciplined army in China.

It is obvious, then, that in China there are only about 120,000 men armed and drilled, while the rest of the soldiers can be regarded only as undisciplined and unarmed reserves. As to gunpowder and arms, the Chinamen apparently have an abundant supply of their own. There are eight excellent arsenals; directed chiefly by Englishmen. The arsenal of Jian-Zin, for instance, turns out daily 3600 pounds of powder. At the arsenals of Nankin and Shanghai the American guns of Remington and Spencer are manufactured. At the Fatcheu-fu arsenal sub-marine mines are prepared. At the Lautcheu-su arsenal cartridges and arms are manufactured.

China has three separate fleets. The Canton fleet comprises twelve gunboats, of which nine were made in England, and are in charge of English officers. The Fu-kiang fleet is composed of six gunboats and a few tradesport vessels; these were made at Fu-tcheu under the supervision of Frenchmen. This fleet is in excellent order, and is in charge of Chinamen. The Shanghai fleet is composed of nine gunboats, two frigates and several transport vessels. All of these were made by the Chinamen

themselves, and are rather insignificant. Recently China has got from England eight iron clads, armed with guns of the largest calibre.

The strongest and most effective part of the Chinese fleet is made up of thirteen small gunboats, named after the letters of the Greek alphabet, of 1,350 tons displacement. They are built of steel, and are propelled by twin screws driven by compound engines of, together, 2,600 indicated horse power. They each carry two 26-ton and 10-inch breech-loading guns, mounted upon center pivots, one forward and one aft. Each of these heavy guns commands a nearly all-around fire. The charge of the gun is 180 pounds of powder, the weight of the projectile 400 pounds, and the penetrative power equal to pierce eighteen inches of solid, unbacked iron-plate. They carry besides in each four 40-pounder breech-loading guns, two 9-pounder breech-loading guns, two Nordenfolds and four Gatlings, and furthermore, two steam cutters fitted with spar torpedoes. The vessels are also armed with a formidable steel knife-edge spur or ram. Without claiming too much for these vessels, says the London Times, it should be remarked of them that the penetrative power and range of their guns, measured by the accepted official standard, exceed those of any gun yet afloat, except those of the English *Inflectible* and the Italian *Dullio*. No unarmed ship that carries guns can be compared for a moment with them, and no unarmed ship equals them in speed.—*St. Petersburg Gazette*.

The Public Lands.

The commissioner of the general land office, Hon. N. C. McFarland, in his annual report states that the disposal of the public land during the year embraced 19,983,789 acres, and the Indian lands 399,235 acres, an increase over 1882 of about 5,000,000 acres. The receipts from all sources in connection with the disposal of public lands were \$11,088,479, and from the sale of Indian lands, \$622,404; total, \$11,713,883. The public lands were disposed of as follows: Public sales, 273,069 acres; private entries, 2,179,955 acres; pre-emption entries, 2,285,710 acres; mineral entries, 31,520 acres; homestead entries, 8,171,914 acres; timber culture entries, 3,110,930 acres; entries with military bounty land warrants, 45,414 acres; entries with land claim scrip, 10,508 acres. Total number of claims and filings posted during the year, 251,685, aggregating 30,000,000 acres. The increase in the number of claims recorded in 1883 was 55,548 over the year 1882. The commissioner states that he is satisfied that pre-emption filings are made or procured to be made to a great extent for speculative purposes.

He renews his recommendation that the pre-emption law be repealed. The report recommends an amendment to the homestead laws requiring a period of not less than six months elapse after the settlement of a claim has been placed on record before final proof shall be admitted, irrespective of the alleged time of residence prior to the entry. The commissioner states that the commutation feature of the homestead law is open to the same abuses as the pre-emption law. He urges that the homestead law be amended so as to require proof of actual residence and improvement for a period of not less than two years before a homestead entry may be commuted by cash payments. The report further recommends the total repeal of the timber culture law on account of its inherent defects. The same objection the commissioner finds in the operation of the desert land act, and he finds entries have been largely made for speculative purposes with no other intention of reclamation. The practical operation of the law has been to enable

land to be purchased in large quantities, thus resulting in more encouragement to monopoly than encouragement to reclamation. The report also says the timber and stone land act is flagrantly violated. "Information is in my possession," the commissioner says, "that much of the most valuable timber land remaining in the possession of the government on the Pacific coast is being taken up by home and foreign capitalists through the medium of entries made by persons hired for that purpose. I have found it necessary to suspend all entries of this class and direct an investigation." The commissioner is of the opinion that the timber lands should be reserved by law from ordinary disposal and sold only after appraisal and upon settled bids. He recommends that congress make legislation in relation to private land claims in New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona, and recommends that a commissioner for each of these territories be appointed to examine and settle these claims.

The construction of 1,210 miles of land grant railroads were reported during the year, making a total of 17,449 miles of road reported as constructed under all grants to June 30, 1883. The question of declaring the forfeiture of these grants where railroads have not been constructed in the official period of time is deemed an appropriate one for legislation.

The commissioner recommends the passage of an act making false and fraudulent returns of public surveys punishable by fine and imprisonment. Much progress has been made in the work of protecting the public lands and public timber. The practice of fencing public lands is condemned, and the recommendation renewed that an act be passed imposing penalties for this offence, and for preventing illegal settlement and entry by force and intimidation.

The commissioner asks that his salary be fixed at \$5,000, and for a moderate increase of the salaries of the principal officials and clerks in his department. The character and responsibility of the office, together with the fact that its business has increased eighty-two per cent since 1881, appears to the commissioner to justify this request.—*S. F. Bulletin*



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