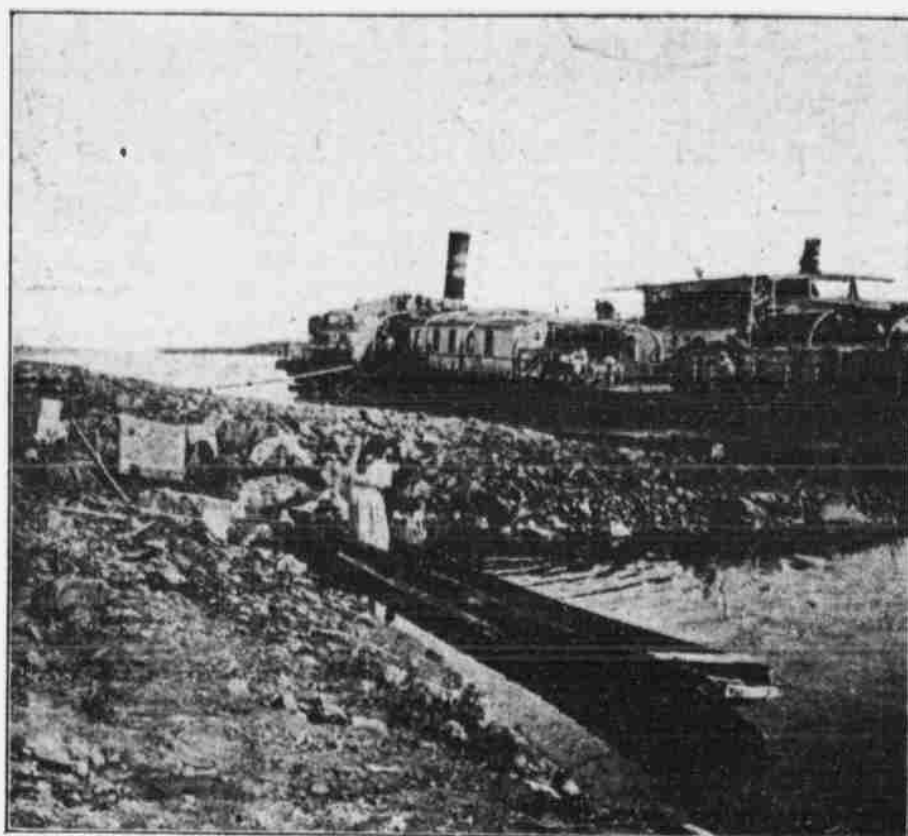


# Russia, Manchuria's Aladdin



FILLING WATER CASKS AT Khabarovsk.



STEAMERS ON THE AMUR, WAITING FOR A SUFFICIENT STAGE OF WATER

(Copyright, 1904, by William Thorp.)  
They terribly carpet the earth with dead,  
and before the cannons cool  
They walk unarmed, by twos and threes,  
inviting the living to school.  
—Kipling.

**N**OTHING in history—not even in the history of our own country, or in the exploitation of the gold-bearing parts of Australia—equals the amazing development of Manchuria since 1900.

During one month of the summer of that year Russia, in putting down the Boxer uprising, ruthlessly swept the land with fire and sword its armies crowding a year of war into a space of thirty days. The massacre of the Chinese at Blagoveshensk and the destruction of the population of Algur in the flames of their own houses were typical of the Russian method of warfare.

Then, all suddenly, when the Boxer armies had been annihilated and the besieged Russian railroads rescued, peace officially reigned over the land. Critics of Russian methods might have said, "They made a wilderness and called it peace," and there would have been truth in the accusation. But almost before the smoke of the guns had rolled away and the ashes of the burned villages had grown cold, Russia set to work with feverish energy to repeople the desert and create cities where hamlets once had been and towns where the wolf had roamed unchecked.

The weak point in the business, as in the whole scheme of Russian administration and colonization in the east, is that it is artificially stimulated. The government does everything, or is at the back of everything. Most business enterprises are subsidized, directly or indirectly, by the government. The government goes ahead of the people all the time. There is no restless impulse driving the Russian peasant to reach out to the uttermost ends of Asia and to carve out a home and fortune for himself, as American pioneers did by slow degrees until they reached the Pacific coast.

This has always been the history of Russian expansion. There was a Russian governor, generations ago, who built a fleet of armored ships and placed them on the Caspian, threatening Persia. When he was remonstrated with, he replied:

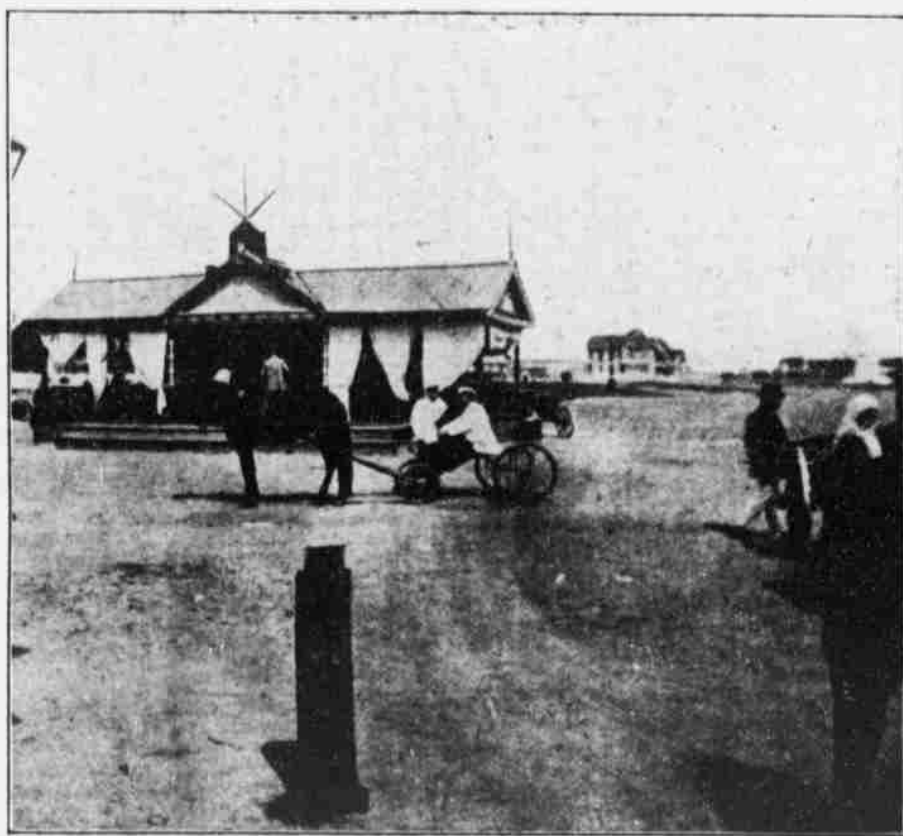
"They are needed to take supplies to our settlers on the eastern shores of the lake."

"But there are no settlers there," he was told.

"No? Well, that is a detail. The ships will take some settlers there, and then carry supplies to them."

There, in a nutshell, is the order of the Russian advance. The flag goes first and makes its conquests. Then come the industrial and commercial interests, which give the flag a colorable excuse for remaining.

At the end of the campaign Russia had nearly 200,000 troops in Manchuria and the adjacent Russian provinces. Strong detachments, mostly Cossacks, were posted at short intervals all along the lines of railway construction; small but strong forts were built for them, and the work interrupted by the Boxer outbreak was resumed with redoubled energy long before the fighting was over. Indeed, although the great campaign of 1900 ended so quickly, guerrilla warfare on a small scale was being vigorously prosecuted in the summer of 1902, and the Chunchuses—Admiral Alexieff's "red-bearded brigands"—were giving a lot of trouble as recently as last summer. They were Russia's standing excuse for not carrying out her



RUSSIAN OFFICERS' HEADQUARTERS IN MUKDEN.

numerous diplomatic pledges to evacuate Manchuria.

A good deal of misapprehension exists as to who these Chunchuses are. The Russian authorities try to make out that they are the bandits who roamed Manchuria before they entered the country, and who were produced by the wretched misgovernment of the Manchu officials. This is not the fact. Only a small proportion of the Chunchuses have been in the bandit business for that length of time. The great majority were made outlaws by the campaign of 1900.

Russian victories, and Russian massacres drove the remnants of the Boxer hordes and the Chinese regular troops to seek safety in the wild recesses of the mountains and forests. They were joined by large numbers of peaceful peasants whose families had been exterminated and whose farms had been laid waste by the Russians. Thus it was that a considerable proportion of the inhabitants of Manchuria were transformed by Russian policy into desperate brigands, and have been hunted down ever since like wild dogs.

Under these circumstances the development of Manchuria had to be emphatically a military development. The towns, which sprang up like mushrooms almost overnight, were in reality huge military posts.

Take the case of Khabarovsk. When the Russians went to Manchuria it was only a small village. At the beginning of 1901 it was a flourishing town of 15,000 people; but nearly everybody in the place was either a government official of some kind or a soldier.

"When I passed through the town in 1901," said Archibald Colquhoun, the well known English traveler, "there were no fewer than twenty-nine generals there. The whole place simply bristled with uniforms, the officers were quartered in every house and were sleeping in every corner of the military club, some six or seven in the billiard room."

Still more wonderful was the rapid growth of Harbin. A tiny fishing village

before the Russian advent, it was selected as the headquarters of the railway construction work. One contractor alone built over 500 houses for military officers and civilian officials within the space of two or three months. Still, there was not enough accommodation for the swarm of them, and a hotel with 400 rooms was rapidly run up. Streets and boulevards were laid out, theaters, restaurants, government buildings and churches erected—in brief, a fully equipped modern city was created as if by the waving of a magician's wand.

It was up-to-date civilization—but civilization with a difference. Forty-two withered heads of Chunchuses were hung up along one of the palatial boulevards of Old Harbin for six months in 1902, "pour encourager les autres."

Russians took hold of Kirin, built river docks and shipbuilding yards there, and made the place an important town within a few months. Russian bazars replaced the Chinese markets in other towns, or grew up beside them. Russian tax collectors took their places along the frontier; Russian syndicates were formed to exploit the vast mineral wealth of the country; Russian steamers and barges ran the old junk traffic off the Manchurian rivers; and in every direction the Russianizing of Manchuria went forward by leaps and bounds.

Enormous numbers of immigrants, increasing month by month and year by year, were brought from Russia along the Trans-Siberian railroad and down the Amur river to be settled on large farms—very much larger than they could cultivate—in the vast regions newly opened to colonization by the prowess of Russian arms. The land was given to the colonists for nothing—it is cheap to give away other people's land—but the Russian government also gave them agricultural implements, cattle and advances of money, the latter nominally repayable within a term of years, but in reality never expected to be repaid.

Great efforts were made by the author-

ties to establish these settlers on a self-supporting basis, but those very efforts have tended to pauperize them, and they seem to be hopelessly unable to compete with the Chinese and Korean farmers, who have swarmed in and occupied land alongside them. The authorities talk much of their educational and civilizing mission, but the Russian settlers are the most backward people in the land.

"The villages are at a considerable distance from each other," said a European traveler who went through the country two years ago. "Frequently there is no school within reach, for these are only found in the larger and older settlements, and the people, thus left without education or ennobling influences of any kind, relapse into a state of semi-barbarism. Many of the farms are inland, but the majority of the settlers live in the little log villages clustered along the banks of the rivers, of which one passes twenty or thirty a day. On Russian maps these villages make an imposing show, but in reality, compared to the vast area available for colonization, they are but drops in the ocean."

It will be observed that the conditions, in some respects, are much like those which Americans faced in the winning of the west. The lack of education and "ennobling influences" is inevitable in such lonely surroundings, and may be regarded as being merely a temporary condition. This failure to attain, at the outset, a measure of impossible success is not to be set down to the discredit of the Russian authorities. Taking account of the brief time they have been working to develop the country, they have accomplished wonders. They would probably have speedily remedied many of the shortcomings noted by travelers if the war with Japan had not upset all their plans.

After the building and guarding of the railways the chief energies of the authorities were applied to the fortification of Port Arthur and the building of the brand new city of Dalny, or Tallenwan. Millions of dollars were spent on the forts and docks at Port Arthur, and millions more were being spent when the war broke out.

The building of Dalny as a terminus for the Siberian railway astounded the world, so colossal was the scheme and so rapid its execution. In 1901 Dalny was simply a small collection of godowns, huts and rough work shops. In 1902 over \$5,000,000 had been spent upon the work, on which 30,000 coolies were then engaged, and twice as much money lay ready to be expended for the completion of the scheme. Five piers, two docks, theaters, churches, boulevards, thousands of houses and innumerable huts for the natives were being built—all destined for the population which was to be imported later on, which, indeed, had already begun to settle in the place when war broke out.

Nothing seemed to be left undone, nothing unthought of by the Russian officials in the development of the country, which lay within their power. The genius of the Russian character is deeply religious. As soon as Manchuria became, to all intents and purposes, a Russian province, it had to have its bishop of the orthodox church; and Innocent, the archimandrite of Peking, was promptly appointed to the dignity. He established an elaborate ecclesiastical organization, covering the whole of the country. Every lonely village of raw settlers, every Cossack post, even each isolated farmer, was in touch with a church and a priest before the war with Japan.

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