

upon mountain-desert, already won, and, eastward, sweep horizons which still salute the throne of far Peking. Unless your mind be wholly given to contemplation of things abstract and general, or to things concrete and narrowly personal, you must feel something of thrill when, after Taldyk's descent, you stumble into the first Chinese station. The simple Cossack officer, with whom we ate black bread three days ago, was commissioned by a magic-worshipping, devout Christian tyrant in St. Petersburg. This courteous yellow man, whose ragged soldiers light the way with paper lanterns, lives by the breath of an old woman who guesses at outside things from Peking's thick-shadowed imperial garden. That barren ridge behind is the political ridge-pole of Asia. On one side are the electric light and the cherished rifle, on the other the fantastic lantern and the neglected battle-axe. On which side shall be found the greater number of units of happiness per capita of human beings I do not know. Three hundred years ago it would have been easy to say on which side could be found the greater light of human reason and civility and worth of all kinds save that of savage strength. Where shall be found fifty years hence the balance of value, merely as measured by European standards, we may not know. Playing prophet is but risky business since Japan began using Christian devices and has adopted our most popular paraphrase of the Sermon on the Mount, in which "blessed" is changed to "cursed," and the whole is spoken in sprightly tones by field artillery, accents given by magazine rifles, and the gathered fragments are legs and arms *disjecta*.