

## THE TRADE FEATURES OF THE GREAT COMMERCIAL NATIONS

### VIII. THE TRADE FEATURES OF JAPAN

#### JAPAN THE GREAT BRITAIN OF ASIA

JAPAN consists of a group of islands situated to the east of the continent of Asia, somewhat as the British Isles are situated to the west of the continent of Europe. But the Japan islands are of volcanic origin and are very numerous. There are said to be 4223 of them. However, there are only four that are of important size, and it is these that are usually thought of when Japan is spoken of. The area of these four islands is 147,655 miles, which is almost a fourth more than that of Great Britain and Ireland. The population (census of 1895) is 42,270,620, which is 4,000,000 more than that of Great Britain and Ireland. The population per square mile is 286, which, though large, is not quite so large as that of Great Britain. If, however, we do not take into consideration the northern island (Yezo), which is still partly inhabited by uncivilised aborigines, the population per square mile is 375, which is considerably in excess of that of both China and Great Britain and Ireland, though still considerably less than that of England alone. The above statistics do not include the island of Formosa (area 13,500 miles, population almost 2,000,000), which was transferred from

China to Japan in 1895, at the close of the late Chino-Japanese war.

#### JAPAN'S WONDERFUL TRANSFORMATION

The significant thing about Japan is the rapidity with which it has become transformed from a semi-civilised nation into one of the great nations of the modern world. Until the year 1868 Japan was an unprogressive, unenlightened country of the usual Asiatic type, scarcely differing in any way from an inland province of China of to-day. In that year a revolution took place which put the whole power of the empire into the hands of the present Mikado, or Emperor. Immediately Japan began to assimilate Western ideas of civilisation and to adopt Western methods of trade, commerce, manufacture, government, and education. Until 1889 the government remained an absolute monarchy. In that year the Mikado voluntarily promulgated a constitution by which a legislative Parliament, or "Imperial Diet," and an executive Cabinet of State Ministers were instituted, so that the government of Japan is now as "constitutional" as that of Germany or Great Britain. The government is in other ways thoroughly modern. Education, for example, is almost as well looked after as in Germany or New England. There are 220 kindergartens established, 97 technical schools, and 49 normal schools for the training of teachers (one being for the training of high-school teachers), besides elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, special schools (1263 of these), and universities. The University of Tokio is an imperial institution, supported entirely by the government, with colleges in law, science, medicine, literature, engineering, and agriculture. Education, between the ages of six and fourteen, is compulsory. The army, too, is wholly a



modern affair. It consists of 285,000 men, and an idea of its modernness may be gathered from the fact that an important part of its organisation is its training schools and colleges. Even the non-commissioned officers are specially trained and educated. Altogether the students in the military schools and colleges of Japan number 2400. The navy, too, as is well known, is both modern and efficient. It consists of 5 battleships and 15 high-class cruisers, besides 46 other vessels,—torpedo craft, gunboats, convoy ships, etc.,—and it is intended to build an immense fleet of 19 battle-ships and cruisers, and 100 torpedo craft in addition.

#### JAPAN'S AGRICULTURE

Japan being of volcanic origin, much of its soil is unfit for cultivation. The total productive area amounts to less than thirty per cent., and even of this only a small portion is capable of being tilled by modern methods. At present only twelve per cent. of the whole surface of the country is devoted to agriculture, even including pasturing. There is, however, but little pasturing, and the principal implement of cultivation is the spade. The modern plough is unknown. But manure (principally domestic manure and fish refuse) is very generously used, and by this means the returns are abundant. The principal food crop is RICE. Other food crops are wheat, barley, and the soya bean, but these not numerously so. The principal cultivated products for purposes of commerce are the mulberry tree (for supporting the silkworm), the tea plant, the lacquer tree, and the camphor tree. Rice also is grown for export as well as for home consumption, and COTTON is very largely grown for home manufacture. No milk, butter, or cheese is produced, scarcely any meat, no wood, and scarcely any leather. (For boots and shoes

paper is used instead of leather.) Of cattle there are only 1,000,000, as compared with 10,000,000 in the British Isles, although the population of Japan is considerably the greater. Of horses there are 1,500,000, and the raising of horses is much encouraged by the government, but principally for military purposes. Horses, indeed, are but little employed. In cities, for purposes of carriage and cartage, men are used instead of horses. Even in rural districts horses are unknown for farming purposes, and not even the hand-cart or wheelbarrow is used. Everything is carried. Fruit is much raised,—oranges, apples, walnuts, plums, peaches, and grapes,—but Japanese fruits are of very inferior quality. FLOWERS are raised everywhere in great variety and in great abundance, and the chrysanthemum is the emblem of the country and is used on postage stamps.

#### JAPAN'S MANUFACTURES: THEIR FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

The future of Japan depends upon its MANUFACTURES, but these also are not without their difficulties. The mineral wealth of the country is very great, principally in COAL and IRON. On the northern island alone (Yezo) the coal deposits are two thirds those of all Great Britain. Unfortunately, however, owing to the mountainous character of the country, railways in Japan are difficult to construct, and the transportation of coal or of ore is difficult and expensive. As the coal deposits and iron deposits are not near together charcoal has been used for smelting purposes. Iron, therefore, so far, has not been produced profitably, and its production has decreased. But silver is mined abundantly, and also KAOLIN, or the raw material used in the manufacture of the beautiful porcelain of the country. Copper and antimony are also large articles of export. The principal manufactures of



Japan as yet are the TEXTILES, especially SILK and COTTON. In these modern methods are used, although so far the productions of the native domestic looms are superior to those of the factory looms. The production of textiles by machinery has increased fourfold in ten years, and now amounts to about \$40,000,000 annually. This, however, is not a large amount, being less than the textile production of any important state in Europe, even Switzerland, or Sweden and Norway, and is only one twentieth that of the United States. Until recently the factory owner in Japan has had the advantage of cheap labour. But the Japanese artisan is also becoming "modernised," and is now demanding higher wages, and enforcing his demand by "strikes." And for all their deftness in domestic manufacture Japanese workmen are not yet as skilful in machine labour as British or American workmen. It follows, therefore, that textile manufacturing in Japan, especially the manufacture of cotton and wool, is not yet out of its tentative or probationary stage. But Japan, having the advantage of an extensive home market for cotton goods (like the Chinese, the Japanese common people wear cotton garments all the year round, in winter padding them for warmth), and having the raw material at her own door (she already grows a large proportion of all the raw cotton she needs), and having, too, an abundance of coal at hand, must needs become a great cotton-manufacturing country. The same conditions hold with regard to the possibilities of Japan's silk manufactures.

#### POSSIBILITIES OF INCREASED FOREIGN TRADE WITH JAPAN

As in the case of China, the possibilities of increased trade with Japan lie principally in WOOLLEN MANUFACTURES and in BREAD-STUFFS. In addition there is a fair

chance of increased trade in metal manufactures. The use of woollen garments in Japan in winter is extending even to the middle and working classes. And inasmuch as the country does not raise sheep, and is, indeed, not well able to raise sheep, such woollen clothing, woollen cloth, or raw wool as is used must be imported. Hitherto the woollen manufactures which have been established in the country have not been very successful, and the probability is that Japan's import trade in woollen clothing and woollen cloths will increase year by year. Similarly, from the fact that the agriculture of the country is not adapted to the growth of wheat, nor seems ever likely to be so adapted, and also from the fact that both the higher and the middle classes of Japan are rapidly adopting European and American habits of living, it is very probable that the importation of wheat and wheat flour into Japan will also continue to increase year by year. And from the difficulty there is of smelting iron cheaply it is probable that the importation of iron and iron goods (which in raw iron, iron and steel rails, iron small wares and nails, spinning and other machinery, and steel ships, already amounts to \$8,000,000 a year) is likewise likely to increase greatly year by year also.

#### JAPAN'S MODERN TRADE FACILITIES

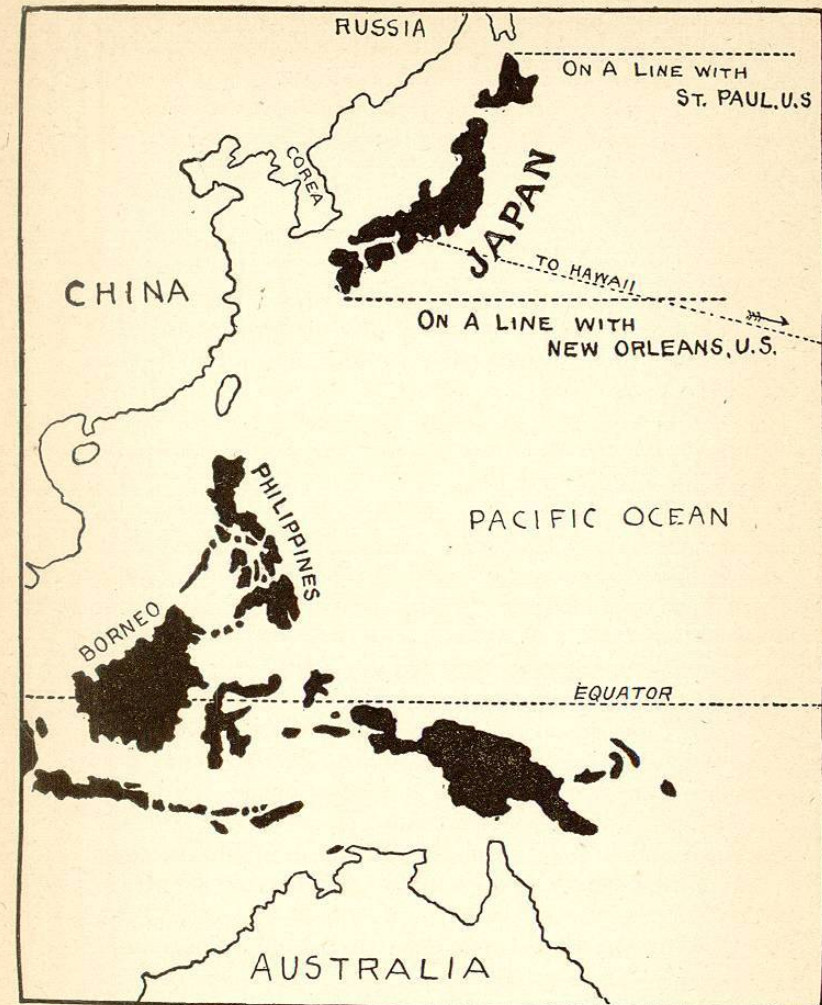
Owing to the irregular conformation of the surface of the country, good roads in Japan can scarcely be said to exist. But 20,000 miles of roads have been built, of which the state maintains about one fourth. There are also 2505 miles of railway, of which the state owns and maintains about one fourth also. There are 11,720 miles of telegraph routes, with 37,000 miles of wire; 520 miles of telephone routes, with 6347 miles of wire; and 387 miles of submarine cable routes, with 1481 miles of wire.



The country also has a merchant navy of 827 steam vessels of modern type and 702 sailing-vessels of modern type, besides 668 native craft. Owing to the irregular and rocky nature of the coast-line and the great number of small islands which exist, numerous lighthouses are needed; but Japan's lighthouse system is one of the best in the world.

#### JAPAN'S FOREIGN TRADE

Japan has a foreign trade of \$60,000,000 annually in exports and \$86,000,000 annually in imports. Of the export trade the principal part, running from a fourth to a third, is with the United States. The next largest part is with France, the next with Hongkong, the next with China, and the next with Great Britain. But Great Britain's direct share is not more than a twelfth. Of the import trade the principal part, almost one third, is with Great Britain. The United States' share is about a twelfth, and that of France about one twenty-fifth. The principal exports are RAW SILK (about one third of the whole), SILK GOODS (about one tenth of the whole), TEA, coal, copper, rice, and matches. The export of matches amounts to \$2,500,000 annually. Characteristic exports, though they do not figure largely in the total amount, are floor rugs, lacquered ware, porcelain ware, fans, umbrellas, bronze ware, repoussé work, paper ware and papier-mâché, fibre carpets, and camphor. There is also a large export of fish, shellfish, cuttlefish, edible seaweed, and mushrooms to China and other Asiatic countries. The chief import is RAW COTTON (almost one fifth of the whole). Other important imports are sugar (although she raises almost 100,000,000 pounds of sugar herself annually), cotton yarn, cotton goods, woollen cloths, flannels and blankets, kerosene oil, watches, and articles of iron and steel as above enumerated. The fishing indus-



Japan's relation to eastern Asia.



try is a very important one and over 2,500,000 people are engaged in it. The number of fishing-boats is about 400,000. The fish trade, which includes seaweed, is (when not for home consumption) principally with China.

#### JAPAN'S SPECIAL TRADE CENTRES

The foreign commerce of Japan, like that of China, is allowed to be carried on only at certain ports, called "treaty ports," of which there are nineteen, the principal being Yokohama, Osaka, Nagasaki, Hakodate, Niigata, and Kobe. The two principal cities, not treaty ports, are Tokio and Kioto. TOKIO (1,300,000) is the capital and chief centre of the political, commercial, and literary activity of the empire. In many respects Tokio is a "modern" city. Its educational features are excellent. Its sanitation also is good. KIOTO (340,000) was formerly the capital, but after the revolution of 1868 it was superseded in this respect by Tokio. YOKOHAMA (170,000), distant from Tokio eighteen miles, is the chief place of the empire for foreign trade. Its foreign trade, indeed, is more than half that of the whole empire, being about \$75,000,000 annually. OSAKA (487,000) is in respect to population the second city of the empire, but its foreign trade is not large and is carried on principally at HIOGO, a port near it. NIIGATA (50,000) is the only treaty port on the west side of Japan, the surf caused by the winter monsoon making the flat west coast of the country very dangerous for shipping for half the year. Other important ports are KOBE (161,000) and NAGASAKI (72,000). NAGOYA (215,000) is an important inland town.

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### IX. THE TRADE FEATURES OF AFRICA

#### AFRICA FIFTEEN YEARS AGO

WITHIN a period of about fifteen years the continent of Africa has been the scene of a vast partition. At the beginning of that period the amount of African territory that was subject to European control was comparatively small. The British were firmly established in South Africa, and had possessions along the coasts elsewhere principally in the west. The French were firmly established in Algeria and in Senegal. The Portuguese had their ancient settlements in Mozambique and Lower Guinea. Morocco on the northwest and Abyssinia in the northeast were more or less well-established governments that were independent. Egypt in the extreme northeast, with tributary possessions extending along the Nile into the far interior of the continent, was also a more or less well-established government that possessed a quasi-independence, though it was nominally dependent upon Turkey. But elsewhere, except in a few other places controlled by European authority, the whole continent may be described as having been in its original state of savagery or semi-savagery. No government existed anywhere that was either beneficent or stable. The slave-traffic abounded everywhere.