

BRITISH TRAINS TO CHINA

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ALL-BRITISH RAILWAY.

Combat Russian Influence—A Writer Proposes a Line From the Mediterranean Through Southern Asia Will Open Up New Fields of Trade.

With our increasing responsibilities in China comes the great question of effectually protecting and stimulating our commercial interests in that part of the world. To that end, the consideration of means of access is one of the most important factors in the development of British trade.

The great Siberian Railway is some way off completion, but is already bringing about some far-reaching changes on the map of Asia, and we may rest assured that the changes will be more rapid and comprehensive as soon as traffic is once more opened across the Asiatic continent to Port Arthur.

TO OUTSTRIP RUSSIA. The point raised in the article is how best to combat, rival, and outstrip the enterprise of Russia in thus tapping these new fields of trade-entirely.

Mr. Moreing has a very definite reply, and suggests that, as Russia is recasting the map of Asia in her own interests by the device of a grand trunk line to China, why should not Great Britain do the same.

THROUGH ALIEN TERRITORY. The inherent point of difference between the two enterprises is that the Russian line will for the most part traverse her own dominions, as far, at least, as the Chinese frontier, while a proportion of the proposed British railway should run through regions where, though our influence may be paramount, the actual sovereignty rests in other hands.

Mr. Moreing is of opinion that the western point of departure must inevitably be Alexandria or Port Said. Bearing in mind that our great object is to secure a British railway, which will run through the British zone or sphere, and interfere as little as possible with the French, German, Russian or Turkish claims, which might attend present attempts to revive the old Euphrates Valley project, we naturally turn to Egypt, whose position marks her out from every point of view as the 'half-way house' on the road from England to the East.

CAIRO AND ALEXANDRIA. Cairo and Alexandria, it is predicted, "from their unrivalled central position and accessibility to both continents, and as the terminal of both the Cape to Cairo and Egypto-Indo-Chinese lines, are destined to regain much of their ancient prestige, and become two of the most important cities of the world."

NO INSUPERABLE DIFFICULTY. The deductions drawn by the author of this interesting article tend to prove that "the circumstances for the construction of a through line to China are far more favorable than they were for Russia in the case of the Siberian Railway." There appear to be no insuperable difficulties attached to the initiation of this Imperial scheme, although it is surrounded by conflicting interests, which will have to be smoothed away and overcome.

It is worth while bearing in mind that as soon as the proposed line reaches India it will revolutionize the sea route and traffic with Australia. It is about 3,500 miles from Madras to Perth, the capital of western Australia, and, in view of the federation of the Australian colonies, Perth will shortly be connected with Sydney by rail.

CHINESE PRIDE IN COFFINS.

Superstitions That May Delay Burials for Years in China.

A sympathetic foreigner, recently writing to an American newspaper, bewailed the heartlessness of Chinese sons and daughters, who in the parent's lifetime prepare his coffin and shroud, and openly talk with him of his demise.

The facts do not justify the sympathy, for there can be no truer evidence of filial piety in China than for a child to present to his parent a burial outfit. Let the head of the family be assured, by the indisputable evidence of the coffin in the house, that a respectable burial will be his, and one of the greatest anxieties of his life is relieved.

It is singular to note with what certainty a Chinaman who is old or ill will prepare for his demise. Premonitions of coming fate seem to enter into his soul, and he sends word to his relatives and friends that he is about to die—what day can they come to his funeral? If he has not been forehanded enough to secure his burial outfit, there is a great commotion among the households till money is collected for a coffin and also for feasting and music for a funeral is a great social event.

English Army Bearskins. The Regulations About the Big Fur Hats of the Coldstream, Grenadiers and Scots Guards.

For more than one hundred and thirty years "a tall hat of fur," has been a conspicuous article of headgear in the British army, and it was with something of a shock that people read in the papers the other day that a committee was going to sit to consider the growing scarcity of the bearskins from which are made the imposing full-dress hats of the Foot Guards, says the London Telegraph.

NO SERVICE TO WEAR IT. This much is necessary to explain the alarm felt the other day, when it was announced that a War Office Headress Committee was about to tamper with the Guardsmen's bearskins. Fortunately, the committee has only limited powers. Its only function this time is, so to speak, to haggle with tradesmen. The plain fact is that bearskins are growing scarce, and the cost of providing the Guards with their magnificent "tall hat of fur," is increasing yearly in a remarkable manner.

SMOKELESS COAL. A report of tests of a smokeless coal recently invented in England states that the fire resembles an extra bright coke fire, with addition of long white and blue flames rising from it. The heat is intense. It is claimed that one ton of water in the case of Welsh steam coal. The fuel used for raising steam is made up in perforated bricks, quettes weighing over ten pounds apiece, but for domestic fires it takes the shape of small circular cakes. These can be sold retail in London at \$5 a ton. The composition consists of about 93 per cent. of coal dust and 7 per cent. of a mixture of pyro-

SHIPS WRECKED ON CALM DAYS.

Waves Which Look Harmless, But Which Are Terribly Dangerous.

Many visitors to the coast are sorely puzzled when a boatman either refuses to put off from shore, or at most, to go far from land, on a day when there is no sign of an approaching storm, and the water is only moved by a long and gently rolling swell, says Pearson's Weekly.

Argument is of no avail, and if the old salt is pushed for a reason he will only reply with some cryptogramic remark about "the ground sea," the questioner then retiring more bewildered than before.

It is hard to understand how such a gentle swell can presage danger, but to experienced eyes it gives a warning that must be heeded. All along the west and parts of the south coasts of England and Ireland, as well as the west coast of Scotland, uncounted tales are told of ships which on a perfectly calm day have been within a few hours first caught by a gentle roll of water and finally thrown on a rock-bound shore by the dreaded "ground sea."

In the region of the storm, these waves are fierce, BREAKING BILLOWS, but as they get further away they settle down into long, rolling ridges, which travel onward in long, unbroken lines, perfectly parallel with each other.

ONE TON TO THE SQUARE INCH. The necessity for caution will be recognized. All waves that come in parallel ridges, however, are not dangerous, as there is a "wind billow" that is closely allied to the "ground sea" in appearance.

IRISH THRIFTER THAN SCOTCH. Some preconceived notions as to the saving qualities of men and women of various nationalities have been rudely attacked in official figures which have recently appeared in England showing the average of Post Office Saving Bank deposits to be £13 in Scotland to £16 in England and £21 in Ireland. Heretofore, it has been popularly supposed that "canny Scotchmen" displayed many more of the qualities of thrift than their more easy-going English brethren, and decidedly more than the happy-go-lucky Irishman, whose lack of frugality is often cited as a barrier to Ireland's commercial success.

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