

VARIOUS

THE GREAT ROUND
WORLD AND WHAT IS
GOING ON IN IT, VOL. 1,
NO. 57, DECEMBER 9,
1897

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December 9, 1897 / Various — «Public Domain»,

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The Great Round World and What Is Going On In It, Vol. 1, No. 57, December 9, 1897 / A Weekly Magazine for Boys and Girls

Germany is furnishing us with some interesting news this week.

She has successfully accomplished something which, to simple folks who are not diplomatists, seems like a plain, every-day case of robbery.

Here is the story of it, and you can judge for yourselves.

Some German missionaries have been killed in China, and Germany has seized a Chinese port in revenge.

Missionaries are, as you know, holy and devoted men who go to far countries to spread the knowledge of the Gospel among heathen and unenlightened people.

These good men have always suffered much for their faith. They go wherever their duty calls, and even carry their message of peace to the terrible cannibals who kill and eat men.

In the early annals of our own country we have records of the terrible sufferings endured by these good men in their missionary work among the redskins.

Missionaries count their perils and their privations as nothing if they can but do the work of God.

Every government is particularly careful to do all that it can to protect its missionaries, and if ignorant savages do them harm, an attempt is always made to punish the wrongdoers, to teach them that these servants of God are well protected.

The German Catholic Church some time ago established a mission in Shantung Province, China. Recently the sad news was received in Berlin that the mission at Yen Chu Fu had been attacked, and two missionaries killed.

The shameful deed was at first attributed to pirates, but later it was found that it had been planned by the governor of the province in revenge for some old grievance.

Following this outrage came news that the captain of a German gunboat had been attacked by a Chinese mob, which also insulted the German flag by throwing stones at it.

The Government was extremely angry at this, and immediately demanded an explanation from China.

The Chinese Government expressed its sorrow for the occurrence, and sent orders to the governor of Shantung to arrest and punish the offenders.

Germany was informed of the action taken by the Chinese Government, which, it is said, used all possible diligence and haste to bring the offenders to justice; so much diligence, in fact, that on the 15th of the month the governor of Shantung telegraphed that he had arrested four of the culprits.

Germany, however, went right ahead in her own way, without paying any heed to the efforts China was making to appease her; and to the intense surprise of the world, simultaneously with the news of the arrests came word that Germany had seized one of the Chinese harbors in the Yellow Sea.

The Yellow Sea is on the east of China, and is formed by the peninsula of Korea. Shantung, where the missionaries were killed, is a province bordering on the Yellow Sea, and the fortified bay captured by the Germans is called Kiao Chou, and is an excellent harbor on the Shantung Coast, with the town of Kiao lying at its head.

This harbor was guarded by three forts, which were manned by fifteen hundred Chinese soldiers.

Without word or warning the German admiral entered the bay, steamed up opposite the forts, and ranged his ships in line of battle. He then sent word to the Chinese commander that the three forts must be vacated within three hours or he would bombard them.

The Chinese commander made no answer, so the German admiral proceeded to land a force of men to take possession of the place.

The Chinamen watched the proceedings without making any demonstration, and allowed the Germans to land six hundred soldiers and several guns without making an effort to prevent them.

As soon, however, as the force began to march upon the forts, the Chinese became panic-stricken, and fled helter-skelter to the hills.

The Germans marched into the forts in good order, and took possession of them without striking a blow. They then hauled down the Chinese flag and ran up their own in its place.

It was found that the Chinese commander and his family had not fled with the rest of the garrison, and as these people promptly placed themselves under the protection of Germany, there was no trouble with them.

The German soldiers proceeded to man the forts, and Germany is now in possession of them. It is believed that she means to keep them.

China is justly indignant at this act on the part of Germany, and fully realizes that she has good cause to declare war; but she is so weak in military and naval force that she is not able to resent the outrage, and the robbers are likely to be able to hold their prize.

Europe is astonished that Germany should have committed such a daring act. It has been understood by all the European nations that when savages misbehave, the only way to teach them manners is to step in and seize their lands; but China is not a savage country, and the Chinese cannot be treated like ignorant barbarians. Every one is wondering what the outcome will be.

Germany evidently expects war, and is preparing for it. She has withdrawn her troops from Crete, and has sent them to the East, it is supposed to Kiao Chou.

You remember, of course, that when the Powers occupied Crete, each nation in the combination landed a certain number of soldiers on the island to help preserve peace.

Some of these soldiers have been at Crete ever since, and some have been withdrawn. England called hers away some time since, and now Germany, having use for her soldiers in China, has ordered hers to other duty.

It is said that the Emperor William has long desired to own a port in China, and that he has used the murder of the missionaries as a pretext to help him gain his ends.

We told you last week of his desire to increase the German navy. To accomplish this, it will be necessary for him to do as other nations do, that is, have ports all over the world where he can coal and repair his ships. He has therefore looked with longing eyes on Kiao Chou.

This harbor is one of the best along the coast; so good, indeed, is it, that Russia has been making offers to buy it. It has a great advantage in being far away from the British and Russian ports, thereby diminishing the chances of interference.

The Chinese have protested against Germany's unlawful act, and asked her when she proposes to withdraw her troops, as they have secured the offenders, and removed all cause of offence. Germany has made no reply, so China fears she means to keep the harbor she has taken.

Many people believe that some such act has long been contemplated by the Emperor.

China has, however, appealed to Russia for help, and as France and England are equally interested in the matter, serious trouble may ensue.

Russia has more than doubled her fleet in the Yellow Sea, and has now thirty-eight vessels in the neighborhood. England, France, and America have also sent ships thither.

From the news as we know it, it seems as if Germany had committed a very shameful act; but when we hear both sides of the question, we may find that she has only done the right thing for the preservation of her national honor.

The Sultan of Turkey has been getting into trouble again. Both Russia and Austria have been making things unpleasant for him.

Since his successes in the war he has begun to think himself a very important sovereign, and both Russia and Austria decided that if he were not checked he might become a very dangerous neighbor, so they met in consultation, and laid their plans for checking his ambition.

They first incited Bulgaria to rebel.

Bulgaria is a small principality on the north of Turkey, which is under the sovereignty of Turkey. Bulgaria enjoys home rule, and is governed by a prince elected by the people; the prince must not, however, be a member of any of the reigning families of Europe. Bulgaria is, however, a tributary state, and has to contribute toward the support of Turkey.

Instigated by Austria and Russia, Bulgaria demanded several small favors from the Sultan, insolently adding that if they were not granted she would declare her independence and throw off the yoke of Turkey.

Now until the peace with Greece is absolutely signed and sealed, the Sultan of Turkey cannot afford to quarrel with anybody, so he was obliged to give in, and grant Bulgaria's demands; but her independence made him feel somewhat uneasy and so he sent a number of soldiers to the Bulgarian frontier, to make sure that the Bulgarians behaved.

This was exactly what Austria and Russia desired. With her troops scattered, and uneasy nations on her borders, Turkey is much less dangerous.

The Bulgarian matter had hardly been settled when Austria discovered a new means of checking Turkey.

The Turkish officials in Asia Minor ill-treated an Austrian subject. He was the agent of the Austrian Lloyd's Steamship Company at Mersina, and had been summarily expelled from the city by order of the officials.

The Austrian consul at once interfered, and was grossly insulted by the Mutessarif, who is a sort of mayor, and also by the Vali, or governor, of Adana, in which province Mersina is situated. Adana is one of the Turkish provinces on the Mediterranean Sea, and Mersina is one of its chief seaport towns.

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