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343

The World

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To the Editor of The World:

It is not often that THE WORLD is at fault in matters of history, but the article in last Monday's issue referring to the Japanese Simonoseki Indemnity contains errors which in simple justice to a much-injured nation I beg leave to correct. The "Japanese authorities" never were guilty, as alleged, of "firing upon foreign commercial vessels." Three ships were fired upon at Simonoseki by a band of rebels to the Government, which the central rulers at the time were straining their energies to subdue. One of the three was an American bark, and, as it happened, she was endeavoring, when attacked, to force her way into a port, entrance to which was prohibited by treaty. The other two, Dutch and French, were in waters through which under international law it is doubtful if they were entitled to sail. The combined foreign naval assault upon Japan was instigated and organized by the British Minister in the interest of British trade, notwithstanding that no British ship was ever molested at any time. It was one of the most cruel and wanton outrages ever perpetrated upon an unoffending and defenseless country, yet the Japanese Government was compelled by threats of violence to pay what was sardonically called an "indemnity" amounting to \$3,000,000 to the United States, England, France and Holland. One American Minister, John A. Bingham, protested against this extortion; and in 1883, after the urgent demand of certain American citizens, the United States Government investigated the whole case, and found so much to be ashamed of in its share of the business that the entire principal of what had been received from Japan was promptly and voluntarily refunded to that Empire. This atonement was made in spite of earnest and repeated remonstrances on the part of Great Britain, and the action produced a feeling in Japan which if properly cultivated would enable America to exercise permanently a preponderating influence in that nation. The story of Japan's wrongs in this affair is one of the most painful and pathetic in Eastern records. Any who are interested in it may learn the full and verified details from a pamphlet entitled "Simonoseki," which is out of print but a copy of which exists in the Astor Library.

E. H. HOUSE.
New York, June 23.

(New Address)

343

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