

Inorama of Philippine Life ~



Earth, Sky, and Sea



I wonder!



The Speaker



Amused

But the true reason was: College students, known to be dangerously enlightened, had taken advantage of this harmless medium to tell the addresses, in anonymous enclosed letters, that they had better stop fighting altogether and return to their wives and children as China was a big place and mighty hard to conquer.

Here was a clear case of revolutionary activity—the first organized effort to disrupt the morale of the Japanese army from behind. Yet, despite the gravity of the affair, the police acted with much caution. A complete revelation, together with an airtight ban on comfort-bags, would have taxed the loyalty and patience of the soldier.

So he has begun to wonder. And a soldier who wonders is a dangerous man. He must be handled with velvet gloves if he is to remain loyal and obedient. The Japanese army is democratic in spirit, and there have been few complaints against superior officers. Most superiors come from an environment pretty close to that of the enlisted men: they have gone through a severe training in the paternal duties of military command and would hardly dare maltreat their subordinates. The case is slightly different with commissioned officers who lack respon-

sibility and who, in several instances, have ruthlessly proved their "superiority."

But a real problem lies with the army doctors. Their behavior is typical of that of medical assistants of any army that is hard up. In 1918, shortly before the end of the Great War, a European magazine published a cartoon of a German army doctor who sent wounded men back into the trenches. The men were lined up in front of his desk and, not bothering to look up, he declared each of them fit to fight. The last one he approved was a skeleton!

This, fundamentally, is the position of the Japanese army surgeon. No doubt he is human. No doubt he acts under orders; for the Japanese army cannot afford to keep men out of the front line too long. But the Japanese soldier who has been shot, and whose wound is hurting terribly, can hardly be expected to be convinced by this argument.

This is the background for the instances of disobedience which have occurred in the Yangtze sector. It is here where field surgeons encountered stiff resistance.

While instances of open rebellion have been sporadic thus far and could be quelled by stern disciplinary measures, cases of veiled discontent have proved

more dangerous. The most fascinating of those cases, representing a typically Oriental "roundabout" rebellion, was the famous Rape of Nanking.

Eye witnesses and correspondents have told the story of that singularly shocking event with every detail of rape, burning, torture, and looting. But "inside" story of the orgy, the historic insubordination of the Japanese conqueror, has never been told. One has to go to Tokyo and to discuss the event with high military authorities to conceive its full implications. The army which took Nanking after the Chinese defenders had abandoned the capital was under definite orders to march on. The opportunity was unique. The Chinese army was in a state of acute despair and demoralization. It took much time to reorganize the diffused units. There was a gap, and through this gap the Japanese army was to march on to Hankow. This was the strategic plan of the High Command, and there is reason to believe that Hankow could have been taken at that time.

Instead, the Japanese army got out of hand, disregarding orders and frustrating the push to Hankow. Their orgy, which lasted for the better part of a fortnight, gave the Chinese a

breathing spell. When order was re-established the Japanese army, aside from the blot on its shield, had lost the greatest battle of the China War. It had lost, to say it more exactly, a *full year* of blood and destruction and expense.

If the army should ever be taken back and thrown upon an exhausted and annoyed population, Japan would be ripe for a revolution. It is true that a "revolution" in the Western sense of the word is unimaginable. Seventy million loyal subjects of the Mikado may express disappointment and discontent in emphatic terms. But when it comes to overthrowing the existing regime, it is more than just law and order that stand in the path of open revolution. The Emperor, after all, is not a political figurehead. He is the supreme *divine* power, and revolt turns into sacrilege.

What is more likely to happen, under the constant and increasing pressure of an utterly disillusioned army, is a slow recession of the powers of the ruling clique, and a slow increase in the powers of the more liberal, civilian wing. Such a development, seen from the vantage point of the high command, is the real danger in Japan.—*Ernest O. Hauser, condensed from The Commentator.*