

THE JAPANESE PERIL.

SOME rather startling conclusions are reached in an article appearing in the current issue of The Forum, entitled "What Is Behind the Japanese Peril?" The article is signed Sigmund Henschen, who, as the editor of The Forum states in an introductory note, is an authority who regards the Japanese Peril as great, as do many Army and Navy officers.

The writer, in the very beginning of his article, ridicules the idea that Japan at heart is the friend of the United States, and asserts that noted Americans who have visited Japan, including ex-President Elliot of Harvard, have been blinded by the hospitality shown them by the polished subjects of the Mikado.

Answering the question "why should they quarrel with us?" the author says:

Let us first understand the Japanese! Do you know what Bushido is? It is something worse than Bernhardism. Bushido is a code that has been handed down to the Japanese from the Middle Ages. Its slogan is "Dai Nippon!" It goes "Deutschland Ueber Alles" one better. It means the glorification of the Japanese; and God help anybody who stands in their way. It teaches that no sacrifice is too great for the Mikado. It is the code of the empire. Its power is so great in these modern days that, when his Emperor died, Nogai, the hero of the Russian war, committed hari-kari, so that he might accompany his Emperor and safeguard him on his way to the Fields of Paradise. That happened but a few years ago, when one of the biggest men in Japan yielded to the doctrines of Bushido. It conclusively showed the enormous primitive feeling that is beneath the Japanese race.

With this underlying characteristic of the Nipponese as a basis, the writer proceeds to fix the casus bellum upon the part the United States took in the Portsmouth treaty, or rather the part the Japanese people were told was taken by the United States in that historic event. This he boldly asserts is what actually occurred in that connection:

You remember how Roosevelt stopped Japan's war with Russia and brought peace—a humane act, an act for which the Japanese people should be grateful. And secretly the Japanese government was. But that wasn't their game. They didn't tell the Japanese people that they should be grateful for peace. Dai Nippon! What they told them was this—"By treacherous diplomacy the United State government robbed you out of an indemnity that Russia should have paid."

Why? On the field of battle, Japan was the victor. Potentially she was defeated; financially she was at the end of her rope. * * * They signed peace without an indemnity.

Japanese money had built their army and navy. Japanese blood had gone out in the war. Did the Mikado's officials dare to say to the people, "We couldn't get any indemnity; you've got to pay higher taxes?" Instead they played the game cleverly. They turned their people against the one country that had been sympathetic with them in the war. They told them that the United States had robbed them of that indemnity. They fanned a hatred against us. They did this so they could build a bigger navy and a bigger army.

Calling attention to the necessity of Japan to seek a place or places for her people to colonize, because her population has so far outgrown the home country, and to the query about Manchuria for this purpose, the writer quotes Thomas F. Maillard, editor of The China Press, as his authority for the statement that the colonization of Manchuria has been an utter failure, and continues:

He (Maillard) points out that the Japanese government made every concession to Japanese colonists; but it didn't work. And here is where you get to the kernel of the Japanese proposition; in day labor, a Japanese is no good against any other Oriental. His standard of living is higher. Chinamen or Koreans can undercut him any day. His paradise of competition is against westerners. His paradise of competition is Mexico, the United States and Canada. There he undercuts, there he profits, there he multiplies. Korea and China are economically impossible for the Japanese outlet. They can trade but not create there. The logical resting place of this outlet is in western civilization, and there the United States bars the way.

Following this analysis of the Japanese viewpoint, their underlying primitive feeling, their real motives and the object to be attained, the writer describes with keen significance a number of incidents in which activities of the Japanese are interpreted to be persistent and unceasing preparation to strike the great blow against this country. Conspicuous among these is the strained situation which arose in the spring of 1913 when the state of California passed her law forbidding the Japanese to own land in that state, and which is described in detail. How all the American forces in the Philippines were concentrated on Corregidor Island, where the Japanese were expected to land troops, and how conflict was finally averted, in reality by British influence, is referred to at length. And upon this matter the article throws this light, assuming that it is justified by the facts which the author asserts are true:

It was about this time that the British Ambassador became "indisposed." To handle the post while this official was indisposed, there came to Washington a very charming English gentleman, Sir William Terrill. * * * He is one of the most important diplomats on the British foreign office staff. Washington welcomed him with open arms.

Of course it was only a coincidence that Sir William Terrill came to Washington when an event of extreme importance to British diplomacy was in the air. It was the Panama Canal Tolls controversy. Admirable moment, too—with the California Legislature running amuck against the Japanese. * * * One does not profess to know the conversation of Sir William Terrill. One merely knows the facts of the Washington situation and what happened. * * * It happened. We renounced our coastal rights in the Panama Canal. Our boys on Corregidor were finally sent back to their posts. Japan was called off.

Since that time a number of things have happened, according to Sigmund Henschen, some of them well known and perhaps forgotten and others known only in part as they have occurred. Among them is this:

We are building fortifications in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Japanese aviator turned up there. He was just a barnstormer who wanted to make some money on exhibition flights. Very suddenly he took it into his head to fly over the Pearl Harbor fortifications. Now that trip would have interested a Japanese military aviator. The Japanese General Staff would have prized any photographs of the Pearl Harbor defenses taken from an aeroplane. Our military authorities stopped his flight.

Continuing the description of Japanese activities, the writer says:

It is a fact known to our General Staff that there are more trained reserved soldiers in Hawaii than there are soldiers of the United States. * * * It is known to our military authorities that there are more Japanese who have served in their army on the Pacific Coast today than there are in the mobile field army of our country. * * * It is an open secret that Japanese land in Lower California, Mexican soil, and then cross the border into the United States. The last estimate our military authorities had showed one quarter of a million Japs in Mexico. During the present trouble in Mexico, it has been established—although newspaper publication has been suppressed—that Japanese officers are with the Mexican trouble makers and that Japan has sold quantities of ammunition to Mexico. It must not be forgotten that Felix Diaz was sent on a special mission to Japan and that just recently Carranza sent one of his high officials on a similar visit.

Among other incidents described are these:

Never heard of Fonseca Bay? It is in Nicaragua. It is north of the Panama Canal. A number of Japanese were discovered there to be making soundings of the bay—an ideal landing place. The American consul was informed. He lay in wait one day and discovered a Jap taking surveying and sounding instruments that were hidden under a bush on the edge of the harbor. He followed him. The Jap got into a boat that had been beached. The boat was manned by Japanese; they were seen to be surveying the harbor.

Come on north! You've heard of Turtle Bay. It is in Lower California. A Japanese warship went aground there. Too bad. The Japs needed four other warships to get it off. To get it off the Japanese had to make landing parties and overrun the entire region thereabout. * * * Of this affair a high United States officer told me: "We know that the Japanese incident at Turtle Bay was not an accident; we have reason to believe that they deliberately ran a warship aground so as to give them an excuse to make observations and to prepare Turtle Bay as a landing place. * * *

Come farther north! The Japanese have been caught with the plans of San Francisco forts in their possession. * * * They have been caught taking the depths of the unfortified harbor of Monterey, where troops could easily be landed. * * * The Japs have been caught in California near the Mexican border and near the border of the state of Washington, where complete data on the terrain has been found in their possession.

Aside from the alarming character of these incidents as showing that Japan is overlooking not a single item in her remarkable preparation for "something," the writer points with more or less significance to her behavior in the present European war and the advantage she is taking of it. He says:

Outside of ourselves, they are the most important foreign nation that has been getting powerful on the war. Most of the ammunition factories in Japan are government owned. The government has been getting the money. The government, seeing England with its hands tied up, has disregarded the spirit of its British alliance. Against every diplomatic precedent of Great Britain, the Japanese have been gaining and gaining in Far Eastern power.

Whatever there may be of reality in the "Japanese Peril," the article of Sigmund Henschel contains an amount of food for American thought and affords a powerful argument for adequate preparedness by the United States against any possible eventuality.