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something in King's Regulations to cover this situation; but in Hong Kong the pages must have been missing.

The first few days were chaos. Some batteries, for instance, had spiked their guns and destroyed their equipment, which seemed the logical thing to do. Sensible officers turned a blind eye, courageous ones set an example. In Stanley, however, where we were under the orders of a Brigadier whom nobody had heard of until after the surrender, the best guns in Hong Kong—9.2's—were turned over to the Nips intact.

Our first parade was to pile arms. I could not help thinking, as I watched the long line of carefully-oiled rifles and tommy-guns and automatics, of those Chinese guerrillas over on the mainland. Indian gunners repacked the ammunition for their ack-ack batteries, their dark faces inscrutable (it was all very well to make fun of those highly-coloured, strangely-worded missives the Nip planes had showered on us: "Shake hands with us all!!! This is the only and best way remained to you!" They had not been without effect). Soon we were at work, carrying our own six-inch shells up from the magazines.

Over the Border

The first thought in many minds was of escape. We knew already of the break for the mainland that had been made by David MacDougall, lately of the Ministry of Information, with Admiral Chan Chak and his party, in the last of the M.T.B.'s. This, the most daring bit of initiative in the Hong Kong debacle, was crowned with complete and well-deserved success, and MacDougall was to come back to Hong Kong four years later (with the rank of Brigadier) as the senior British military officer in the relieving force. (How I cursed my own luck, that I had been at Stanley at the finish! We were marooned on our little peninsula, with the Nips across the isthmus and their patrol boats all around us).

But escape after a surrender is not a simple business, as the much-publicised case of General Gordon Bennett would seem to indicate. King's Regulations need revising again. All we knew on the subject was the familiar formula—coined for countries that recognised the rules of war—that it is the duty of a POW at all times to escape if he can. But the most extraordinary advice was given by our senior officers; and there was a good deal of bitterness later on the part of those—especially Chinese members of the Field Ambulance, and so forth—who followed instructions to remain with their units in the days when they could easily have slipped out of uniform and lost themselves in the civilian population.

There is a great deal more that could be said upon this topic; but it is all dangerous ground. Escape in the first months in Hong Kong, even after we had been transferred to four main prison-camps was not so difficult, if you had money and food and some sort of contact outside. Later it became more difficult, and then the Nips forced everyone to sign a paper stating that no attempt would be made to evade the Imperial forces. That one wouldn't have bothered us; we had plenty of lawyers to tell us all about signatures under duress; but what did was the matter of reprisals. For months at Shumshuipo we lived on starvation rations because some of our people got away. And after the first weeks, one would have needed to place a very high value on one's own freedom

to consider it worth the lives of one's mess-mates and civilian friends, whom the gendarmes would then pick up as a matter of course.

Prisoners at Home

How does one begin to describe the life we led in Hong Kong in those days? The irony of it all, of course, was pointed by the fact that we were prisoners-of-war in our own country, or something like it. Imagine the Auckland Home Guard interned on Mt. Victoria, and brought out every day to work in the Domain, and you have some idea of it. Even the British regulars had their Chinese girlfriends coming down to the wire on



COUNT TERAUCHI
"Would perhaps be fairer game"

Saturday mornings to signal a bit of news and hand in a parcel of foodstuffs. (One of these days I shall write a dramatic poem and dedicate it to those unsung heroines of Hong Kong, the Flower Girls of Wanchai. They were grand during the fighting and they stuck to their men in prison-camp, and they deserve a lot more than they'll ever get for it.)

The Hong Kong Volunteers, of course, many still obsessed by the fate of their houses and their bank-balances, had dropped abruptly from the social heights of the Peak to basic coolie level. But many of them—remember we had more than 20 nationalities represented in our ranks!—still had families or friends in Hong Kong, and when we marched out to work on the airfield at Kaitak the roads were always lined with Portuguese or French or Scandinavian wives and sisters and children. A friendly guard would sometimes allow a prisoner a few minutes together with his wife and baby, moments of almost unbearable poignancy for all concerned.

In Retrospect

Looking back now on nearly two years of it, I feel we didn't do too badly in Hong Kong. In the first place, the Nips had decided to take prisoners, and they did make a genuine, if half-hearted, effort to cope with the considerable problems of running a large-scale prison camp. They early hit on the device, applied throughout to the largest camp for all ranks at Shumshuipo, of running the camp internally through a weak and

neurotic British officer with his own little hand-picked staff of "stooges" and informers. This officer is still under arrest awaiting court-martial; so I suspend further comment.

There were shocking lacks, of course. In the first year, most of us had all the deficiency diseases, including a form of polyneuritis ("dry beri-beri") which was as painful as any known torture. There was a diphtheria epidemic thrown in, which didn't help matters. When the death-roll was at its highest (averaging about five a day) one was struck by certain odd features of Japanese military mentality: in spite of their normal cheese-paring, which would not allow the purchase of medical equipment or serum, they would still spend money to buy cheap box-coffins and wreaths of flowers, and sometimes the Camp Commandant, whose squeeze at this time must have been enormous, would solemnly attend funerals himself (perhaps he had an interest in the local undertakers!).

What kept us going at Shumshuipo, after a really grim first year, was a change of Commandant and the arrival of a shipload of Red Cross supplies from Africa. This, and the medical supplies and foodstuffs brought along each week by the local people, mainly Chinese and Portuguese. No praise is too high for the loyalty and sacrifice of these "parcel-bearers" of Hong Kong. They proved that even a British Colony can have better citizens than it deserves. And in Dr. Selwyn-Clarke, Director of Medical Services, who first organised the flow of funds and medical supplies into the prison-camps, Britain had a colonial servant—and a hero and martyr—worthy of her oldest and best governmental traditions.

A Story to be Told

All this is inadequate. But any casual comment must be inadequate to the story of the Japanese prison-camps. There are probably only two methods of presenting a fair picture.

One of these is statistical. That pattern will appear in due course, and I sincerely hope its figures will be studied in this country. The final percentages—casualties, disease, persecution, and atrocities—will tell their collective tale better than any individual record.

The other method is imaginative treatment. All these prison experiences are the raw material for novels and plays and short stories that may make a new contribution to literature, and may do nearer justice to the extremes of human depravity (never a racial or a national monopoly) and of human fortitude and dignity. The effect here depends on the artist's power of selection, as in Ernst Toller's *Swallow-Book*.

To Japan

One of the stories that will make a play or a film by itself is the tale of the *Lisbon Maru*, which was torpedoed and sunk off the China coast while carrying the first big draft of prisoners from Hong Kong to Japan. I was lucky enough to miss that one; but now the drafts were becoming regular policy. And it was in Dai Nippon, the heart of the Japanese Empire, that we were soon to find ourselves in conditions that made Hong Kong, in retrospect, seem like a distant and Mediterranean rest camp.

(To be continued)



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