

BOOK RECORD

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JAPAN CLAY v. CHINA SANDS

Impartial Observer Wonders
Whether Island Empire
Is Over-reaching

FAR across the Pacific is being waged a battle between two Eastern nations that may, at any time, have profound and even disastrous consequences in the European arena—or, on the other hand, it may fizzle out quietly into one of those uneasy and distrustful neutralities which are so difficult for the Occidental mind to understand.

What will be the outcome of the Sino-Japanese war cannot at present be predicted by even the most knowledgeable. But, however the war ends, there is no doubt that European peoples must, in the future, pay a great deal more serious attention than they have done in the past to events and racial feelings in the mysterious East. Both China and Japan seem destined to take an increasing part in international complications and friction—if only because their teeming populations are daily emphasising the problem of land expansion.

To-day, of course, it is Japan that assumes the more sinister proportions in European eyes. China—huge, sprawling, only half awakened to Westernisation and racial loyalty by the amazing efforts of General Chiang-Kai-Shek—is only the stubborn victim of Japanese aggrandisement. Whatever her potentialities, she is at the moment rather a country for protection than to be feared.

But the terrifying efficiency of Japan's war machine has, in the last few years, turned the watchful eyes of the whole world upon her.

UNFORTUNATELY, those who would like to see the Japanese scene wholly, are handicapped by lack of understanding of the Oriental mind—combined now with a fear-complex that breeds all sorts of prejudices. In the flood of partisan books about Japan, then, thoughtful readers will welcome with unusual enthusiasm the latest work of William Henry Chamberlin, "Japan Over Asia." This is written with a rare balance of judgment and shrewdness of observation.

Those acquainted with Mr. Chamberlin's three books on the Soviet Union will already know what to expect from him. He has not been Far Eastern correspondent of the "Christian Science Monitor" for many years without learning how to sift the grain from the chaff and to discern significant detail in a flurry of rumour and biased speculation.

As he states in his preface, he does not intend either "an indictment nor a vindication of Japan's expansionism, but to set forth as objectively as possible the main events and causes of

the forward drive in Asia, the obstacles which it encountered, and the favourable and unfavourable auguries for Japan's imperial career in the future."

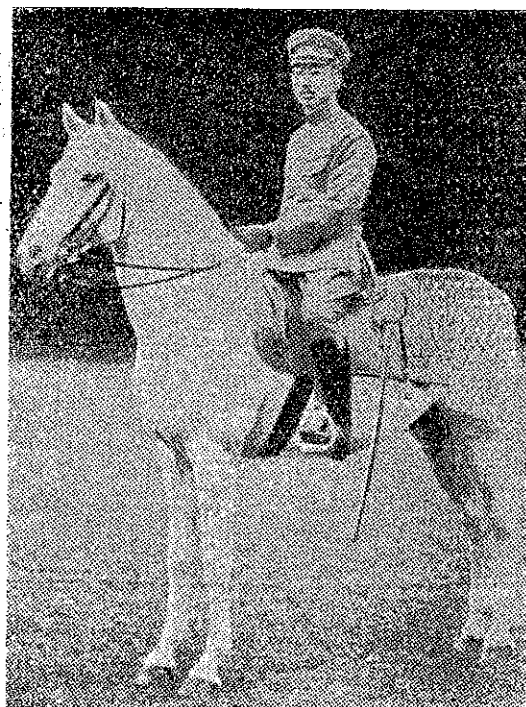
Seldom has a political writer better justified his promise than Mr. Chamberlin. His critical faculty never seems to be lulled, and he examines all his information with a sternly selective eye. The result is a study of Japan that not only traces the main features of the recent drive for expansion, but also probes deeply into the political, economic and psychological complexities of the Japanese people. It shows clearly how the nation, for all its rapid assimilation of Western progress, is still passionately convinced of the old principle of "divine right of kings"; and how the army will be more strong because it is so genuinely fired with the Japanese ideal of an "Asia for the Asiatics."

ON the whole, Mr. Chamberlin's picture is not one to quieten fears. There is an ominous note in his assessment of the Japanese character and aims—and yet he does hint strongly that Japan may perhaps be over-reaching herself just as Napoleon did years ago in his attempt to conquer Europe. For the Japanese military caste is engaged in an enterprise of unlimited liability. Each new conquest and each aggressive move seems to build higher the wall of trouble the nation has yet to meet.

Who knows but in the end, the answer to Japan's war policy will be made not by Japan at all, but by a reunited China? Mr. Chamberlin makes no prophecies—he is too wise for that. But he does say:

"The fear that Japan may swallow China whole and swell to the greatest empire in the world in the process is based on a gross under-estimate of Chinese subtlety and Chinese capacity for evasion, procrastination, sabotage and passive resistance. The Japanese clay may break if there is too reckless an expenditure of men and money in pursuit of ambitious dreams of overlordship in China. But the Chinese sands will never run in Japanese moulds."

Undoubtedly, "Japan Over Asia" is one of the most valuable books on this portentous subject which has been



THE EMPEROR OF JAPAN
... Dictator of a New Asia?

written. No one who is really interested in world movement can afford to miss an estimate so lucid, so impartial and so broadly authoritative.

"Japan Over Asia," by William Henry Chamberlin. (Duckworth, London). Our copy from the publishers.

THIS GLAD SHRIEK FROM THE GRAVE

PUBLIC sense of humour seems to be changing. Just as in conversation jokes nowadays have to be slightly smutty to be sure of raising a laugh, so in books the most popular humorists are the men who can skate on the thinnest ice without quite knocking over the censor.

All the same, the sparkle of these sophisticated, sniggering funnymen is apt to become a little too dazzlingly "bright" when it is seen frequently. Now and then, you catch yourself in disgraceful yearnings for the simple "horse" laughs of yesteryear, for the irresponsible nonsense of a Wodehouse and the risqué jokes so obvious that even a virgin can see them.

In such a mood, you may be lucky enough to come across Joan Butler's "Lost Property"—which was for me the silver lining under the clouds of a wet King's Birthday. There is a genuine old-time touch about this silly book that is like a glad shriek from the grave.

The fun starts when Mr. Winton Cherne kicks his fiancée's pet goat from behind because it had mealed off
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