

JAPAN'S WAR METHODS

Strange Story of Shimose, The Terrible Explosive.

[T. P.'s Weekly.]—Fifty years ago, in the days when France and England of Japan paraded in quiet scale the Crimean, when Capt. Arthur had not yet surveyed and given his name to the famous port in the Liao-tung peninsula; when Vladivostok was a fishing village, with a now forgotten name, and Petropavlovsk, far north in Kamtschatka, was the only Russian port in the Far East, the feudal armies of Japan paraded in grand style, their men of science, and their mechanics have provided them with formidable weapons of Japanese invention and of Japanese manufacture.

SOME JAPANESE INVENTIONS.

Their navy still depends on foreign shipyards for battleships and powerful cruisers, and for naval artillery they go to foreign factories. It is a severe tax on the resources of the country. The yen, worth about a florin of our money, is the Japanese unit of value, and is nearly equivalent to the buying power of the yen in native Japan (but not in the tourist resorts) is equivalent to nearly a pound with us. This is its equivalent value in labor, in food, in tax-paying power. A battleship costs, say, a million sterling, that is about ten million yen. It costs, therefore, in equivalent value, many millions. To obtain one battleship is as great a strain on Japanese resources as it is for us to launch a powerful squadron.

DESTROYED MAKAROFF'S FLAGSHIP.

About some of these inventions little or nothing was heard here in Europe until the war gave practical proof of their terrible efficiency. Thus the Oda mine was first talked about after the

Chinese indemnity and the loans floated after the war have given Japan her splendid fighting fleet, but even with this help its maintenance and the interest on the capital thus employed is a heavy strain on the country. Japan would never have prepared for the present struggle with Russia if her own industrial and engineering resources had not enabled her to produce the Petropavlovsk. The mines are of large size and carry a heavy charge on explosives. As they are fixed in one spot they are not like the dangerous floating mines which the Russians are said to have let loose in the Chinese seas. They have also the advantage that the automatic firing gear of the mine cannot work the the fusing operation is complete. The secret of the arrangement has been kept,

FROP. SHIMOSE.

The Japanese shells, torpedoes, and mines all owe much of their exceeding high explosive power to the substance used in charging them, the now famous Shimose powder. Before the war the name of its inventor, Prof. Shimose, was quite unknown. After the war he was made a colonel in the army, and became a member of the Japanese general staff. The Oda mine, invented by Commander Oda, I. J. N., and the Shimose powder, a high explosive, invented by Prof. Shimose, one of the most distinguished scientists men of Japan.

TOKIO UNIVERSITY.

After obtaining his degree he worked for some months in the university laboratories at Tokio, and it was then his attention was turned to the question of improvements in high explosive. He then entered the government service, and after acting for two years as chemist to the imperial printing office, he was transferred to the navy department. He introduced several improvements into the processes of powder-making in the government mills, and during this research connected with this work he obtained, it is said, by means of his own experiments, the new explosive, which he had long been thinking. The perfecting of his discovery cost him ten years of experimental work, some of it of a very dangerous character. Twice he was badly wounded by explosions in his workshop, and one of his hands is to this day partly crippled as the result of these accidents. On another occasion during the trials of the powder a heavy gun burst on the range and sent several of its fragments within a few feet of Shimose, who was watching the

dramatically swift destruction of Makarov's flagship, the ill-fated Petropavlovsk. According to a Japanese authority, the invention consists not so much in the mine itself as in device for rapidly and safely mooring automatic mines at the proper depth. It is claimed by the Japanese that this was one of the mines laid under Commander Oda's direction, that destroyed the Petropavlovsk. The mines are of large size and carry a heavy charge on explosives. As they are fixed in one spot they are not like the dangerous floating mines which the Russians are said to have let loose in the Chinese seas. They have also the advantage that the automatic firing gear of the mine cannot work the the fusing operation is complete. The secret of the arrangement has been kept,

inventor was not yet satisfied that the new explosive was all he could make in his researches, and a plant for the regular production of the powder on a large scale was laid down in the arsenals. After it had blown up without exploding with one bucket of water. In experiments against armor plating on the Shimose charge and the thin plates the shells exploded and burst while penetrating the plate, shattering it, and were kept at varying temperatures without change of character. It can be heated without exploding it, and if it is deliberately set on fire it burns without much flame, and can be easily extinguished with one bucket of water. In experiments against armor plating on the Shimose charge and the thin plates the shells exploded and burst while penetrating the plate, shattering it, and

protecting a shower of fragments in war. The inventor claims that it is destructive power it is second only to nitro-glycerine and superior to gunpowder and dynamite, but safer and more reliable than all three. The extent of the damage done by the Japanese ships points also to the effectiveness of the new powder. The admirals and generals who have tried their best and arms in the actual fighting.

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