

# PRINCE YAMAGATA

## A CHAT WITH JAPAN'S GREAT GENERAL ABOUT WAR AND PEACE

Special Correspondence.

TOKIO, Japan.—I have just returned from an interview with Prince Yamagata, one of the greatest generals and statesmen of the past half century. What Von Moltke was to Germany and Grant to the United States, Prince Yamagata has been to Japan. In many respects he has been even more in his marvellously the originator of the Japanese army, the man whose organizing military ability has made it one of the most formidable fighting machines of the world. The story of his life has been wrapped up in the new Japan, and he and Prince Ito and one or two others are all that now remain of the links which bind the old feudal times to the up-to-date life activities of our western civilization.

### PRINCE YAMAGATA IN 1869.

It was at his home in the suburbs overlooking Tokyo that I met Gen. Yamagata by appointment. His son-in-law, Mr. Shibusawa, acted as interpreter, and for an hour the famous general talked most interestingly about army matters and of the position which Japan now holds to the rest of the world.

But before I give you the interview let me tell you something about how this great Japanese general looks, and a bit as to his history. He is now 70 years of age, but is as straight as an arrow, and his mind is as clear as it was when, as captain of the Choshu Clan, he fought against the Shogun in a war more than 40 years ago. He is tall for a Japanese, is slender and wiry, and so gentle in his manner, and his conversation that one would never imagine that his life had been that of a minister of war, an organizer of armies and a general in command.

Prince Yamagata was born at just about the time Andrew Jackson left the presidency of the United States. He was 16 years old when Commodore Perry presented the letters he brought here from President Fillmore, and made the treaty which opened Japan to the world, and he was a man of 30 at the time the emperor was brought out of his seclusion to be the ruler of the new Japan. At that time he had already made a military reputation, and soon thereafter he was appointed major general and then minister of war. He was acting as the war minister at about the time that General Grant ended his term as president of the United States, and after that held many civil as well as military positions. He aided in organizing the government, and has several times been at the head of it as premier. He attended the coronation of the emperor in 1869, and then brought back the treaty with Russia, which goes by his name. He was for a time commander-in-chief of the army of Japan in its war with China, and was made chief of the general staff during the war with Russia.

JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES. With a record like this one would imagine that Gen. Yamagata would be an advocate of military aggrandizement and that his voice would favor the pushing of Japan to the front as a military nation. I did not find him so. When I asked him whether there was any feeling here in favor of a war with the United States, he replied: "No, there is nothing of the kind. We do not want war with any nation, and most certainly not with our old friend, the United States. On the other hand I cannot believe that there is any such sentiment in your country against us. We Japanese have always looked upon you as our great and good friend. You are a sort of mother country to us. The Japan of today is a child of America. It was you who opened our ports to the world and it was from your teachers that we took our first lesson in the arts of modern civilization. Throughout our new national life you have always stood by us, and we have felt that we could rely upon you. We feel so now, and I cannot believe but that the general sentiment of your country is friendly to us."

### A NATION OF PEACE.

"Besides," continued his highness, "Japan is not anxious to be considered a warlike nation. Our military establishment was created for defense and

not for conquest. We hope to continue our national life along the lines of peace, not of war."

But your military establishment is so large that other nations fear that you may need to make war to occupy it. Do you think a big army is necessary in these modern times?"

"As your president has said, the best guarantee of any nation against war is the fact that that nation is prepared for war if it should come. This we believe to be the case, and I see the United States believes likewise, for it is now talking of increasing its army and navy."

"Will the time ever come when war will be done away with? When such peace conferences as that of the Hague will settle all international difficulties by arbitration and reconciliation?"

"Yes, I think so, but that time will be distant. When all the nations of the world are equally civilized and they have united in their efforts to benefit themselves and humanity as well as we may be able to dispense with our great armies. I hope such a day will some time come."

### FLYING MACHINES IN WAR.

"How about the new inventions in modern warfare? May they not be so terrible that a small nation might destroy a great one?"

"Yes, I can imagine inventions which would make warfare mean annihilation. Some of the new explosives are terribly destructive. Take the balloons and the flying machines in which your people are now so widely experimenting. If they should be successful they would change the conditions of battles and fighting. A few such machines and some bushels of dynamite might wipe out an army. There might be charges from the clouds which the forces on the ground, however great, could not resist. Inventions of that kind would very likely put an end to war."

### THE YELLOW PERIL.

"How about the yellow peril, your highness? Is there not danger that the Chinese may become a great fighting nation, and that by combining with Japan the yellow races may conquer the world?"

"There is no such thing as a yellow peril," replied Prince Yamagata, "and no reason why Japan should be so associated with China in the minds of the west. The chief difference between the nations of the west and ours is that of color. We have the same ambitions along the lines of civilization, and the same desires toward the betterment of mankind and of the world. There is no reason why we should be set aside by ourselves."

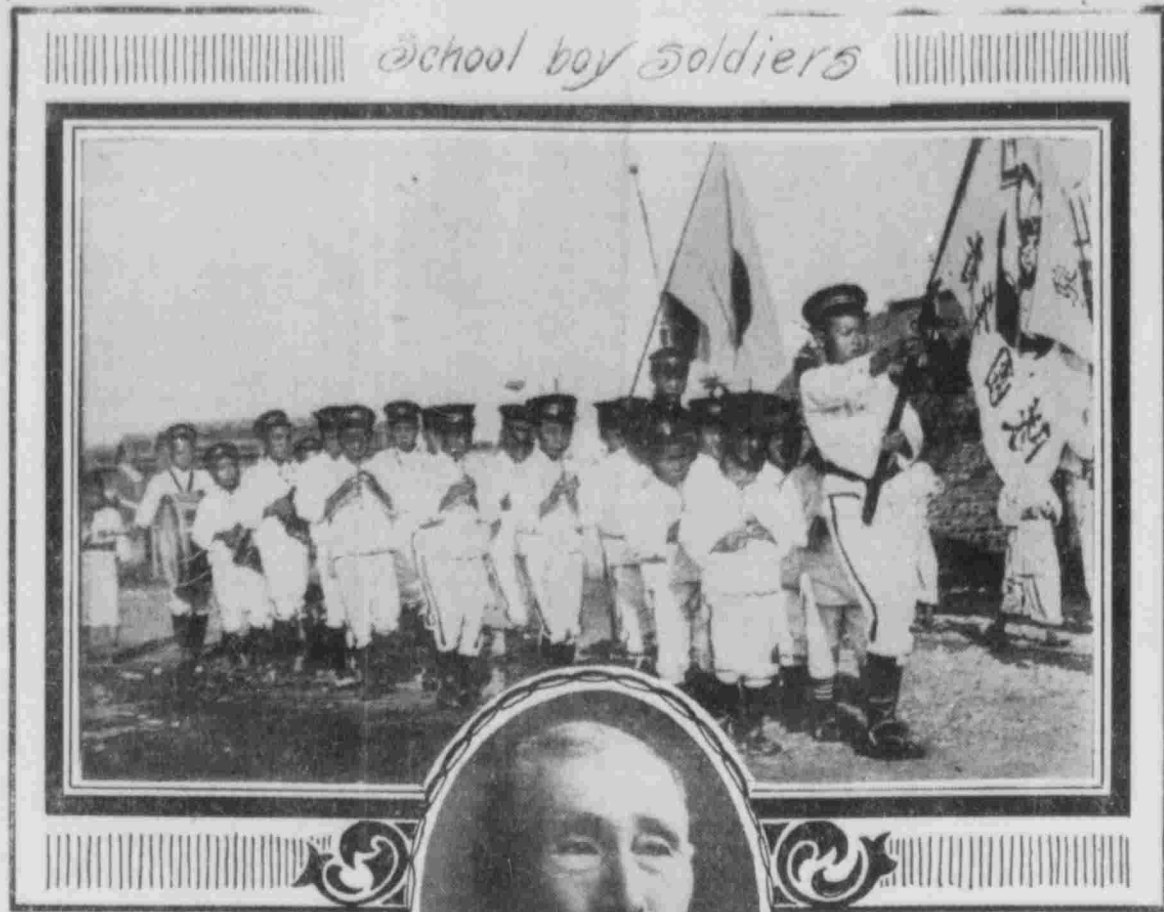
"As to China," his highness continued, "what it will be in the future I cannot predict, except to say that in the past its power has been greatly overestimated, and that today it is in no position to have a war with any great nation. At the time of the Sino-Japanese war there was generally supposed to be in the neighborhood of 1,000,000 troops in China. Li Hung Chang had 50,000 men, who were reported to be well equipped and trained by German officers, and he had also 300,000 soldiers in the north. Upon investigation we found that a great number of these men were enrolled only that their pay might be taken by the officers. They had no existence except as men of straw, and both army and equipment were of a low order. It will be a long time before China can put a great army into the field. As I look at it, the Chinese empire today has very little strength in itself, and its existence as a nation and its preservation as such depends upon the great powers of the world, who are interested in keeping it independent."

### IF CHINA HAD A STRONG EMPEROR.

"But can China be westernized? It is said to be now introducing our modern civilization."

"I do not know. It will probably change in time. If it should have a strong emperor, who would take the reins of government into his own hands, it would be as easy to change it as it was to change Japan. The system of laws is similar throughout the country. The emperor is supreme, and theoretically he controls everything in his empire. The military system might be centralized and the taxes reduced so as to give the country a revenue. If properly trained the Chinese might become excellent soldiers."

He Says Japan is the Child of America and Full of Filial Love—The Yellow Peril—The Future of China and What a Strong Emperor Might Do for Her—How Japan's Big Army Was Created—The Warfare of the Future—A Nation of Fighters and Its Schoolboy Soldiers—Where the Girls are Ready to Die for Their Country, and the Mechanics Buy Government Bonds.



School boy soldiers

and with almost infinite resources of men and treasure a strong emperor could create a most powerful army. In such a case China itself might become what you call a yellow peril. At present, however, there is no danger of such a possibility, although China in the past has had two rulers of the present dynasty who have governed the people with a firm and capable hand."

### HOW JAPAN'S BIG ARMY WAS CREATED.

The conversation then turned to the organization of the Japanese army, which was largely performed by Prince Yamagata. And I asked him to tell me something as to how it was done. He replied:

"In the feudal times the imperial army consisted of about 400,000 families of Shizuka, or the followers of the daimyos, who were the feudal lords. Each daimyo kept as many retainers as his finances would permit and, allowing two or three men to the family, the army of that day had possibly as many as one million men. This included not only the soldiers but the surgeons, treasurers and other officials. It was in 1871 that the system of conscription was introduced and the reorganization of the army began. It was first started in a few provinces, and thence extended throughout the empire. The imperial scheme was to organize a standing army of 400,000 men, comprising six army corps. This was found impossible at the start, and a small army of 40,000 was created. That was about 1873. At that time French officers were brought in to train the soldiers, and for several years they were our chief instructors along the lines of modern warfare."

"Then, after a careful investigation of the armies of Europe it was decided that the German system was better suited to our needs. We then introduced German officers, and our tactics of today are based upon those originated in Germany. In 1883, the



Prince Yamagata

army was reconstituted and increased to 200,000, and in 1895, after the Sino-Japanese war, it was again reorganized, and brought up to 500,000. On a war footing it is now considerably larger than that."

"What does your highness think of the German system of military training?"

"I consider it superior to any other," replied Prince Yamagata. "It seems to me perfect and I do not see how it could be improved upon."

"But does not that system turn the man into a machine which makes him useless in times of emergency, where he has to act for himself? I have always thought so of the German soldier."

"The German is a very able soldier," replied Prince Yamagata, "and the German army, though not as good, perhaps, as it would be had it had practice in actual warfare, is a very well trained and efficient one."

### SCHOOLBOY SOLDIERS.

Since this talk with Prince Yamagata I have visited many of the schools to see the material which Japan is now turning up into her soldiers of the future. Every boy in the empire is now undergoing military drill. The law pro-

vides that all the schools shall be equipped with guns and knapsacks, and the pupils are regularly trained by an army officer. Every school has its drill hall and exercising grounds; and rain or shine the boys go through their marching. I see them in the streets, tramping along with their guns on their shoulders and their knapsacks on their backs. They are taken to see the army maneuvers, and officers are especially appointed to explain what is going on. The children are taught that it is their duty to fight and die for their country, and they have school songs in honor of the heroes of Japan. Almost every school teacher has been in the army at one time or another and there is a six-week service which has been especially created for the teachers of the primary schools. During this time they are made to go through the regular training of the ordinary soldiers, and are then disbanded.

As an instance of the patriotism of the schoolchildren, during the war with Russia subscriptions were gotten up by them to purchase a warship for the emperor. Every little one gave his pennies, denying himself candy and toys, and the whole amounted to many thousand yen.

### EVERY JAPANESE A SOLDIER.

As it is now, every Japanese is a soldier. Service in the army is universal and compulsory. Every boy is expected to enter the army at 17, although he is not required to perform active service until he is 20. He then serves off and on until he is 40. At the emperor's call, the whole nation might be put into the field, although there are some exemptions. The only son of an indigent parent over 60 years of age may stay at home, and there are certain exceptions as to Japanese living in foreign countries. There are a few young men of the higher circles who have to serve only one year in the ranks, after which they may be en-

rolled as non-commissioned officers. Such men, however, must possess an education equal to that of the graduates of the middle schools.

The service expected of every man is at regular intervals from the ages of 20 to 40, and this service is such that the greater body of the people may be made ready for active war at any time. The number of trained and partially trained men available at the beginning of the Russian war was about 600,000. This was added to as the struggle went on; and when the war closed Japan had more than 800,000 men in the field. I am told that 600,000 men could now be massed without trouble, and that within a short time an army of not less than 1,000,000 could be called forth.

### A NATION OF FIGHTERS.

From this it will be seen that the Japanese are a nation of fighters and that in a war with them the whole people must be taken into account. Every man, woman and child is a patriot, and every one esteems it a glory to die for his country. During the war with Russia the women worked almost day and night to aid the army funds, and they frequently expressed their regret that they could not go to the field. I had a talk the other day with an American professor who has been teaching in the Japanese school at Shinko, one of the largest cities between Tokyo and Osaka, during which he gave me an instance illustrating the war spirit among the school girls. Said he:

"It was in one of our little schools. The American teacher was discussing the war situation. Some bad news had arrived that morning, and the teacher said she feared Japan would finally be defeated. Upon this one little Japanese girl burst out: 'Oh, no, Japan will never be defeated, for when the men are all killed we girls will take the guns and fight for the emperor.'"

### JAPAN'S WAR FUND.

"At the time of the war Japan had a serious problem to face," continued the professor. "She had her standing army of 500,000 men, who were all sent to the field. Then the reserves were called out, numbering hundreds of thousands more. All of these came from the ranks of industry. They were taken from the farms and factories, from the workshops and gardens. The population here is comparatively small, and it was a question how the war could go on and the factories not stop and the fields not be cultivated. This question was solved by the people jumping in and sacrificing themselves without pay. The men in the mills worked overtime to make up the loss of the force which had been called off to war. In many cases their overtime wages were given to the families of the soldiers. The farmers, clerks and mechanics combined together to till the lands left vacant. Often they worked at night and sometimes together in gangs. The children worked after school hours to help the families of soldiers, and in some places farms were let out free to soldiers' families and the crops were sold for them. In one village the families of the men absent at the war were given the monopoly of selling matches and soap, and in others they had like privileges. Many laborers remitted their wages to such people, and the doctors treated their sick without charge. A relief association with a capital of a million dollars was then formed to support the widows and orphans of soldiers. The Red Cross society, which was so efficient in the hospitals and on the field, was supported by all the people. That society has 1,000,000 members, and one in every 15 of the Japanese population belongs to it and has pledged himself to pay \$1.50 for 10 years toward its maintenance. The Japanese Red Cross society was organized with the idea of paying the country's debt by selling its soldiers, and it has done an enormous good."

### SMALL BONDS OWNED IN JAPAN.

The money raised for the war, while some of it came from abroad, was largely supplied at home. The action of the people in this regard shows that the emperor can call on his subjects for the last cent in their pockets at the time of any national struggle. Every one subscribed to the bonds, and they

were made of such small denominations that the poorest man could invest. One could take a bond on the payment of \$2.50 of our money. When the war was over the people rushed by thousands to buy them. Jintan, the men and factory hands carried the savings to the bank and men who were working for 30 cents a day sold their little hoards into government securities and that largely from patriotism and their reverence and love for the emperor.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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### GERMANY POPULARIZING WORKMEN'S INSURANCE.

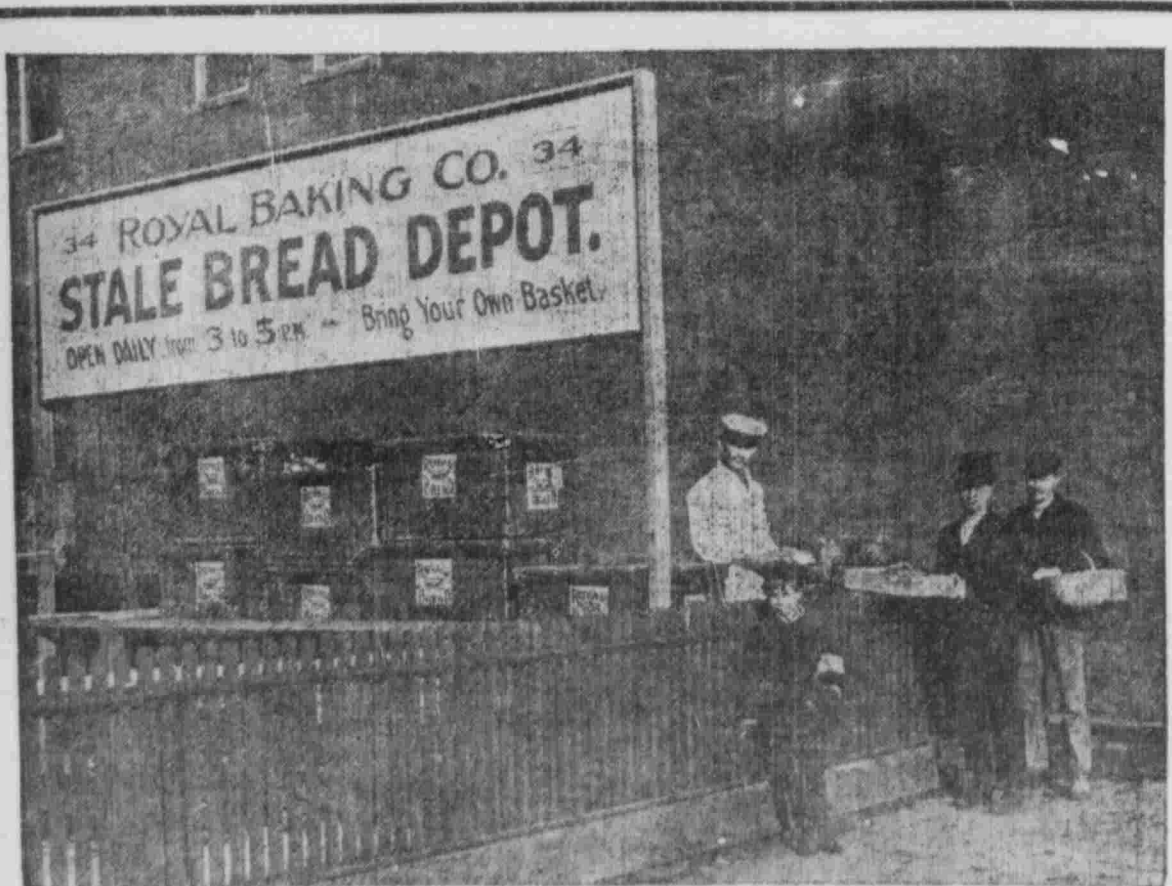
Germany is educating her citizens the value of various kinds of insurance—sickness, accident and life. The Minister of the Interior, Herr von Schulerberg, writes as follows after spending several months studying workmen's insurance in Germany: "The imperial insurance department is interested in popularizing insurance knowledge among workmen, and at this end, has published for two years a small monthly bulletin on workmen's insurance. While primarily intended for the officials of the insurance department and for the managers and clerks of the various sick clubs, the attempt is made to have the articles written in such popular fashion that they can be understood by the insured workmen."

Even private enterprise has seen the value of attempting to bring insurance home to the working classes. The publisher of a series of books, known as the Miniature Library, which sell for 25 cents each, has included in his list the various insurance laws put in force that they can be read by the classes of the population. Since January, 1908, Regierungsrath Dittmann, of Oldenburg, in collaboration with his colleagues, has published a bi-weekly magazine, called the Insurance Messenger, to educate those who are insured under the law. So that this may be brought to the notice of all concerned, the price of this magazine has been made very low. Bought by the thousands, the subscription price is 20 cents a year. From the statement made by the writer, it appears that sufficient copies are being purchased by the various sick clubs for their members, make the publication self-supporting.

### TUBERCULOSIS KILLING 200,000 YEAR.

Congressman J. Sloat Fassett writes in the December Charities and Commons, on the need for a nation bureau of health, says:

"It is well known that this country was threatened with an invasion of a tangible foe, whose successful landing would admittedly result in the death annually, of 200,000 of our citizens young and old, rich and poor, for as long a time as such tangible foe could retain a foothold in our country, the would be no question but that the Congress would have power at once to provide for the general welfare in making every possible provision for the nation's defense. We would all of us at once as citizens of the state and as citizens of the nation, rally all our powers, resistance, neglect no precaution of defense, to prevent such an invasion. The merely formal objections would be permitted to stand in the way for a moment. Technicalities, objections based upon forms of government, would be swept away, and we would add ourselves with all the powers of a nation to the preservation of our country and of our homes."



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### THE COST OF TUBERCULOSIS.

Congressman J. Sloat Fassett writes in the December Charities and Commons, on the ravages of consumption in the United States:

"There are 86,000,000 people in the United States, and it is estimated that 200,000 of them die of tuberculosis every year. It is estimated that 112-10 per cent of all who die, die of tuberculosis. If that is true, then of the 86,000,000 of people now living in the United States 9,632,000 are doomed to die of tuberculosis. Prof. Irving Fisher states that the money cost of tuberculosis, including capitalized earning power lost by death, exceeds \$5,000 per death; so that the hand of this destroyer has already laid its paralyzing grasp upon \$1,000,000,000 worth of human productive energy per annum, and of this cost two-fifths, or \$400,000,000 falls on others than the consumptive. And when this tremendous loss, this enormous paralysis of energy, is extended to what may happen, unless conditions change, before the last living inhabitant of the United States passes to his long home, it is represented by figures that are stupendous and inconceivable. Measured, then, by the bare standard of money alone, this dread disease, unless checked, has already laid out for the future of this country a sum of \$1,000,000,000."

### COLLEGE COURSES IN "INSURANCE SCIENCES."

At the University of Göttingen, in Germany, there has been since 1895 a Royal Seminary for insurance science, and the establishment of chairs at other universities in this profession is recommended. Students attending the seminary are required to pass an examination, and are granted diplomas.

During the past winter, special courses in social insurance were given at the universities of Göttingen and Leipzig. In connection with the instruction in political and social science, at the universities of Berlin, Bonn, Gießen, Halle, Heidelberg, Jena, Kiel, and Königsberg, courses of lectures in social insurance were given to the students in these departments. A similar course was given at the technical high schools of Charlottenburg and at the high schools of commerce of Dresden and Carlsruhe; special courses were offered in Berlin and Frankfurt for general students. A training course for higher officials was offered in Berlin, Cologne, and Frankfurt. For several years the imperial insurance department has had a course of lectures on social medicine for officials, which has been exceptionally well attended. In the sick societies of Leipzig and Dresden, individuals applying for positions in the service are now required to pass an examination to show fitness.—Lee K. Frankel in the December Charities and Commons.



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