

# American Goods Ahead of English Product in the Japanese Market.

By Frederick J. Haskin.

Main Office of Standard Oil in Japan

American Bank in Yokohama.

American Trading Co.'s Office.



**YOKOHAMA.**—No country has profited so much by the Japanese-Russian war as the United States. In all likelihood our sales to the island empire this year will exceed those of England and, if this result is shown when the balances are made up, it will be the first time that Uncle Sam has ever outdone John Bull in this market. The English have long been masters of the situation here, but the Americans have made steady gains until it seems they are now in first place. It is impossible to get exact figures because the monthly custom reports show only such goods as are dutiable. The bulk of the increase in American sales is being made direct to the government, and is coming in without duty, hence the official statistics are misleading in that they fall short of actual totals.

Although the fact that the Americans are foremost in selling to the Japanese must lack official substantiation for some time being, still those in a position to judge that it is undoubtedly true. This favorable state of affairs will be cause for much congratulation among the Japanese, and Japan's best customer, affording her a ready market for about 70 per cent of all she has to sell. A diligent canvass among the American business men in Japan has brought to light much information that is worthy of consideration.

**Converts to Bread Eating.**  
Japan is now buying about \$500,000,000 worth of goods annually. The five leading items in the long list she is procuring from the United States are flour, cotton, kerosene, leather and canned goods. The flour trade is having a boom. Thousands of men who have heretofore subsisted on rice are learning to eat bread in the army and it is argued that when they return to their homes they will become flour customers and convert their families and friends to its use. The experts are busy figuring on the possibilities of the future. A pound of flour costs the same as a pound of rice, and granting that its nutritive quality is equal, the question of supply follows. The Japanese are so quick and apt at imitation that it is predicted they will no more than acquire the habit of eating bread before they will begin to raise their own wheat and grind their own flour. Both the northern part of Japan and Manchuria contain much good wheat land, but there is one point in favor of the Yankee millers which it is claimed they cannot overcome. Sometimes American flour sells by the barrel for a price no greater than the raw wheat costs. On its face this would seem to mean that the millers are working for nothing. But they are not. They realize a profit from utilizing the by-product of shorts and bran. The Japs have no way of doing this, because they have no stock in it, so the American millers have this handicap over their Oriental imitators.

**The World's Hungry Mouths.**  
The forecast of conditions liable to affect the future goes even further. At a recent exposition in Japan the Canadian millers were on hand baking bread and giving it away to the crowds. Some one wanted to know where were the flouring Yankees? The reply was that the demand for American flour was so great that there was no need of giving any away in exploitation. The new grain fields of Canada, as well as the areas in the Orient which may be put under cultivation, are not the menace to American interests that some authorities consider them. Our ability to produce wheat is increasing, and our consumptive capacity is increasing, consequently our surplus for export will naturally diminish. Even if irrigation should greatly increase the yield of American fields, not new foreign areas produce quantities not now reckoned upon, the world's supply of wheat will hardly increase faster than the hunger of the millions ready to eat it.

The impetus to the leather trade is accounted for by the need of shoes and harness to equip the men and animals of the army. The same argument applies to bread holds good in regard to shoes—the soldier will always want to shoes—the leather people will not find as plain sailing as the millers, because the articles they wish to substitute is much more expensive than what their customer has been used to. A pair of wooden clogs, or straw sandals, cost only a few cents, while anything in leather which would be within the means of the average Jap would be so flimsy that it would not be serviceable.

**Inferior Leather Goods.**  
The earning capacity of any people regulates their purchasing power, and there are many things which the Japs cannot utilize simply because they cannot afford them. This will be a poor market for shoes for a long time on this account. All leather goods made in Japan are cheap American imitations. I had a pair of shoes made here. The shoemaker showed me samples and agreed to duplicate the five-dollar pair, was wearing for half the price. The job looked all right when completed, but it had neither the workmanship of the originals. My American shoes are the cheapest because they are the best. It is the same way with valises, hat boxes, trunks, and all articles made of leather—they are merely inferior copies of American made goods, cheaper, but more expensive because they are not nearly so durable. The Jap is a natural born imitator.

He can fake an idea quicker than a parrot can learn to swear. It is discouraging to the Yankee drummer when he comes over here all cocked and primed to open a new market, to find cheap imitations of his own goods starting at him from the windows of the shops. I have seen a number of instances like this, including soap, books, patent medicines and machinery. The names of articles made famous by advertisements in the states are brazenly copied here and sold at a third of the regular price. The government offers no protection to the foreign manufacturer. If he copyrights his trade mark the local imitator merely changes a letter or a portion of the design and evades liability on technicality. Although the confiscation is apparent, the courts will not see it that way.

**An Expensive Failure.**  
But sometimes the crafty Jap bites off more than he can chew. Not long ago an importing firm introduced some cigarette manufacturing machines. They were very complicated affairs and turned out cigarettes almost as fast as you could count them. The saving in labor was so great that a number of firms installed them.

**The 'Cello Player's False Note**  
The 'cellist, with his straight figure, broad shoulders and great black eyes, was a fine looking man. Night after night he came and sat playing in the little orchestra balcony that overlooked the grand cafe of the Hotel Cecil. Sometimes, when so directed, he played a solo—"Traumerel," or "Ave Maria," or some serenade—whatever the leader might select as suitable for the changing temper of the crowd. Herr Weyrich, the 'cellist, did not bother his head about these cafe audiences. He was not flattered by occasional applause nor depressed when his performance was ignored. He knew that cafe audiences generally approved of nothing till their bellies were full, and thereafter applauded everything; therefore he despised their opinions, and played his 'cello as he was bid, with no other inspiration than the 33 which each performance yielded to him.

At home in his attic studio, with no chattering, drinking, munching mob around him, he belted out "Cello" because the singing voice of his spirit, crooning the wordless anthems of his hopes and fears and calling back the memories of his youth and passions. For Herr Weyrich was no longer young. The brown curls about his ears were turning white, and he no longer cared to sit where he could watch the women listening to his 'cello. With the younger men of the orchestra it was quite different. They were very glad to play at the pretty guests who sometimes nodded smiling encores at them. With these young fellows "a request" from the audience was still an event, a scribbled note asking for demure and furtive glances exchanged across the balcony railing had already made the handsome young first violin an ob-

**Japan Branch of New York Life.**  
The importers thought they had a good business started, when suddenly the sales stopped. Investigation proved that ten imitations of the patent had been made and sold. These substitutions were remarkable for their seeming exactness. They looked identical to the originals, but for some reason they wouldn't make cigarettes. The imitator had slipped a cog some where and he had to pocket a loss of many thousand dollars.

While some admirers of the Japanese claim that he is strictly honorable in his business dealings, the bulk of testimony on this point indicates that he is as slippery as an eel. Leaving out of the account the small dealers, whose rating is little better than the poor farmer or cooile, and considering only the larger and more important firms it is found that they constantly resort to many forms of sharp practice and petty fraud. An order is placed with an importer for a consignment of American goods to be accepted at the wharf. The goods arrive and Mr. Jap shows up with a long face and asks if the importer will please hold them a little while. This means drayage to a warehouse, insurance and storage, all of which come out of the importer's profit.

their instruments the young first violinist found a card on the floor, and read:  
"Play the piece you played me that last night at Potsdam—Carlotta."  
He thrust the scroll into his pocket, and as was his custom, hurried after Papa Weyrich. As the 'cellist reached the aisle the blonde goddess came half way to meet him. She put both hands in his, fixed him with her luminous eyes, and leading him to a chair, sat near him.

"So, Emil, you have not forgotten Potsdam," she was saying, watching some old familiar fire come back into his eyes.  
"It's not Potsdam, it's not the music," he said. And the young violinist, waiting apart, marveled at Papa's sudden air of buoyant gallantry.  
"No, no, Emil," she laughed, "this is no place for gallantries. Besides, you know, we are no longer boy and girl. Indeed, I almost forgot in my joy at seeing you after all these years. I knew you the moment I heard 'Traumerel' and saw those curls of yours. Really, Emil, you're as handsome as ever!"  
"You seem more beautiful, Carlotta."  
"Now, I'll punish you," she whispered, playfully tapping his hand as she turned to the younger woman, who, with her two men companions, sat chatting at a near-by table.  
"Come here, Irene," she called. And then to the 'cellist:  
"Mr. Weyrich, this is my daughter Irene."  
The musician winced, turned pale and stammered:  
"Impossible—that is—pardon me, miss, your mother seems too young to call so mature a child her daughter."  
The daughter hardly suppressed a sneer at his blunt gentry. She did not understand or care about the gray pallor of his face as he regarded her. But the mother saw and understood and enjoyed his confusion.  
"And now—auf wieder sehn," she was laughing, but he stopped her with a queer gesture, calling the young violinist, who yet waited across the aisle.  
"Before we separate, ladies, let me present my son, Carl Weyrich."  
And the triumph faded from the elder woman's face as she watched them walk away into the night.—John H. Raftery.

**Japanese Till-Tapping.**  
The Japs work the claim dodge for all it is worth. If an order arrives with a low market, the importer feels it in his bones that he will have a claim. He might as well compromise and pocket his loss because he will get little consolation in the courts. A Tokio firm reports a shortage of \$4 worth of paper on a small order from a Yokohama importer. The latter is certain his stock was intact, but it will cost more than the claim is worth to send a man to Tokio to investigate, so he allows it. Another common practice is to hand in checks for bills due just after 12 o'clock on Saturday in order to gain two days' interest at the bank.

**Those Long-Tailed Shirts.**  
I remember the first time I ran into this sort of thing. It was on one of my first trips to the West Indies and a

This is the sort of petty till-tapping the representative Japanese business men engage in. Their defenders say we have the same thing in America. We do have it occasionally, but not universally, as it occurs here. Our big houses are above that sort of thing, while the largest concerns here practice it constantly.

**American Enterprise in Japan.**  
With all the difficulties in the way American capital is very much in evidence in Japan. The Standard Oil has over 1,500 agencies in the empire and is out-selling cussies with about three to one. The new office of the American trust is the most imposing structure on the Bund in Yokohama. It might easily be taken for the marble palace of some native millionaire. The Japan branch of the New York Life occupies another prominent corner. Although the Japanese are so poor that hardly one in 500 can afford to carry insurance on his life, the better classes are taking kindly to this safeguard for their families and the great American company is in the lead of all competition for their business. The International Banking corporation and the American Trading company are two more American enterprises which occupy separate buildings in the heart of the commercial district.

The usual complaint is made here that Americans are arbitrary and will not meet the requirements of the trade. I do not take it much stock in these objections to our way of doing business as I did formerly. The talk one hears in clubs abroad, and the arguments used in consular reports, are only one side of the case. As a rule it doesn't take the American manufacturer as long to explain why he won't do certain things as it does his competitors to censure him for not doing it. His critics are earnest enough and honest withal, in their desire to promote American prestige in the foreign field, but the "old man" in the office at home is usually a level-headed old codger, who takes the floor out from under you in about two minutes when you come in with one of these complaints.

This worthy is generally a rascal who cheats both parties, under quoting to one and over quoting to the other. The banto is a much abused individual. The business men who have had experience with him claim that, like the Indian, he is only good after he is dead. You may think you are real foxy, Mr. American, but one of these Oriental shysters can take the kink out of your conceit any morning before breakfast. The banto is regarded as a commercial baronade, and he will be dispensed with as soon as it is possible.

As at the present time, owing to the differences in languages and customs, the newcomer cannot get along without him, and even the oldest firms have to depend upon him at times. By dealing with the importer the ordinary American will save much annoyance and loss.

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I remember the first time I ran into this sort of thing. It was on one of my first trips to the West Indies and a

duffy merchant nearly talked an arm off of me because a shirt firm had refused to make him a lot of shirts with long tails. His customers wore their shirts outside their trousers, with belts, and they had lost all interest in ordinary garments on this account. I went in with the complaint, thinking I was a messenger bearing light and great commercial opportunity. The "old man" took me into the private office by the side door and inside of five minutes I had lost all interest in long-tailed shirts. His reasons for not filling the order were too numerous to be recounted here, but they were good. First, he said, he had never heard the bearer of "sugostions" many times since, but it is always with misgiving that I consent to act as an emissary with intelligence from foreign fields; because the head of the firm, although never failing to receive me courteously, invariably had it all down on his thumb nail and my well meaning argument for reform is soon twisted all out of shape by the terse, blunt force of my listener's unexpected knowledge of the subject.

All this does not signify that there are not times when the home office should pay heed to the demands of the field. Occasionally there is good reason to make some alteration in the manner of making goods, or packing them, but the Europeans have made such a mess of catering to every notion or whim of their customers that they have spoiled them. However, a recent example shows what a small thing will influence a large volume of business. The Japs insisted on having wire nails packed in kegs containing 35 pounds—their standard unit—when the usual weight is 112 pounds to the keg. Our people wouldn't do it, and their orders fell off to the Germans, who jumped at the chance to cross into the trade. Finally we packed them to order and now we control the market.

**Look Out For the Japs!**  
In conclusion I would say that while I have frankly stated the faults of the Jap as they have been explained to me, he is not to be regarded lightly as a business man. Although he is poor, and his traditions are not in accordance with our standards, he will be as apt in learning that honesty is the best policy as he is in grasping the secret of military success or the trick of imitating manufacturers. Our business men are getting on with him by watching closely to keep him straight when they can, and by exposing his deceptions when they cannot be prevented. The Jap is new at the game, but in time he is going to be both a good customer and a formidable competitor. When he gets through shooting and applies himself to trade he will give the best of us a run for our money.

FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

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All pain and dragging sensations soon disappear entirely.

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Every part of the organism affected by Varicocele is restored to that state of health and soundness intended by Nature.

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It goes to the very bottom of the disease and forces out every particle of impurity.

Soon every sign and symptom disappears completely and forever.

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