

**Japs Still Our Tutors.**

Atlanta Constitution.

With somewhat awkward humility the sophisticated nations of the west have been sitting at the feet of Japan for the last sixteen months, conning such lessons in warfare and hygiene as they thought once to have learned only from their own experts. Japan has, however, earned this role of tutor since, absorbing the best of our own ideas and devices, she has almost invariably improved on them, either in efficiency or simplicity of application.

The talk hitherto about the lessons we were learning from the little island folk has been based on more or less vague and conjectural bases. America, along with other nations, has maintained a fairly representative corps in the field in Manchuria, but reports have been lacking in detail and finality by reason of the impenetrable secrecy thrown around Japanese operations. Now that the mikado's people have secured something approximating a strangle hold on both the naval and military situations and the prospects for peace appear auspicious, there is a relaxation of the rigid censorship and official reports are beginning to trickle into headquarters at Washington and other national capitals.

As yet these reports are incomplete, but they furnish an indication of the superb efficiency of Japanese methods in every conceivable phase bearing on the current war. For instance, the quartermaster's department is just now poring over reports in the nature of revelations to eyes American. They furnish largely an explanation for the extreme mobility of the armies under Oyama and his lieutenants and a key to the relatively low rate of mortality. Dealing with this former aspect, we quote a Washington dispatch summarizing some of the conclusions of the department's observers: Every piece of metal in a Japanese soldier's carrying outfit is aluminum. He carries an aluminum canteen, an aluminum cup, and wherever metal is required in the way of buckles that light metal is used. His haversack is made of lightweight materials and his gun is lighter than an American soldier would have to pack with him. Everything is reduced to a minimum of weight.

Because his general accoutrements are lightweight, the Japanese soldier is enabled to carry intrenching tools; that is, a pick and shovel. That is a fact not generally known, and it accounts for the comparatively small mortality on a number of fields in which the Japanese apparently fought without cover.

The battle fields of Liao Yang and Mukden supply some startling demonstrations of engineering genius and tactical innovations, such as are expected to recommend themselves to the canny gentlemen in charge of these features at Washington. A few of them more intelligible to the lay mind are outlined as follows:

Examination of the fields at Liao Yang and Mukden show that on every advance the Japanese army practically entrenched itself. The first line of skirmishers thrown out dug very shallow trenches. The second line occupied them, and then moved forward. The third dug them still deeper, and the fourth completed them. But in trenching the Japanese showed a new trick. They dug their trenches as if they were preparing to bury huge telegraph poles, each bearing as many cross-arms as possible. The trench in which the pole was to lie led back to the ammunition carts and the reserves. The transverse or arm trenches extended parallel with the front of the Russian positions. The ammunition servers passed through the long trench running from rear to front and were never exposed to rifle fire at all. Shrapnel fire might reach them, but it did not often.

After having constructed the elaborate intrenchments in the face of the enemy's fire, the Japanese were ready to show another trick. That was to fall back from their trenches nearest the enemy and thus invite him to charge forward, only to be met by the whole strength of the organization making the attack in the last trench, into which machine and mounted guns had been hurried as soon as it was completed. When the Russians reached the last trench the galling fire was too much for men entirely exposed and they went down by thousands.

Another fact with respect to their field work is that there was no blind firing. That is, there was no shooting simply because the Russians were known to be in a certain direction from the Japanese troops. There was no shooting until the range finders had picked up the Russians and the distance was accurately measured with the best scientific instruments the Japanese government could buy.

Perhaps the greatest popular interest has centered in the methods whereby the health of the Japanese troops was kept at a standard not even approached in ancient or modern warfare. The following extract is significant with suggestions:

The doctors were from twenty-four to seventy-two hours ahead of the army. Also there came the quartermasters to assure a supply of water,

fuel and forage for the horses before the fighting men arrived. By such precautions the army operated in Manchuria without having more than 1 per cent of the men in the hospital on account of sickness.

More elaborate reports and reports on features as yet unremarked will be eagerly awaited by experts and the public. Russia is not the only nation learning from Japan. That country is doing so much to modernize so-called modern warfare, to make it more deadly and eventually more merciful that she is laying civilization at large under a degree of obligation. The extent of that obligation and its final intrinsic value must, of course, be left to the winnowing process of time and unhurried thought.

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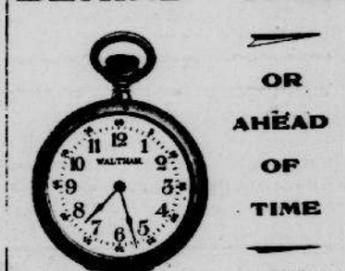
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