

MARSHAL YAMAGATA TO THE JOURNAL.

Field Marshal Yamagata believes Americans are the brightest and quickest people in the world.

That is what he told me, through his interpreter, and I knew intuitively it was what he said before the remark was translated. For this famous Japanese has the quality in great degree that marks the successful diplomat—of impressing his meaning by grace of manner fully as much as by word of mouth.

The Field Marshal is of unusual stature, when compared to other men of his race. He carries his fifty-seven years lightly, despite the ill-health that requires the presence with him of his own physician, who is his constant companion. The most noticeable sign of the fulness of his years that Father Time has placed upon him is the almost snowy whiteness of his mustache. Great mental strain, the hardships of war and the discomfort of high official position have not dimmed the brightness of his eyes, and his clear, penetrating gaze gives ample evidence of the wonderful mentality which has made him the conqueror of the Celestial Empire, who crossed old ocean to victory as easily as that famous victor of other days crossed the Rubicon in search of fresh glories.

Yamagata has all the aversion of the trained diplomat and truly modest man to interview or ostentation. He firmly believes his forte to be deeds rather than words, and so conducts himself. He was, however, induced to put aside his habitual reserve sufficiently to give an interesting expression of his views for the benefit of the readers of the Sunday Journal.

To watch this man of mild manners and inoffensive mien as he sat talking pleasantly of the great nation whose guest he was, it seemed marvellous to believe that you were in the presence of the first warrior of Japan. Still, a second glance showed that in the smiling features there were lineaments of power; that a capacity for inflexible action and stern command lay latent. In this man Li Hung Chang met more than his match. Through him the Bluenock of China encountered the Waterloo of the Flowery Kingdom.

If the Marshal understands English at all, he cleverly manages never to betray the fact. To all appearances he is an ignorant of the question propounded in English as if it were framed in Choctaw. It isn't the easiest thing in the world to talk to a man whom you know does not understand a word you say. Somehow or other you feel as if you were talking with your eyes bandaged. You have the constant fear that the man who repeats your query won't say exactly what you do. You know he will not say it in the same way. It is like corresponding by letter with a person who sits the other side of the room. It resembles nothing more greatly than the situation of an interviewer whom some one refuses to see, and replies by writing opposite the list of questions sent him "Yes" and "No."

After awhile, however, Marshal Yamagata showed he had mastered the art of conversing through an interpreter. His manner was as full of meaning as his words. I plunged boldly into the task of gaining his opinions, and began by asking: "How will the international disagreements of the future be settled?"

The Marshal thought for a moment, and then said: "I sincerely hope that there were civilized nations are relics of the past. The wars which we have seen in recent years have been those inspired by necessity. Bloodshed is never sought by nations. If such conflict is not to be avoided, why, then it must be endured. The march of civilization is marked by bloodshed, and yet it has been of benefit because existing conditions made it so. The result has inured to the benefit of the many rather than the few. I believe that one of the cardinal principles of your wonderful country is that the majority shall rule. It is not that might makes right, but that right makes might."

"What do you think of the military and naval strength of the United States, and of her chances of success in maintaining her rights in opposition to other nations?" was asked. It was clearly apparent the Marshal considered this a "leading question," for he promptly replied:

"Your country is at peace with all other countries, and it is to be hoped she will remain so."

Leaving the topics of war for the gentler and less embarrassing queries of peace, I asked the Marshal what had most impressed him since his arrival in this country.

"By far the most striking features I have seen are the marvellous improvements that have been made here since I visited the United States since 1889. They are wonderful, and show the great faculty of progress that even the children of your nation seem to possess."

"Have you noticed greater evidence of progress and improvement in one section of the country than in another?"

"The most correct answer I can give to your question," said the Marshal, speaking slowly and seeming to weigh every word uttered, "is to say that the march of improvement seems national. It is everywhere noticeable. Yet, I am free to say that in New York, more than any other place I have visited, I am impressed with the wonders of your country and its people. New York seems to be the heart through which the blood of your nation pulsates. And, by the way, one thing that has impressed itself upon me with exceeding strength since I have been a sojourner in your great city is the undeniable fact that New Yorkers seem happier and better natured than the people of other cities, and other countries, too, for that matter."

"This is, in my estimation, in all probability due to a great extent to the fact that New York City is the most cosmopolitan city in the world. Whatever the cause may be, the fact remains that New Yorkers show by their methods and their actions that they enjoy life in the greatest possible degree, and that trifles are not permitted by them to disturb the pleasures of the happy existence they enjoy."

"A noticeable feature of the state of affairs to which I have referred is that this same pleasant condition of things exists in the lower classes of the people of your city. This philosophical way of taking life as it is, of avoiding the quagmires and pitfalls which surround the ordinary existence, seems to exist equally in laborer and millionaire."

"Why," said the Marshal, with the only gesture that he made during the entire conversation, "I saw this condition of things everywhere—in the streets where I walked, in the beautiful park where I drove; in fact, wherever I went."

"What other traits have you noticed that seemed peculiar to the people of the United States?" I asked.

The Marshal smiled pleasantly as he replied: "You must know there are so many that it is very hard to determine which I have noticed is the brightness of the Americans. I think the Americans are the quickest and the brightest people in the world. You see, they think so quickly, they act so quickly, they are so quick to grasp the point of what you say and explain to them. And then—here the face of the Marshal was fairly wreathed in smiles—"they are—the Americans—so quick to take advantage of what they see."

It seemed to me that I had never heard appreciation of the native American shrewdness more delicately voiced than by this Oriental diplomat, who glanced at me with a pair of eyes in which there was a decided twinkle as his interpreter translated the remark.

Then I asked the Marshal again what improvement he thought more noticeable than others. I have seen that I can only recall a few. I have noticed them on every side, you see. A stranger, even though he may have been here before, sees so much that is new to him that it is bewildering. Your tall buildings are architectural wonders and they fill the beholder who comes here from another country with amazement. Why, at the present rate you are increasing the height of buildings here, it seems to me it will be only a little while before they will touch the clouds.

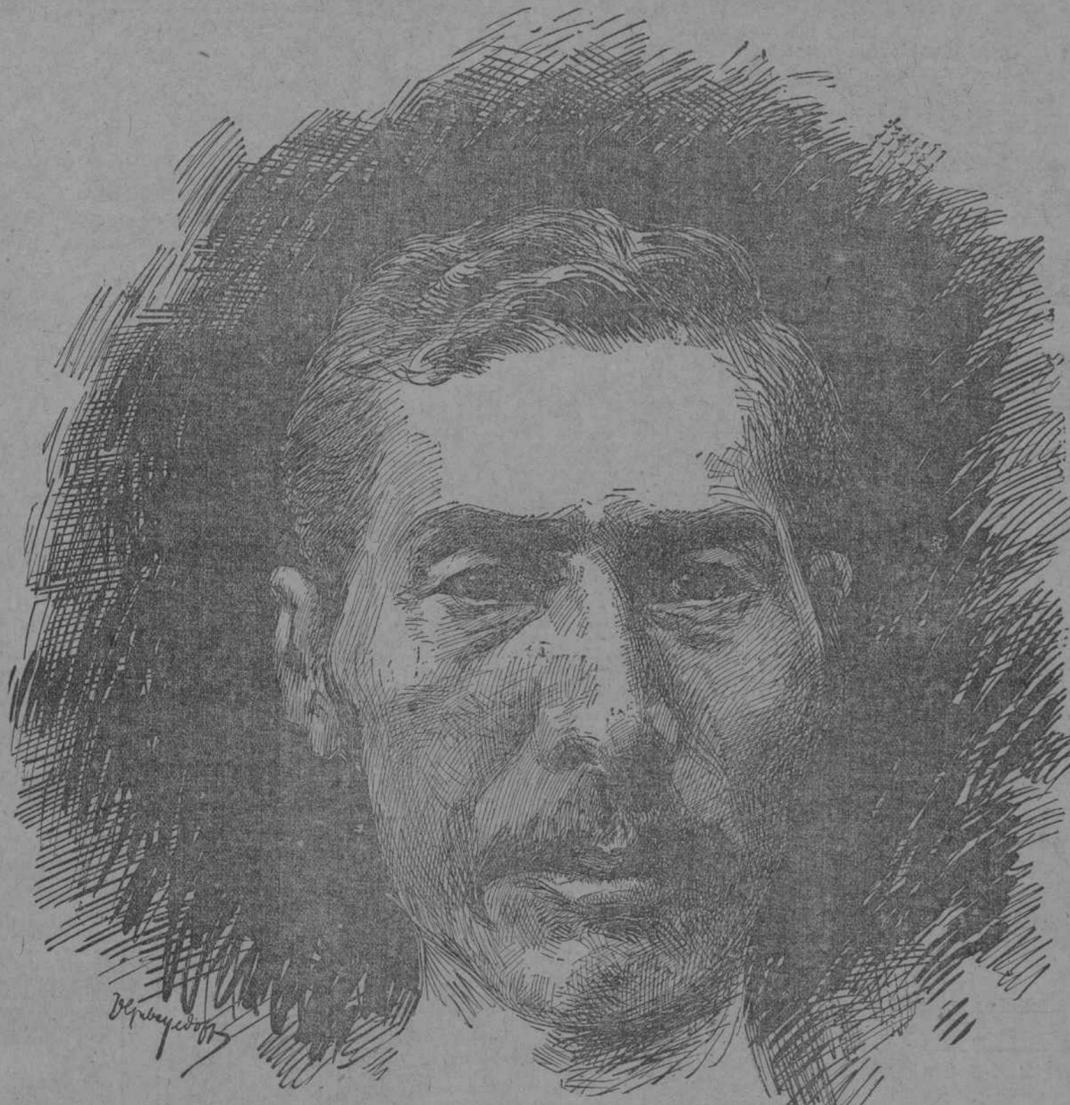
"One thing I have in mind to have noticed particularly. The transportation facilities have been improved wonderfully in the seven years which have elapsed since my previous visit, as regards speed, safety and comfort. These improvements are to me as noticeable when travelling on your boats as on your railways."

So the Marshal went on saying a host of complimentary things about our methods of moving from place to place by river and by rail. After that, with that grace which Mr. Platt woe the recalcitrant voter, he indicated that while he could speak volumes of encomium regarding the United States, tired Nature had begun to assert herself.

I ventured one more question, however. "What," I said, "do you think of New York as compared with Chicago?" "Ah," said the Marshal so blandly that I felt something very pleasant was about to be said. "The two cities are so delightful and large and fine that it has been impossible for me to discern any striking difference between them."

Can any one truly say after that remark that His Excellency Field Marshal Yamagata is not a diplomat? J. Z. R.

Yamagata, the Great Japanese General.



To the Editor of the Journal:
The United States is a country with immense resources and a people with ability to utilize them.

YAMAGATA.



How Marshal Yamagata Achieved His Greatness.

When the Mikado selected Field Marshal Yamagata as his representative at the coronation of the Czar he chose the foremost soldier of the Empire. Yamagata is the Moltke of Japan, as well as his Bismarck.

To him more than to any other man is due the new and advanced position which Japan has taken among the nations of the world, because of the war with China. When Yamagata came upon the field of Japanese affairs the army of the Mikado was more untried and antiquated than even that of China. Its organization and system belonged to the fifteenth century, since which time it had hardly changed in any important particular.

If the Japanese army had remained in this condition the prospect of its making headway against China would have been hopeless, and such a war would have been the highest folly on the part of the Mikado, placing his Empire at the mercy of his hereditary enemy. Japan, in wealth and population, is insignificant compared to China, but it was because of the modern, scientific and up-to-date weapon it possessed in the army organized by Yamagata that the Japanese undertook the war against China, not only with confidence, but with joy.

Just as Moltke, for years previous to the Franco-Prussian war, had been planning every movement of that campaign down to the finest details, so Yamagata had devoted more than a dozen years to preparations for a war against China.

The world was startled at the spectacle of puny Japan, with a relatively insignificant army, undertaking to whip colossal China. But Yamagata knew that China was at his mercy, and that while she possessed some magnificent fortifications, such as those at Port Arthur, her army was a ridiculous horde of unorganized cowards, without arms, patriotism or intelligence. But while Yamagata, a modern, scientifically trained, up-to-date soldier, thoroughly appreciated the relative military strength of the two powers, he had much to struggle against in Japan, where a powerful conservative element was still influenced by hereditary fear of China. This was the element that was in control of the Japanese army previous to 1878.

Before that time three great clans or families made up the Japanese army, keeping all the offices to themselves, determining all questions of policy and overruling the Government. The generals knew nothing of the science of war, and were even afraid of modern weapons. At the time of the outbreak of hostilities few people realized the offensive power of Japan which Yamagata had developed. There were in the army 848 general officers, 3,713 officers of the line, 11,704 subaltern officers, 2,066 cadets and 289,748 men in the ranks. In the infantry each regiment consisted of twelve companies, the war footing of each company being 272 men.

The bulk of the men were armed with the Marata magazine, breech-loading rifle, holding nine cartridges. In 1874 Marshal Yamagata had 50,000 well trained, disciplined troops actually under arms. The full military power of the Empire was never displayed at any time during the war. The army of invasion was relatively small. Yamagata took the field in person in command of the first army to enter China, and he quickly showed in the greatest battle of the war the disparity of strength between the two armies. It was by his planned and executed the battle of Ping Yang. This city was strongly fortified and defended by 20,000 Chinese troops. Yamagata's tactics and strategy excited the admiration of all European military critics. Although the Chinese, with every advantage of protection, made at first a stubborn resistance, they were taken in the rear by the two wings of Yamagata's army while the main body engaged the front. Then began a scene of cowardice and confusion which showed that the rank and file of the Chinese army was contemptible.

The 5,000 men of Li Hung Chang, who were present, were the only combatants on the Chinese side who fought like soldiers. It was apparent to everybody after Ping Yang that what Yamagata said was true, that the Japanese army would have a walkover in China.

He was taken sick shortly after the battle and was recalled to Japan to act as Minister of War to direct the operations from the capital. He thus remained the Commander-in-Chief until the triumphant close of the campaign.

Personal Characteristics of Field Marshal Yamagata.

Field Marshal Yamagata and his suite, which includes the Inspector-General of the Japanese Police, the Director-General of the Imperial Household Library, and the Surgeon-General of the Japanese Army, and an attaché of the Foreign Office, travels without any ostentation. They secure the travelling accommodations that any wealthy party of gentlemen would naturally enjoy.

An evidence of the simple manner in which the party travels is shown in the fact that for the six they carry but thirty-one pieces of baggage. Many an English tourist with his "man" carries more, and then thinks that he is "roughing it."

This great Japanese has very simple personal tastes. He dresses in dark clothing of fashionable cut. He was one of the first public men in Japan to adopt European dress; was, in fact, one of those who urged the young Emperor to eschew his imperial apparel, and of the plan since generally adopted by all classes but the peasantry to discard the ancient garb of Japan in favor of the costumes of Western Europe and America. He wears few ornaments, but on state occasions his breast glitters with medals and orders that have been conferred upon him. One medal that he prizes highly was worn by Napoleon the Great in his first campaign. This was the gift of an admiring Frenchman.

His habits are regularity itself. He retires by 10 o'clock, except when officially kept up at some court function, and arises at 6. He takes a cold plunge-bath, having acquired the habit of "tubbing" through association with the members of the British Legation.

In the matter of food the distinguished soldier is simple almost to the point of abstemiousness. He is very fond of the beef he finds in America. He drinks tea of a fine quality, which he carries with him, and with his dinner drinks sparingly of the light wines of France. He smokes a long-cut, curly tobacco in a peculiar pipe, the bowl of which is of silver and about the diameter of a cigarette. It holds but a mere pinch of tobacco. He is an inveterate fruit eater, with a special fondness for the Tokay grapes of California and oranges from the Pacific slope. A stand of fruit is always part of the equipment of his reception room at the hotel.

In the eyes of the soldier and the war party of Japan, Field Marshal Yamagata is representative of the spirit that calls for a display of the national valor on slight occasion. He is not a hothead, however, and he never displayed his powers until his army was in thorough training and equipment and he in possession of better topographical maps of Corea and China than the governments of those countries possessed. It was his plan to almost invest the Korean capital with soldiers disguised as artisans and small shop keepers two years before the trouble broke out in the Hermit Kingdom, that gave the pretence for Japanese mediation.

General Grant, in his tour around the world, met Field Marshal Yamagata, who was then a Colonel. A warm friendship sprang up between them. One of the Field Marshal's first actions upon arriving in New York was to visit Colonel Fred Grant and his wife, out of compliment to the memory of the dead commander. His visit to the Brooklyn Navy Yard was in the nature of a social call upon Commodore Sicard, whom he knew well while the latter was stationed with the Asiatic Squadron.

Yamagata's health is not good. He has never fully recovered from the illness which forced him to retire from supreme command of the army in the field after the victory at Wiaiwai, which followed the assault upon Ping-Yang. In the planning of which he showed himself to be a master of strategy and one of the foremost officers in the world.

The Surgeon-General of the Army is travelling with the Marquis as his personal physician, and his movements are to a great extent regulated by that official.

In religion Marquis Yamagata is a student of the school of thought and philosophy founded by Confucius. He is fifty-seven years of age and a widower, his American-born wife having died ten years ago. In his demeanor toward inferiors he lacks all of that hauteur so common among military men, and the attendants at the Waldorf have been unremittent in their attentions, a service which was compensated with a douceur of princely proportions.

YAMAGATA AS SEEN BY A GENERAL.

Major-General Nelson A. Miles, the commanding general of the United States Army, is an ardent admirer of Field Marshal Yamagata. He thinks his military ability of the highest order. This opinion is based on General Miles's careful study of the campaigns of the Japanese-Chinese.

In conversation with a Journal reporter in Washington the other day General Miles said: "The war between Japan and China was more of a moral than a military struggle, but the army played an important part in the success of the Japanese, shown conclusively in the battle of Wei-Hai-Wei. The Japanese navy was unable to dislodge the enemy, and success was obtained only through the movement of the army in the rear of the Chinese position. It was the same at Port Arthur, where the Chinese were stormed by the Japanese army, and compelled to capitulate."

"It is as a great organizer of men that the Marquis Yamagata stands foremost. His ability to gather, blend, equip and manage large forces has been clearly proved. This is one of the greatest things necessary to make a successful general—it is the thing. It is true that the Japanese had an enemy who had been indifferent to military advancement, but nevertheless Yamagata showed how thoroughly he understood the necessity for making his forces as nearly perfect as possible in regard to equipment and formation. He evidently understood, too, how to give the soldiers confidence in themselves, for in Japan the soldier is a superior person, one who has the admiration and respect of the people—a hero. In China, on the contrary, the soldier is in the lowest scale of life, and has no incentive to self-respect. To compare Yamagata with Caesar, Hannibal, Alexander, Napoleon or Grant, or Lee, would be hardly fitting. I mean by this that conditions always differ in war, and a general should be judged on the basis of the circumstances under which his campaign was conducted. No two battles are fought under conditions exactly similar, but the rules of strategy remain unchanged, and apply to all military movements. Each commander should be judged by the result, and Yamagata's success is sufficient to obtain an understanding of his character as a general."

"As I have said, it is in his ability to gather, equip and consolidate men that the Marquis Yamagata appears so favorably from a military point of view. He evidently understood the foremost importance of this feature of campaigning."

The opinion of General Miles concerning Yamagata coincides with the views of other military experts at Washington, and altogether the great Japanese soldier might be deemed to know how well he stands in the estimation of the American soldier.

Marshal Yamagata as Studied by a Woman.

When Yamagata, the Field Marshal of Japan, came into New York the other day I stood in the Grand Central Depot craning my neck eagerly forward in hopes of a good long look at him. It was framed in by the dazzling toggety of General McAlpin's staff that I got my first glimpse of the keen warrior who is one of the foremost men that, they say, is making Japan "a nation with a future."

In place of the picturesque, vigorous hero of the Orient I expected to see a man who showed in every muscle that his trade was war, there walked out a model in black, with a frock coat and irreproachable trousers, a rather elderly, peevish personage, lank and a trifle stooping, not dramatically Japanese at all.

To crown it all and to make my dream utterly collapse, he wore a top hat of the pattern an English vicar might have donned. As he walked up the platform at General McAlpin's side there was, until one could see his face, nothing to suggest the Orient. For Marshal Yamagata is much taller than Japanese men usually are, and in form and walk he seems a European or American.

But as he came nearer and I could study his thin, expressive face, that had a story and a picture in every line, I became suddenly aware that this man was out of another world and another life, and was moved by different impulses and feelings. A hundred strange, little peculiarities told me this, and they told me more—I can hardly explain why or in what way—but I seemed to know immediately that to him the people of the world were only the little puppets that he was ambitious to make dance at his will, and that he cared not for individuals so long as he could slowly weave his plans and keep on with the pattern of his own designing.

A great general, a wonderful leader of men, a master who will in the years to come make, it is more than likely, Japan and himself—not Japan without himself—much more powerful than either is now, but a man I should bitterly regret any woman giving herself up to, for he could make no woman happy, no home a true home—that was what Marshal Yamagata's face seemed to tell me.

The more I looked at it the more I held to my first impression. Wonderfully fascinating was that face—just the self-assertive, quiet, mobile countenance to ensure women as well as men; even more, to entice them with the romance that stood out in every feature. Oriental in a certain sensuousness that played about the nose and the lips, the prevailing motive was yet its intellectuality. That was the first thing that a woman would see, the first thing a woman does see. She forgets, until it is too late and she is a wife forever, to look for the brutality, the bloodthirstiness behind the intellectual shell, ready to fly out and get the mastery at the first opportunity.

Cruel to the last point should it become necessary, and without an atom of pity or remorse for any deed it might fall in with his plans of ambition to do, that is Yamagata, the General. Here and in Europe I do not think we have men of just his type. We have brutes, but they are purely brutal; we have not that exquisite combination of an intellect that is altogether outside of humanity and is guided by an implacable policy of ambition that thinks individuals nothing when there is a personal triumph ahead.

A. J. W.

Marshal Yamagata as a Phrenologist Sees Him.

A reporter for the Sunday Journal submitted several excellent photographs of Marquis Yamagata to Mr. Nelson Sizer, the phrenological expert of Fowler & Wells, phrenologists, No. 27 East Twenty-first street. Mr. Sizer, after looking at the pictures, said:

"The subject has a Phil Sheridan type of face between the mouth and eyes, which implies a warlike and sagacious character. The broad cheek bones, high nose, and general build of the face and head indicate the enduring motive temperament which gives him a well-knit frame and compact constitution. He also has the mental temperament, which gives power to think rapidly and accurately; and the motive temperament backs up what he knows, and makes it effective, making the nature of what he accomplishes, like the hardened chisel that will chip the hard cast iron, but will not get dull itself."

"He has policy, watchfulness and prudence. He has a great deal of caution, which leads him to look out for the conditions and circumstances. The width of the upper back side head indicates caution, and the fulness of the side head below shows that he has policy and tact. The faculties which give him quickness of thought are located across the eyebrows, and lead him to appreciate his environment. The middle of the upper part of the forehead is prominent, which would indicate the possession of a large faculty for comparison; consequently he makes nice distinctions and has quick opinions and conclusions. In the region of the temples, along backward in the upper part the side head is full. Identity, sublimity and caution fill up that region."

"Therefore, with his sharpness of observation, his keen analysis, his prudence, his policy, his energy and his self-control, he is a type of man destined to wield power. The nose is an aggressive one. The prominence of the cheek bones means good breathing power and a kind of personal bodily courage, and the prominence of the mouth indicates that he possesses impulses of affection and discrimination."

"The head rises high at the crown, which shows self-reliance and determination, and the side shows firmness. In the top of the back head is conscientiousness, which levels the head and gives him a sense of right. When he believes that he is in the right he has the power of his convictions."