

The Japan Gazette

YOKOHAMA, SEPTEMBER 25TH 1907.

SOWING ILL-FEELING.

RECENT telegrams and publications from America indicate that a section of the sensational press is continuing to make capital out of Japan's alleged intention of attacking that country—an intention which if entertained has been remarkably well concealed from residents here. It is moreover to be remarked that these alarmist reports come from the camps of wellknown yellow journals such as those owned by Mr. Hearst and that they fail to state the reasons for their apprehensions. These things are now well understood by the reputable press in Japan which regards such ebullitions as politico-commercial eccentricities which have no national meaning. But considering the millions of readers reached by each great sensational daily it is impossible not to perceive that by continuously harping upon one string a note may be impressed on the millions and if it be a false international note the result will be a proportionately wide-spread international discord. Thus the fact of these war-trumpetings of the Hearst clan should not be ignored, although it is well that they should not be answered in kind. Probably the Japanese press wisely observes that such irresponsible tampering with international relations must bring its own retribution in ultimate Government restriction. There has been a growing tendency in the west for governments to assert a natural control over breeders of State trouble, and the sturdiest champions of the press could not object to State safeguards against a press license which disgraces the best canons of the profession. It is evident that if these yellow publications will not themselves respect the limits of international decency those limits will have to be imposed upon them. The present Washington administration has shown its power in curbing licentious commercial aggregations and would probably not be afraid next to take in hand the regulation of this growing yellow monster. Otherwise it is likely to become a subject of international conference and world regulation. But besides these saffron-coloured dailies, there are other publications of a staid character which seem to be printing attacks on

things Japanese with new *animus* just now, and it seems reasonable to suppose that the yellow papers have already created an atmosphere favourable for this wider propagation. The magazines usually endeavour to follow what they believe to be the popular inclination of the moment, so that the character of their contents is instructive to that extent. One of these publications has just been brought to our notice. "The World's Work" for September contains two articles on Japanese conditions which are likely to create an impression where they are read. The first is "Japan's War Tax and Poverty: The Sufferings of the People Caused by the Cost of War and by the New Economic Regime" (illustrated), by Walter J. Kingsley; the second is "The Peril of Japan; Its Critical Condition Caused by Increased Taxes and War-debts," and the author's name is not given. It is perhaps needless after quoting the titles to add that both articles purport to reveal principally the worst social and financial conditions of the Empire, thereby, of course, producing a one-sided and misleading picture. Incidentally, it seems that the name of the author of the first article, Walter J. Kingsley, is familiar as that borne by a young man engaged on a local contemporary during the absence in America of its proprietor and who disappeared on the eve of the return of the proprietor, who found it difficult to readjust relations disturbed by the said young man. He was also said to be known in other spheres under the *nom de plume* of "Stephen England" who made an uneuviable name as a yellow journalist. If this be the same person as the author of the article in "World's Work," and there are internal evidences which favour the conclusion, the article may naturally be looked upon askance. The character of the anonymous article may be gathered from the concluding paragraph:—

"If the annual report of the Minister of Finance indicates one thing more strongly than another, it is that if the late war had lasted six months longer it would have left Japan bankrupt. Within the next two years, the budget of the Empire must be cut down by perhaps \$100,000,000 a year or Japan will be permanently crippled. The economists of the world look with anxiety for the preliminary estimates of the next national budget."

"The World's Work" is a periodical of standing and large circulation, and Japan's advisers may regard it as wise to notice these articles and if they are

misleading—as in some particulars they certainly appear—to have the impression they will create corrected. It was such work for which we understand that Viscounts (then Barons) Kaneko and Suyematsu were commissioned to England and America during the war, but it is probable that their number would have to be re-enforced now to effect the same purpose, and the Government may ask themselves whether it is worth while to try to stem that flood of reaction which they may regard as only natural after the excess of indiscriminate praise heaped on all things Japanese, partially for political purposes, during the war. No nation, as no individual, is perfect, but the perfection of national intercourse, as of that between individuals, is arrived at when both recognize each other's strengths and weaknesses, and are a little kind to the one and blind to the other. The "World's Work" articles and similar articles may be indirectly helping to promote the knowledge that is necessarily preliminary to that ideal international intercourse, and in that view it may be the wiser policy for Japan to take them philosophically. Time is fairly well certain to bring its justifications of national as well as personal policies if they have been unjustly condemned. But it would be well, in the view of those who favour peace and good international relations, that the opportunity of making mischief of this kind should be minimised as much as possible at its source by State action or international agreement.

