

Some Pictures from Nanking (Dec. 15) 1937

At Nanking the Japanese Army has lost much of its reputation, and has thrown away a remarkable opportunity to gain the respect of the Chinese inhabitants and of foreign opinion. The disgraceful collapse of Chinese authority and the break-up of the Chinese armies in this region left vast numbers of persons ready to respond to the order and organization of which Japan boasts. Many local people freely expressed their relief when the entry of Japanese troops apparently brought an end to the strains of war conditions and the immediate perils of bombardment. At least they were rid of their fears of disorderly Chinese troops, who indeed passed out without doing severe damage to most parts of the city.

But in two days the whole outlook has been ruined by frequent murder, wholesale and semi-regular looting, and uncontrolled disturbance of private homes including offences against the security of women. Foreigners who have traveled over the city report many civilian bodies lying in the streets. In the central portion of Nanking they were counted yesterday as about one to the city block. A considerable percentage of the dead civilians were the victims of shooting or bayoneting in the afternoon and evening of the 13th., which was the time of Japanese entry into the city. Any person who ran in fear or excitement, and any one who was caught in streets or alleys after dusk by roving patrols was likely to be killed on the spot. Most of this severity was beyond even theoretical excuse. It proceeded in the Safety Zone as well as elsewhere, and many cases are plainly witnessed by foreigners and by reputable Chinese. Some bayonet wounds were barbarously cruel.

Squads of men picked out by Japanese troops as former Chinese soldiers have been tied together and shot. These soldiers had discarded their arms, and in some cases their military clothing. Thus far we have found no trace of prisoners in Japanese hands other than such squads actually or apparently on the way to execution, save for men picked up anywhere to serve as temporary carriers of loot and equipment. From one building in the refugee zone, four hundred men were selected by the local police under compulsion from Japanese soldiers, and were marched off tied in batches of fifty between lines of riflemen and machine-gunners. The explanation given to observers left no doubt as to their fate.

On the main streets the petty looting of the Chinese soldiers, mostly of food shops and of unprotected windows, was turned into systematic destruction of shop-front after shop-front under the eyes of officers of rank. Japanese soldiers required private carriers to help them struggle along under great loads. Food was apparently in first demand, but everything else useful or valuable had its turn. Thousands upon thousands of private houses all through the city, occupied and unoccupied, large and small, Chinese and foreign, have been impartially plundered. Peculiarly disgraceful cases of robbery by soldiers include the following: scores of refugees in camps and shelters had money and valuables removed from their slight possessions during mass searches; the staff of the University Hospital were stripped of cash and watches from their persons, and of other possessions from the nurses' dormitory (their buildings are American, and like a number of others that were plundered, were flying foreign flags and carrying officials



ficial proclamations from their respective Embassies), the seizure of motor-cars and other property after tearing down the flags upon them.

There are reported many cases of rape and insult to women, which we have not yet had time to investigate. But cases like the following are sufficient to show the situation. From a house close to one of our foreign friends, four girls were yesterday abducted by soldiers. Foreigners saw in the quarters of a newly arrived officer, in a part of the city practically deserted by ordinary people, eight young women.

Under these conditions the terror is indescribable, and lectures by suave officers on their "sole purpose of making war on the oppressive Chinese Government for the sake of the Chinese people," leave an impression that nauseates.

Surely this horrible exhibition in Nanking does not represent the best achievement of the Japanese Empire, and there must be responsible Japanese statesmen, military and ~~every~~ civilian, who for their own national interests will promptly and adequately remedy the harm that these days have done to Japanese standing in China. There are individual soldiers and officers who conduct themselves as gentlemen worthy of their profession and worthy of their Empire. But the total action has been a sad blow.