

CHAPTER XIII

THE undeclared war between China and Japan, or rather, the war lords of China and Japan was brought practically to a conclusion by first the fall of Canton and then Hankow. The British and the French were in the main responsible for the swift manoeuvre by which Japan landed an army in the south of China and then moved into Canton. The British and the French had enjoyed commercial dominancy there and they fed the armies of Chiang Kai-shek with munitions and supplies from Hongkong to Canton and north. To bring the fighting to an end Japan was forced to go south and capture Canton and choke off these supplies. She did it with remarkable speed and skill. Great Britain looked upon the fall of Canton to the Japanese arms with, what must have been, a feeling akin to despair. By her own act she had brought Japan south. Now she realized her folly.

Canton's fall, Hankow's abandonment, shattered what prestige Chiang Kai-shek maintained among his own people and abroad. The world knew, what many knew in China long before Canton's fall, that Chiang Kai-shek and his war lords had failed.

It was revealed that China after all was not united and not as one with Chiang Kai-shek. Canton, too, had been the seat of Soviet conspiracy against Japan. By its capture Moscow propagandists retired to the hinterlands and went into hiding for another day.

The fall of Canton and then of Hankow brought relief to millions of Chinese. It gave a chance for the better elements in China, long under the heels of the war lords, and then the Bolshevik, to come out and openly co-operate with the Japanese who had rid their country of these political pests. But it brought on Japan again the stirring of an avalanche of propaganda against her, by the British and others, who, seeing their long rule in south China ended, wished, also, to drag the United States out of the trade picture in the Orient. Nothing would please these nations more than to embroil the United States with Japan and have our country do their fighting for them in the Far East. They know from now on that Japan would dominate that part of the world, that Japan favored America over them in the preference of trade, that, seeking to develop Manchuria and China, Japan would ask American co-operation and capital.