

## STOLE ALL GOOD THINGS

# Japs Raided Parcels Sent to Grenadiers

A parcel sent by his family to Major Kenneth A. Baird, Hong Kong prisoner, was returned Thursday, the day the Major himself came home.

"But all the good things were taken out of it," said his pretty daughter, Harvelyn, 14: "The sweater, the shoes, the soap. Even bits of gum were removed from the package and odd chicklets and razor blades. Some of the tins are empty, look," and she ran off to get them while father smiled indulgently.

The Major said he didn't know what to tell "that you don't know already. . . . We had handicraft shows and beautiful things were exhibited—cribbage boards, canes, cigarette cases, regimental crests, carved from teakwood and inlaid with silver."

Where did the men get materials? "Well, there was an abandoned house near the garden where we worked at North Point. They were people of means evidently, who had lived there: rosewood furniture and a teakwood altar were found. The boys would take a silver spoon, beat it out till it was paper thin and then hammer tiny bits into the wood in a design. They did beautiful work and they had practically nothing to work with but a jackknife or a tool made by themselves."

The things were so attractive that Col. Tokanaga wanted to buy some "but nobody would sell him a thing."

There was no understanding Japanese mentality: bags of mail and parcels were received at the camps but few things were distributed to the men. "I got 4,000 cigarettes in four years. . . . some men got more, some got none. I never got a parcel."

One day Major Baird saw a Jap guard with rifle slung over his shoulder flying a kite "and having a wonderful time like a child of seven or eight. Their mentality was low. And the standard of living must have been low, they've been so ground down for years."

The guards bought from the black market and sold stuff to the prisoners "at fantastic prices—600 yen for a pound of beans, 200 for wheat bran, 25 for one duck egg. Yet there always seemed to be somebody who could buy. Of course the men sold watches, rings, everything they had. . . . Once at the airfield I came across a pile of cameras and binoculars the Japs had taken from the men when they were first captured."

Major Baird was with the non-permanent Grenadiers; he reverted to the rank of captain to go on active service. He was employed by the Sun Life Assurance Co. His wife and daughter live in the Debary apts.



MAJOR KENNETH BAIRD