

goodness. It is, indeed, a formidable picture of self-restraint, moral scruple, and orderly citizenship. When so much energy is used in being civilised, it is not surprising that one

of the sins we accuse ourselves of is sloth. It is an unfortunate price to pay in a highly competitive world, but it is hardly too big a price for being gentle and law-abiding.

Angus Wilson

TAMING LEVIATHAN

THE maintenance of relations between nations—or since nations are a comparatively recent development—between separate powers of whatever kind depends on a series of commonly accepted conventions of conduct. Double dealing up to a point may be expected and accepted, but how much double dealing is a delicate question which different ages have solved in different ways. Count Gondomar, Spanish ambassador to England in the reign of James I, was never able to discover how or where his despatches were tapped on their way back to Madrid and was interested to discover the secret years later when talking it over amicably with the English ambassador in Spain who knew the answer. The spying and counter-spying was all very much a part of the game in the epoch when Sir Henry Wotton wrote the bare truth—though a thought too free to please his monarch—when he described an ambassador as one sent to lie abroad for his country's good.

The conventions have varied through the ages. Diplomatic relations remain possible as long as the conventions, whatever they are, are more or less accepted and adhered to. They become impossible, or at least very difficult, when the parties concerned accept and act on different conventions. When the social and moral order is changing rapidly there is bound to be a period of transition in diplomacy, just as there is when two types of civilisation, which have not before been in close contact, come to have relations with each other.

Oddly enough this aspect of history—not so much diplomatic history as the framework of diplomatic convention which lies behind the political relations of powers or peoples—has been neglected. We read our European history, from the decline of the Middle Ages to the emergence of the nation states, from the 15th to the 17th century, as a series of

dynastic quarrels, aggressions, religious wars, and shifting alliances, without paying very much attention to the character of the diplomacy which accompanied them.

This was, of course, a prolonged time of transition, during which nothing changed more radically than the diplomatic conventions. Modern international diplomacy came into being, and because we still live (more or less) within that convention, we tend to accept it as permanent and natural. Instead, we should study it as the unexpected product of new conditions.

Medieval Christendom had been in theory united. This was a beautiful idea which had singularly little relevance to the actual facts, Western Europe being almost continuously a prey to war and disorder. But the modern ambassador, resident in a foreign country to represent the interests of his own, had no place in this theoretically united world. Ambassadors acted only as the individual messengers from one prince or prelate to another, and it would appear that almost any ruler who had the need to send an ambassador had the right to do so; the privilege was not confined to sovereign princes.

The Italian city-states were the first who felt the need of keeping representatives abroad to protect the interests of their own people. Modern diplomacy was sketched out in the trading and political relations of these rising city-states, which were themselves models for the nation-states which came to dominate the European scene by the end of the 16th century. Long-drawn-out treaties between dynasties played their part too; the ambassador sent to deal with a particular problem might become something very like a resident ambassador before the treaty was concluded or finally abandoned.

MR. MATTINGLY, whose biography of Catherine of Aragon combined human

insight with scholarly accomplishment, shows himself equally at home with this wider, more general, and yet more intricate subject.* He illustrates the development of the new diplomacy with quotations from contemporary writers and with illustrations from the treaty-making and -breaking of the epoch. He does justice incidentally to the most diplomatically conscious and conscientious British sovereign, the much-abused King James I. He leads us by easy stages from the universal theory of the Middle Ages through the jungle diplomacy of the 16th century to the emergence of new codes and acceptances with Grotius's *Laws of War and Peace*. Mr. Mattingly sums up admirably what Grotius did for a world which had finally abandoned both the theory and practice of medieval Christendom. "From first to last his argument was arranged to appeal to rational men and men of goodwill, yes, but to such men

living in a society which had accepted Leviathan."

That sentence may serve to show that Mr. Mattingly's book is history for the modern reader as well as for the scholar. The bewildered heirs of the Renaissance, we find ourselves today faced with a world situation for which our weapons of diplomacy are hardly adequate. It is no good lamenting that none of this would have happened to us if we had rejected the new learning, the new technologies, and the new adventure, and had stayed quietly at home within the Christian medieval fold. Facing a situation which, on a far larger scale, is curiously like the Western European situation in the divided and violent 16th century, we have got to think again. Mr. Mattingly concludes: "The next significant effort to achieve the rule of law among nations could not confine itself to the heirs of a single tradition. It would have to embrace mankind." His sane, learned, and witty account of one great epoch of transition is by no means irrelevant to the epoch of transition in which we live.

C. V. Wedgwood

* *Renaissance Diplomacy*. By GARRETT MATTINGLY. Cape. 25s.

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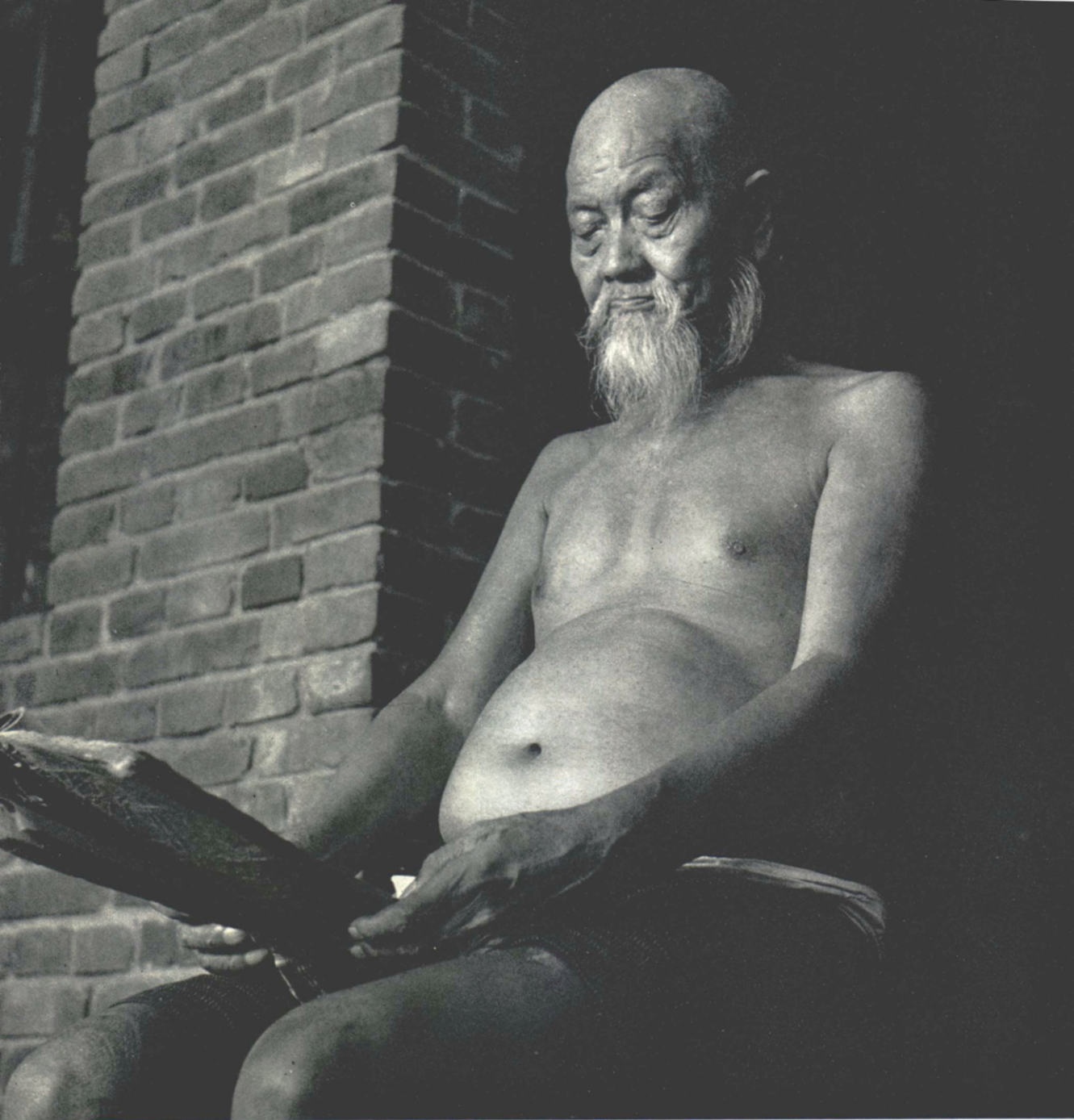
Camera Press

In the lowlands the fields are either rice or sugar cane. Here a farmer ploughs his rice field



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Aborigine woman



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Formosan patriarch



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Formosan funerals are elaborate, whenever the family has money to spend, as in the case of this grandmother of a large and well-to-do peasant family. Children are kneeling in dirt of roadside before taking coffin to cemetery

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