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REVIEWS OF NEW BOOKS

In deference to some hundreds of requests from subscribers in many parts of the country, we have decided to act as purchasing agents for any books reviewed in THE LITERARY DIGEST. Orders for such books will hereafter be promptly filled on receipt of the purchase price, with the postage added, when required. Orders should be addressed to Funk & Wagnalls Company, 354-360 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

CHINA'S GREATEST MODERN MAN

Bland, J. O. P. Li Hung Chang. Makers of the Nineteenth Century. Edited by Basil Williams. Pp. 327. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1917. \$2 net. Postage, 12 cents.

The outstanding figure in China, for almost forty years, was Li Hung Chang. His biography is properly included among "Makers of the Nineteenth Century." His character, as here portrayed, was progressive, puzzling, paradoxical. Given early and clear vision that his country's traditions must be overcome by the new developments of civilization and science, he held loyally by the spirit of those traditions, and with unbroken zeal supported the throne which by those traditions was upheld. Possessed of high moral courage, he grew rich through low standards in civic and commercial relations. Honored by his Imperial Government as no other mandarin ever was, he was also degraded by it, and in frequent peril of execution. Always jealous of the foreigner, he often surrounded himself with "outside barbarians"—best known of these being "Chinese Gordon"—and at seventy-three years of age made a tour of Europe and America more spectacular than was ever before undertaken, with a large retinue and a magnificent coffin to challenge the world's comment. An American, Hon. John W. Foster, became his chief adviser throughout one prolonged set of treaty negotiations. Mr. Foster's opinion is thus recorded:

"Li Hung Chang was not only the greatest man the Chinese race has produced in modern times, but, in combination of qualities, the most unique personality of the past century among all the nations of the world. He was distinguished as a man of letters; as a soldier in important campaigns he rendered valuable services to his country; as a statesman for thirty years he maintained a recognized pre-eminence over his countrymen in the oldest and most populous nation of the earth; and as a diplomat his achievements entitle him to a front rank in the international relations of all history."

But after quoting this opinion, from certain "Memoirs" published in 1913, with the Imperial Government's consent, Mr. Bland gives another quotation from the editor of those "Memoirs," which is not so complimentary, tho contradictory. Admitting his great power, it says that Li Hung Chang "was wanting in the Christian or Confucian standard of morality, yet he preserved a certain rugged integrity of purpose. Again, "he was a conservative and adhered to the customs and superstitions of antiquity, yet a progressive, introducing enlightenment and reform." He professed to see the danger of the opium curse, but "was still one of the greatest poppy-growers in the land." He "united the traits of cordial philanthropy and heartless cruelty, of truthfulness and mendacity."

Li Hung Chang was born in 1823, was a brilliant student, and passed a notable examination at school, being third among 4,000 metropolitan graduates when twenty-

four years old. "He could recite whole volumes of the classics, backward or forward," curiously says this biographer, "and indite endless essays, in prose and verse, on any and every subject." Soon, however, he substituted the sword for the pen. It was in the Taiping Rebellion that he found his great opportunity. From the Hanlin, or college of preeminent scholars, he became a defender of the dynasty and a leader of those who fought against its enemies. In 1862, while engaged in efforts to suppress this rebellion, he was made Governor of Kiangsu, two years later the rebellion ended; and six years afterward Li Hung Chang was made Viceroy of Chihli, which high place he held from 1870 until 1894. "For forty years," Mr. Bland tells us, covering all this vicerealty and more,

"He labored with untiring energy to provide a *modus vivendi* between China and the outside world, boldly declaring to unwilling hearers the causes and results of China's defenseless state; but never, during all these years, did he attempt, either by precept or example, to stem the chief source of her weakness, the deep-rooted dishonesty of the mandarin class."

In 1894 war came between China and Japan; the Imperial forces were defeated; and Li Hung Chang lost his yellow jacket, the purple bridle, and other honors, as a result. Even then he did not lose his power, altho removed from the vicerealty. The year after he negotiated the important treaty of Shimonoseki; and in 1896 he was made envoy to the Czar's coronation, from which he visited European capitals and the United States. Later he served as viceroy at Canton; and when came the Boxer rising her Majesty Tzu Hsi, still true to her early faith in him, recalled him to his old post as Viceroy of Chihli, "there being urgent need of a diplomat versed in foreign affairs." "Li was an old man, and tired," we are told; "he was suffering severely from the illness which ended his life in the following year. Yet never for a moment did it occur to him to decline the dangerous and disagreeable task assigned to him." He was still loyal to the Throne. He remained so until he died, in November, 1901,

"Bearing the brunt of his country's affliction and mistakes—a pathetic but very dignified figure, manfully striving to save something from the wreck of Tzu Hsi's fortunes, to abate something of the vengeful demands of the Powers. He died as he had lived, in the forefront of the battle, wearing his heavy harness with indomitable courage. . . . Even on his deathbed he fought on, resisting Russia's claims that he should pay her price of 'friendship' by signing away the Manchurian provinces. Finally, having made an honorable peace for her Majesty and prepared the way for her return to Peking and power, he died, regretting only that he could not live to see the old Buddha once again."

LABOR CONDITIONS IN OUR INDUSTRIES

Lauck, W. Jett and Sydenstricker, Edgar. Conditions of Labor in American Industries. Pp. 403. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company. \$1.75 net. Postage, 15 cents.

Wages, and their adequacy or inadequacy; working hours, and how these affect the work done; sanitary appointments, and how the product of labor is affected thereby; irregularity of employment, unemployment, and how these conditions bear upon the

economies of business—these and other matters are treated in extensive detail in this volume, with no purpose to put forth a propaganda, but for the information of employers and the employed.

Messrs. Lauck and Sydenstricker have been close students of industrial figures and facts. The former was coauthor with Jeremiah W. Jenks of "The Immigration Problem." The latter has done much similar work as an expert investigator for the Federal Commission and the Commission on Federal Relations. They have produced here a compact collection of the results of many investigations and studies of those conditions under which the American wage-earner and his family must live. These results are stated, so far as possible, in comparable terms, but conclusions have been rather suggested than declared. Perhaps the most positive conclusion reached is that which closes the book's last paragraph, as follows:

"To state it conservatively, the effect of the increased cost of living has been to nullify, in large measure, the advantages gained by wage-increases and by sacrifices made by the wives and children of workmen in entering industrial employment."

An immense array of facts is presented in these pages with regard to labor and wages, laborers and their earnings, etc. No reflective business man, no thoughtful workingman, no social worker, no trade-unionist, no student of industrial problems, can study the situation here revealed without realizing how fundamental to our national life these facts must be, and how thoroughly they deserve consideration. Their influence is felt along all lines of human activity, in every community where labor serves and must be fed, in every calling which engages the effort of workers.

There is much food for comfort and encouragement in the facts here shown, despite the grave concern that they may cause. Employers and employed have come to a better understanding of each other; the health of laborers is better conserved than formerly; welfare work increases in extent and effect. Scientific management makes for the specialization of service; and efficiency has become a common watchword of business, to insure which there must be greater regard for the surroundings of labor and for the laborer's own conservation. Such a compilation of figures and facts as this volume provides can not fail to help on the general good of society, if it be widely consulted and considered.

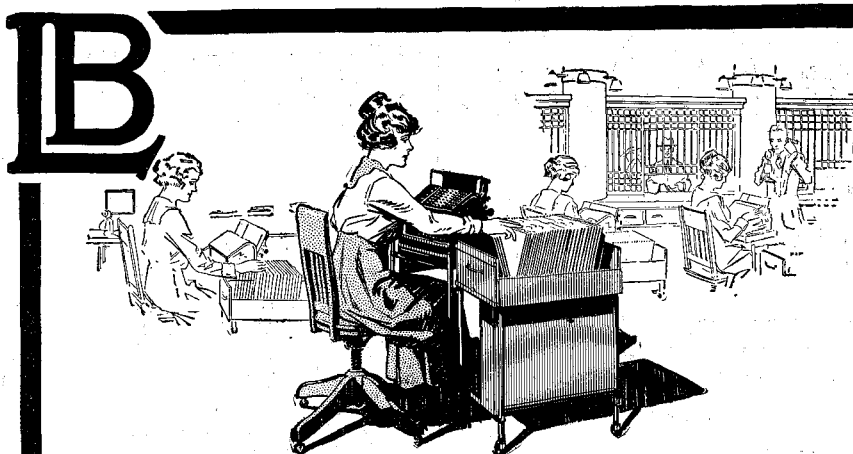
OTHER BOOKS WORTH WHILE

Putnam, George R. *Lighthouses and Lightships of the United States*. Illustrated. Pp. 310. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2. Postage, 14 cents.

Necessarily this book is full of technical details and statistics, but it is a comprehensive and interesting account of one of the most necessary departments of the Government—the humanitarian work of the nation—affording safety and protection to our own and visiting navigators.

It was in 1852 that a board was appointed which administered the lighthouse work for fifty-eight years; then July 1, 1910, there was substituted a simple bureau form of organization with its different divisions, and the service divided into nineteen lighthouse districts, each in charge of an inspector.

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