

President Coolidge's speech has left the way open for arbitration. Should the interchanges between the Governments lead to no result, the United States might now properly invite Mexico to formulate the points at issue in terms of a question which she would be willing to submit to the judgment of the Court of Arbitration or to the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague.

The principle of direct negotiation holds out hopes of working successfully in Nicaragua also. Mr. Stimson has been reported in touch with Dr. Sacasa, the leader of the Liberal rebellion against the Conservative administration of President Diaz. While supporting Diaz, whom the United States has recognized, the Administration at Washington is consequently trying to arrange terms of peace with his antagonists. The mission of Mr. Stimson may lead to a truce, and to new elections supervised by the United States, as in 1925. If so, it should prove a long step both toward the preservation of order in Central America and toward the recovery in all South America of confidence in the intentions of the United States.

Friendship and Sugar

As between friends, nations as well as individuals, good will is expected to manifest itself in beneficial acts. Some such thought, doubtless, is in the mind of President Machado, of Cuba. He came to the United States to tell us how highly Cubans think of Americans, but he will shortly ask that the United States manifest its friendship for Cuba in a few definite ways.

Indeed, he and his predecessors have been asking for several years past that one of these things be done. It is the repeal of that clause of an act of 1866 which prohibits the importation of cigars and cigarettes in quantities less than 3,000. That practically precluded the sending of cigars and cigarettes by mail from Cuba to the United States. Repeal has been promised, it is said, many times, but Congress always has failed to act. A determined effort was made to get the bill through at the last session, but it was strangled to death at the end.

Cuba has an easy means of retaliation, which, if used, would, as The Outlook pointed out some time ago, seriously affect American exports to Cuba. All of our parcels post shipments to Cuba, and they are large, are permitted under a mail treaty—made in 1903—in which, it is claimed, we agreed to the repeal of the act of 1866. That treaty has expired, but Cuba has continued it under a temporary convention since 1926. If Cuba cancels that con-

vention, any parcels that go to Cuba must pay postage at letter rates.

The one other commodity sent from Cuba to the United States in large quantities is sugar. Under our present tariff law, Cuban sugar has a differential of twenty per cent. Cuba wants this dif-



Underwood & Underwood

President Machado, of Cuba

ferential raised to forty per cent. The twenty per cent differential is guaranteed by the treaty of 1903; there is no treaty provision for a higher one.

Here, too, Cuba has a retaliatory weapon. Cuba is bound by the treaty to give to the United States preferential tariff rates ranging from ten to thirty per cent, but she can set her rates as high as she pleases. A new tariff law already has been formulated, but not promulgated. It is held in abeyance, for use if necessary. The new schedules are, to use one of our own favorite terms, highly "protective."

Cuba's demand for a more favorable differential on sugar is certain to meet even stronger resistance than has the demand for repeal of the cigar and cigarette item of the act of 1866. If American cigar manufacturers are opposed to any action that would let in more Cuban cigars, American sugar producers, both the cane producers of Louisiana and the beet growers of the West, are much more strongly opposed to any action that would give Cuban sugar a larger preferential. They have even sought means, for several years, of getting rid of the twenty per cent arrangement.

America's Hwangho

WHAT has happened along the Mississippi this spring is not an isolated disaster. It has happened in varying degrees before. It will happen, perhaps on a larger scale, in the future. Again and again the waters of the Mississippi have flooded farm lands, inundated towns and cities, swept away houses, ruined crops, and left behind the crests of their floods hunger, disease, poverty. If, as has been surmised, they will have done this year more damage than ever before, it is because they are becoming a greater menace year by year, decade by decade, century by century. What, then, of the future?

Is there a crystal into which we Americans of the twentieth century can gaze and see what the Mississippi is threatening to do for us in coming years, and for our sons and daughters, and for their children and their children's children? If there is, would it not be well to look into it and see what we have to guard against? Would it not be well for us to-day, if we can be admonished by any form of television revealing the future, to begin now to take those precautions that will minimize the peril, or even turn disaster into benefit?

There is such a crystal. Its name is China. Looking into it, we can foresee the distant future of the Mississippi in the wriggling, lashing fury of the Yellow River, China's Sorrow, the Hwangho.

For at least three thousand years, perhaps for many hundred years more, the Chinese have been doing along the Hwangho what we Americans have started to do along the Mississippi. They have cut down the forests along this upper region. For uncounted centuries they have left the mountains among which the tributaries of the Hwangho take their rise denuded of trees. They have become accustomed to the inevitable consequence of this deforestation. When the rains come, the Chinese accept as a work of nature the washing away of the soil. There are no trees or shrubs to hold with their roots the soil in place. Every downpour turns rills into gullies. The bare faces of the mountain are wrinkled and seamed and creased. And the rains carry the soil down suspended in the water. There is nothing to hold back the waters in their rush. The deforestation of these hills has thus a double effect: it increases the flood of water and increases the erosion of the soil.

So long as the run-off of the waters is swift, so long the particles of soil are kept in suspension. Stirred up by the

swirling, eddying streams, they are carried along. But when the river reaches the alluvial plain, the flow of the river is retarded and the particles of soil begin to settle. Little by little the muddied river deposits the silt on its bed. Even if the hills had not been denuded of trees, the river would have carried some of the soil down to the plains, as it did in prehistoric ages; but deforestation has greatly hastened the process of building up the river's bed. Gradually year by year the river becomes shallower and broader until it finds a new channel. It is possible to trace courses of the Yellow River which have existed at one time or another with outlets as far north as Tientsin and as far south as at or near Shanghai.

To stop the river from meandering, to overcome the consequences of their reckless destruction of their forests the Chinese have from time immemorial been building dikes. As the river bed has risen they have built their dikes higher. They did not foresee, or if they foresaw they did not care, what would happen. As human life is measured, the process of confining the river has been a slow one. John R. Freeman, the famous American hydraulic engineer, has estimated the rate of elevation of the beds of the Yellow River as "hardly more than one foot in a hundred years." But as hundreds of years have run into thousands, the bed of the Yellow River is now in some places as much as twenty feet above the level of the surrounding country. The river, instead of running in a channel, thus runs on a ridge.

What happens when the Yellow River bursts through its dikes appals the imagination. No man can conceive the terror, the suffering, the desolation. In his book "China: Land of Famine," published by the American Geographical Society, New York, 1926, Walter H. Mallory, who at the time of writing the book was Secretary of the China International Famine Relief Commission, gives some account, sober, unadorned by rhetoric, but clear, explicit, authentic, of the floods in China as a contributing cause of famine. To that book we refer our readers. In it they will find much more about China than its floods. They will get from it a background for what is happening in China to-day. But they will also get, what is of more concern to them, a foresight of what may happen in America in the future.

We have begun by imitating the Chinese. Of course, we have not gone so far as they. We have checked, but not stopped our practice of destroying forests. But we are building levees along the Mississippi with the same disregard

of the future that the Chinese have shown in building their dikes along the Hwangho.

We have let the floods come, and then we have futilely tried to control them.

Is there no better way?

Now is the time for America to take counsel of her wisest and most farseeing.

Relieve the distress now. Repair the damage as soon as possible. Set up whatever bulwarks are necessary against the perils of the near future. But that will not be enough if Americans do not wish their Mississippi to become another Yellow River, their country to become another China, and their children's children to become as fatalistic and as helpless as the Chinese.

Rhubarb Pie

RHUBARB pie is the true harbinger of spring. It is the first product of the soil to come into being. It refreshes the palate and tones up the blood. In the New England dietary it rivals the pumpkin in popularity and is a tonic equaled by few and excelled by none.

Rhubarb sauce is a good second. The acid of the pie-plant, as old folks call it, is pleasant to the taste and fruity in flavor. Rhubarb itself is a plant that winters well and expands its broad leaves in defiance of frost. It comes along in its own way and time, regardless of weather conditions. Unsung by poets, it should rank with the trailing arbutus, the snowdrop, and the jonquil in its insistence on coming to life on the edge of snow-banks.

We salute the sturdy plant and call for a second portion of pie, cut at right angles and roofed with a lattice of crust instead of a lid!

Smoking out the President

NO concerted effort to force the President to commit himself on the third-term issue has been undertaken by the men regarded as the President's chief rivals for the Republican nomination.

That The Outlook can state on the best of authority.

On April 19 the "Courier-Journal" of Louisville, Kentucky, printed a despatch from its Washington bureau in which appeared the following sentences:

A considerable group within the Republican party is contemplating with some delectation the scheme of quizzing Mr. Coolidge on the third-term question.

In this group are followers of Vice-President Dawes, former Governor Lowden, Senator Borah, Senator

Moses of New Hampshire, and Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University.

No such scheme as described in this despatch to the "Courier-Journal" could be undertaken on behalf of these distinguished men without their knowledge. Of course, ordinary politicians have recourse to the third-term tradition whenever circumstances permit it to be used as a diversion from real issues; but these men are not ordinary politicians. If, therefore, they had any such plan in view, it was certain that any letter presented to the President on their behalf would be of great importance. The Outlook offered its columns to them in a telegram addressed by the Editor-in-Chief to each of them except the Vice-President. The Outlook's telegram was as follows:

The Louisville "Courier-Journal" states that some of your supporters combined with supporters of [here were specified the names of the three others to whom the telegram was addressed] are planning to address an open letter to the President asking him to state his position on accepting a third term. If such a letter is written, we suggest the appropriateness of publishing it in The Outlook, where all conditions as to release dates can be carefully guarded. The Outlook's National distribution and its reputation for forthright discussion of National affairs will furnish the best possible background for such a letter. Our columns are open for such a letter at any time upon two weeks' notice. Will appreciate a reply telling us how we can co-operate with your supporters.

ERNEST H. ABBOTT.

The following replies establish beyond dispute the fact that if any such scheme has been contemplated it is not to be taken seriously, as it is without the knowledge of those chiefly concerned. In order that there may be no misunderstanding, it should be said that the Louisville "Courier-Journal's" despatch appeared some days before any announcement was made of the open letter on the subject which is about to be published in the "Forum" and which has obviously no connection with the plan described in that despatch. The letter in the "Forum" is written by a newspaper man, and, however interesting of itself, did not purport to come from men whose prospects for the nomination depended on the President's decision. It is one thing for the President to ignore an unauthorized query as he physically must ignore most of the multitude of letters that are addressed to him; it would be quite another thing for him to ignore the joint letter of Vice-President