

Behind the News in the Far East

We must understand the Far East better if the sad story of misunderstanding and delusion which has been written into our European policies is not to be repeated more dangerously. But the East, and especially turbulent Japan and confused China, is no newspaper subject, as Vincent Sheean made clear in his "Personal History." It has a vitally important historical background without which the foreground of the present is incomprehensible. And even the happenings of the last few years have been so variously reported and interpreted that the reader dependent upon news, is helpless. Books are being written upon the Far East in increasing numbers, some good, some bad, some history, some interpretation. In the typical group reviewed below, selected from recent publications, one sees how important is the background of thought, and how diverse are the possible points of view, even on such a well known figure as Dr. Sun Yat-sen.—The Editor.

"Soviet China"

CHINA'S RED ARMY MARCHES. By Agnes Smedley. New York: The Vanguard Press. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ALFRED H. HOLT

THIS spirited chronicle of what was happening in "Soviet China" during the years 1928-1931 is recommended to all who possess sufficient tolerance to read an informal history that makes no pretense at impartiality. The author knows a great deal about one side of the picture, and her book is exciting.

Where so many references are made to the Chinese Revolution, one is surprised to find the name of Sun Yat-sen studiously avoided, until one realizes that Miss Smedley's is a different revolution. The Kuomintang, since 1926 the arch enemy of the Reds, has skilfully capitalized the fabulous popularity of Dr. Sun, while playing down the ardent attachment to Russia that characterized his later years. To us who were in Canton during the Borodin period, when the ultra-radical Kuomintang was baiting the foreign devil with the very phrase, "running dogs of imperialism," of which Miss Smedley and her friends never tire, such a statement as this, in her book, appears a ludicrous mistake: "like the class brothers they had always been, these two little Nanking (Kuomintang) vessels slid up in the protecting shadow of the foreign monsters." Until the Chinese Reds make a place for Dr. Sun in their calendar of saints, the appeal of communism to the vast middle class that have had a little education will be distinctly limited. An illustration of the fact that the great majority of Miss Smedley's revolutionists are ignorant peasants from the interior is seen in her story of the amazement of many delegates to the first Soviet Congress when the electric lights were turned on. Let it be said, however, that education (directed of course by trained propagandists) is one of the main planks in the communist platform for China.

As in all propagandist literature about war and revolution, the atrocities practised (always by the enemy) are high-lighted; crowded hospitals are blown to pieces; political enemies are buried alive. Here and there is a hint, but only a hint, that a Red might become ruthless, under provocation. While at times Miss Smedley leans over backward to show that she is reporting the facts—as when, an eye-witness, she reveals that the radio operator at the first Chinese Soviet Congress tried long, but in vain, to get Moscow for the loudspeaker—at other times there is grave doubt as to whether she is, perhaps unconsciously, misrepresenting historical truth. It is altogether unlikely that her account of the "bombardment" of Changsha by imperialist gunboats will be accepted by the historian of the future.

Though the book is never dull, what humor there is of a dark and saturnine, if not macabre, tinge, far enough removed from the gay and childlike humor of the

Chinese. The fact is that she is desperately in earnest when trying hardest to be funny, as in the passage satirizing the conversion of General Chiang Kai-shek to Christianity, and ending with the pious bray of an army mule as an echo to the sob of an emotional Methodist. Her impatience with Christianity is boundless.

In a book whose preface was written by a professor of English, one may be forgiven for expecting better proofreading.

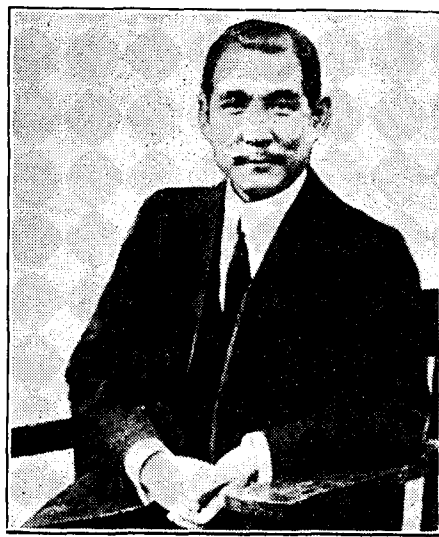
Chinese Liberator

SUN YAT-SEN: His Life and Its Meaning. By Lyon Sharman. New York: The John Day Co. \$3.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE E. SOKOLSKY

LYON SHARMAN has done an important although unsympathetic and dull biography of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The book is important because it contains a vast amount of material not otherwise available in the English language. Mr. Sharman apparently went to Chinese sources—mostly books, including Dr. Sun's own writings—whereas a genuine research job would have sent him to Dr. Sun's associates, friends, and enemies, many of whom are still alive in China.

The book is unsympathetic because Mr. Sharman does not like Dr. Sun; he does not approve of the revolution in China; he rather believes that some gradual evolutionary process such as Kan Yy-wei and Liang Chi-chao advocated would have done China more "good." To anyone who knew Sun Yat-sen, Mr. Sharman's biography is not only critical; it is frigid. It is like going through a man's application for a job and reconstructing a character from the answers to questions. That is just it: the answers are all there is to Mr. Sharman's work, but Dr. Sun is not there. He was warm, magnetic, forgiving, and amply practical, for he did, starting almost alone, upset the Manchu dynasty and set China on the trail to modernization. That he did not produce a completed picture of Broadway and Forty-second Street or Gary, Indiana, in China within a week or two does not make him an impractical dreamer. He was dealing with four hundred million individualists in a land without means of



SUN YAT-SEN

communication and with a high illiteracy. His job was to start the revolution. That he did, and that pointed task of his life Mr. Sharman missed.

Research workers often suffer from a naiveté which makes it difficult to understand why they don't see behind the record. All records are carefully prepared to keep posterity aglow. Mr. Sharman has gone to the record diligently but often childishly. For instance, his account of the role of Yuan Shih-kai in the history of China is indicative of an unawareness of how the game is played in China as elsewhere which, to me, is amusing, for I had a little finger in one or two of those games. For instance, I came across a quotation which I ghost-wrote for a famous Chinese and which Mr. Sharman takes more seriously than either of us did at the time. Mr. J. O. P. Bland will enjoy that tremendously when he reads this book, because he has

an unerring sense of the grotesqueness of foreign political activities in China.

The fact is that Tong Shao-yi went down to Shanghai as Yuan Shih-kai's representative not to bring about a constitutional monarchy but to help get rid of the Manchus. It was a straight double-cross. Sun Yat-sen never wanted to relinquish the Presidency to Yuan Shih-kai, but Yuan gave him no alternative. He would have taken the Presidency from Sun by force. Mr. Sharman has this situation rather twisted. He could have got it straight by a visit to Tong Shao-yi at Canton or Tongkawan where in addition to getting the low-down, he would have met one of the few glamorous human beings left in this vale of the ordinary.

Yet when all is said, Mr. Sharman's book is not negligible; it does contain a wealth of unpublished material; it does represent painstaking research in a difficult field. Mr. Sharman has not, however, the facility to make the personages live; nor can he avoid trying to force Chinese into the mold of the American version of evangelical Christianity. These limitations unfortunately spoil an otherwise important volume.

Mr. Sokolsky is a journalist who has been an editor in China, and Chinese correspondent for Occidental papers. He is the author of "The Tinder Box of Asia."

Japan's Personality

JAPAN IN CRISIS. By Harry Emerson Wildes. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.

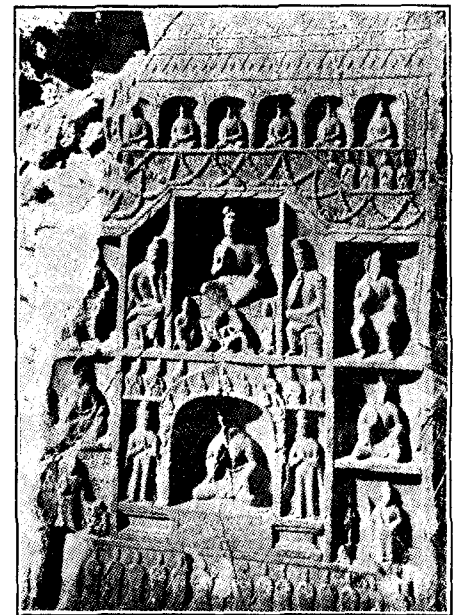
Reviewed by G. H. SEYBOLD

WITH the announced intention of pioneering on a search for the "personality" of Japan, Dr. Wildes surveys the national life in all its manifestations. The research has been thorough, the observations cogent, and one is inclined to agree not only with the major conclusions but also with his evaluations of the complex forces which the conflict of modern industrialism and feudal social organization has evolved.

Dr. Wildes concludes that Japan has no recourse but war if she would remain alive. The adventure and the booty would "provide a stimulation to endure the domestic ills a moment longer." He thinks Russia is "the best excuse." Yet he recounts that in August of last year three leading department stores of Kobe displayed the "Japanese-American war of 1936" with a realistic exhibition of charts and relief maps on which battlefields, trenches, and tanks were depicted, with patriotic lecturers on hand to ballyhoo the show. Whoever the proximate national enemy may be, it is apparent that the dominating militarists are missing no opportunity of whipping up the war spirit. Japan is bent on conquest in Asia, secure in the hope that no Western nation will fight. Internally Dr. Wildes thinks any upheaval toward the left is an "astronomical distance away." He shows how completely liberalism in politics and organization in labor have been squelched.

The casual observer who cherishes the idea that Japan has become modernized otherwise than technically and scientifically will be disabused of these opinions by a perusal of this book. The old and the new, the feudal and the modern persist in fantastic juxtaposition. Modern machinery is welcome, but Western culture and fashion are rejected. An Imperial official is prosecuted for giving away a cigarette presented by a subordinate of the Imperial household because he is guilty of disrespect to the Emperor, and 174 boys are arrested for wearing knickerbockers.

The book, which assumes that the reader possesses a considerable knowledge of basic Japanese conditions, could have been improved by the citation of a few more statistical facts. On the whole, however, the author has done more than a pioneering job in presenting the "personality" of Japan, and in view of the urgency of the issues she is forcing on the world, his volume is important and timely.



BAS-RELIEFS AND STATUES OF LUNG-MEN From "A Pageant of Asia."

The Ingredients of Eastern Culture

A PAGEANT OF ASIA. By Kenneth Saunders. New York: Oxford University Press. \$5.

Reviewed by LANGDON WARNER

IF you are to be scared off by the romantic choice of title for this book you will lose some uncommonly good reading and a great deal that provokes thought. The author is frankly no pedant and has put together the facts provided by special historians of the Orient in a kind of swift marching order that compels one to watch while the pageant goes by.

Like every sound historian Dr. Kenneth Saunders feels the unity and the purpose of his procession. But he does not offend us by preaching about it. He leaves us to discover what it may be.

Dates do not fascinate him but the chronology of progress does, especially the chronology of the progress of ideas that have possessed Oriental nations. As a student of comparative religion who has written and thought on these subjects for the last twenty years and wandered and lived in the Orient, he has caught what I imagine to be an uncommonly just estimate of the ingredients of Eastern culture. Hinduism and Buddhism are not to him mere catalogues of old creeds and tenets held by separate divisions of colored persons living in remote countries. They are the attitudes of man to God and, obviously, no thinking or thoughtless person in those surroundings and generations could quite escape them.

The Chinese and Japanese history selected by the author for his pageant is admirably presented within its short compass and his debt to Sansom's extraordinary work is acknowledged. Here again not dates but ideas and tendencies receive the emphasis. A carping critic would probably point out that the Confucianism so significant in medieval and later Japan should have been definitely labelled *neo* to emphasize how little it had to do with the original doctrines and to show its adaptation by the Japanese to fit their national temper. So too, in the matter of Oriental art, which he illustrates by admirable and clear reproductions unusually well chosen, the author's point of view will be criticized. He speaks apologetically of carvings on the Barhut rail as being "weak in perspective." My somewhat horrified comment would be—what honest craftsman in stone would so misuse his chisel and mallet as to try to be strong in a trick which is proper to brush and pencil? He tells us that the Horyuji bronze triad is of "Wei Tatar provenance" in spite of the fact that it is signed and dated by a Japanese—but perhaps he means merely to emphasize its Wei style. Such things I admit are trivial, but for the publishers of this admirably made volume to give us no maps is entirely unforgivable.

Langdon Warner, a member of the department of fine arts of Harvard University, was in charge of the first and second China expeditions for the Fogg Art Museum of which institution he is a field fellow.

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Duping the Consumer

THE POPULAR PRACTICE OF FRAUD.

By T. Swann Harding. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1935. \$3.50.

Reviewed by HAROLD D. LASSWELL

LET no sober judging citizen recoil from this book. The author is no self-righteous toad, puffed with the wind of virtue, croaking in the muck. Mr. Harding is bold, calm, clear; his facts are permitted to shriek for themselves.

The topic is the art of duping the American consumer. The most innocuous form entices the consumer to buy some useless or exorbitant article. Gargling, we are once more informed, has no bacterioidal or therapeutic usefulness. The entire cosmetic industry is essentially "parasitic"; the best skin treatment remains good soap and water, plus a cheap pharmaceutical cold cream.

Duplicity is more serious when the consumer is lured into using dangerous articles. We are told that most headache remedies contain certain dangerous drugs like acetanilid which are poisonous, and should be administered, if at all, under expert supervision. Potassium iodide is widely sold in proprietary remedies for asthma, hay fever, and other diseases; it is advertised as harmless, yet is deadly dangerous to people with arrested tuberculosis.

The virtue of this book is less the telling instance than the judicious treatment. There is an explicit reaction against the "hell-fire" technique of recent propaganda, which has overdone the atrocity theme. While applauding the ardor and often the usefulness of many professional friends of the consumer, Mr. Harding deplores a certain looseness in matters of simple fact. A six-page appendix is given over to the citation of passages in "100,000,000 Guinea Pigs," a recent volume by Messrs. Schlink and Kallett, with which Mr. Harding disagrees.

There is a timely synopsis of the struggle over the Tugwell Bill in the last Congress. With admirable ingenuity, Mr. Harding compares editorial pronouncements with advertising practices during 1934. Many newspaper and periodical editorials declared that the proposed legislation was unnecessary because of the present purity of the press. No one will read Mr. Harding's analysis of their advertising columns and remain unduly impressed by the purity plea.

By this time it has occurred to the alert modern reader that a book on fraud in advertising should explain as well as describe it. Mr. Harding is not unaware of the connection between advertising revenue and editorial bias, but he follows his usual policy of presenting data. He does not add insult to profit. It is not amiss to report that, according to the figures of the Federal Trade Commission, \$350,000,000 is annually paid for the advertisement of drugs, cosmetics, and medicine. Nor is it amiss to remark that the releases of the Federal Trade Commission, which analyze frauds, are usually ignored by the press, and that the yearly appropriation for the regulatory work of the Food and Drug Administration is a million and a half.

With the same delicacy the author deals with the doctor's place in fraud. He calls attention to the excellent work of the councils of the American Medical Association, but deplores the matter carried in official publications. *Hygeia*, the health magazine of the A. M. A., advertised in one typical issue the claim of a breakfast cereal to make firm teeth and the claim of dental creams to be antiseptic, and other such items. Since many physicians receive their post-graduate instruction from the advertisements as well as the articles in medical journals, such practices cannot be passed over with complacency.

The author is fully cognizant of the extent to which fraud is stimulated by the profits system; but the general tenor of his book is reformist, supporting the views now current in the Food and Drug Administration about the legislative changes which are at present practicable.

Although this volume is written for the non-specialist, it is not unreasonable to point out that material is available for a much more discriminating analysis of the

place of fraud in our economic life than Mr. Harding provides. Where are the markets in which fraud is most abundant? What is the connection between profits and fraud?

Before resting content with sweeping generalizations about the connections of fraud and capitalism, it is worth showing that some highly profitable industries are free from advertising fraud. The study of industrial profits in the United States between 1919 and 1928 showed that the manufacture of scientific instruments maintained about the highest level of profits. Certain other conditions than high profit must be present if fraud is to thrive, and a balanced picture can now be painted.

"Consumer consciousness" in the United States has recently gained support from the desire to find some goals toward which capitalistic society can be directed. How can combinations of sentimental and vested interests be developed which will prove capable of demanding and enforcing performance standards on American business? Is there any connection between consumer consciousness and the inauguration of policies which mitigate the principal sources of instability in the economic system? These larger issues have been left to one side, or understated, in the present book, admirable as it is in so many respects.

Harold D. Lasswell is a member of the department of political science at the University of Chicago.

Bum and Mission Stiff

WAITING FOR NOTHING. By Tom Kromer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1935. \$2.

Reviewed by ROLAND MULHAUSER

INMATES at the Welfare Island Penitentiary snorted when the first pages of this book were read to them. Drifters, bums, and mission stiffies simply do not talk in the manner assumed by Tom Kromer in his account of sinking through these years of depression. They act as he acted, they do as he did; perhaps they feel and think the same, but such men and the author do not talk alike. His lingo, the professional patter of the professional down-and-outer, is correct; his style is laconic and redundant, yet his stream of consciousness is too complete for actuality. The morbid thoughts that throb in the mind of a bum are jotted in staccato sentences.

In spite of the "four or five small incidents" that keep this from being "strictly autobiographical," there can be no question but that the author is telling a true tale. More articulate than those with whom he floundered, he was one of them all the same, living their life, but he had a peculiarly objective way of seeing what happened. There is a static calm in his point of view suggesting compression and numbness beyond pain. There is no sentimentalizing pity. There are no emotional outbursts. Nothing but hunger. Still, it is a shocking book: a picture of unmitigated depravity.

Flop houses, soup lines, box cars, and the "jungle" of the tramps form the setting. A dead level of colorless automatons shuffle by. The lethargy of these useless masses, waiting hopelessly for nothing in a lifeless bin, is disturbed only occasionally by the futile attempts of a man such as Kromer who is trying to break away.

Ever the struggle is against him. He attempts to knock a man out and roll him, but the stick never strikes—he loses his nerve. Fidgeting before the bank teller's window, he tangles the gat in his coat lining, never exposes it, never uses it—he slinks away, baffled, broke, and hungry.

He sleeps on rainy nights in vacant lofts where the police arrest him. He sleeps, when he has the money, in a four-bit flop-house; when he has none, it frequently is the mission. He knows the God of City Missions; he is preached to, prayed for, and saved—so that he may sleep indoors. He sees men die; he watches people starve; he seldom eats. He struggles—and he dedicates his book "To Jolene who turned off the gas."

Roland Mulhauser is library director of the Department of Correction, Welfare Island, New York City.