

BOOKS IN THE NEWS: China

BY CARL CROW

The Saturday Review asked Carl Crow, author of "400,000,000 Customers," to report on the Far Eastern situation as reflected in the growing shelf of current books on China and Japan. Mr. Crow's own book, published last summer, is the story of his years of experience as a business man in China. He is also the author of a short book on the background of the current conflict, "I Speak for the Chinese," published in December.

THE Far Eastern scene has always been too large and too complex for a single canvas and, as a result, we have had for a half century an increasing number of books which each present one phase of the picture or deal with one of the many geographical or political divisions. Not only is the scene complex but, at the present time, it also changes so rapidly that by the time the most careful appraisal of a situation has been printed, often indeed before it has been passed by the proofreader, the picture is no longer accurate. The ancient history of China marched to the slow and majestic tempo of the rise and fall of dynasties. Later, changes were measured by centuries, generations, and decades. This speed is too slow now. With the issue of war in China undecided, each dawning day may be a historic one.

Against this complex and swiftly moving scene there is a solid background of history in which few of the important facts are disputed, and a knowledge of these facts is essential if one is to read current books with understanding. "War in China"* by Varian Fry, is a fairly successful attempt to provide this background. It is inevitable that in a brief summary no one could possibly present the story in a perspective that other students would thoroughly approve. There are few blacks and whites in the Far Eastern picture, but many half tones; and no two students will agree as to their relative values. There can be no question as to the historical accuracy of Mr. Fry's book as there cannot be about any publication which has the endorsement of the Foreign Policy Association, but there is room for honest disagreement as to the value he places on many events.

Mr. Fry has in some places left parts of the picture blank. Very few Americans realize the important part their own countrymen have played in the development of Far Eastern countries, and this volume leaves them unenlightened. The interesting story of American efforts in the Far East was practically unknown until Tyler Dennett, after years of scholarly research, produced his invaluable "Americans in Eastern Asia," a book which is unfortunately out of print and very scarce in spite of the fact that it was published only sixteen years ago. In this work Mr. Dennett showed the fallacy of the old idea that the British initiated the treaties in the Far East and that all we did was

to take the fruits of British conquest by reason of the "most favored nation" clause. Mr. Fry helps to perpetuate that fallacy by ascribing to the British the imposition on China of the provision of extraterritoriality, under which foreigners were subject only to their own laws and their own courts. The provision of extraterritoriality in its first practical and workable form appeared in the treaty negotiated by the American Commissioner, Caleb Cushing, who also formulated the "Open Door" policy which Hay later enunciated, not as an original idea, but a restatement of an old policy.

It was also an American who wrote the extraterritorial provisions into the treaty with Japan, later to be copied by all the other powers. This was done by Townsend Harris—one of the great but forgotten Americans who played a less dramatic but far more important part than Perry in opening Japan to the world. Harris himself thought the imposition of extraterritoriality in Japan was an injustice but wrote it into the treaty because he was told that the United States Senate would not ratify the treaty unless it were included. There were very few events in the Far East, and especially in China, in which the United States did not have a hand in shaping the policy of the foreign powers, and Mr. Fry goes counter to the opinion of almost all authorities when he says we "played no very important role there before the end of the nineteenth century."

Mr. Fry's summary also ignores the fact that our ethical and cultural interest in that country has always been more important than our financial interest. While the statement would be difficult to prove, it is undoubtedly true that America has given more to China for schools, hospitals, and mission work than she has ever taken out of the country in the form of profits on goods sold to the country. Henry L. Stimson, in his "Far Eastern Crisis," says this contribution constitutes the greatest private missionary effort ever made by one country to another, and pays tribute to its far-reaching influence not only in molding the thought of China but in creating a strong bond of sympathy and friendship between America and China.

Dr. Peter Parker, who went to Canton in 1830, was the first of thousands of American missionaries who, not content with the conversion of the Chinese to Christianity, also brought about widespread social reforms through the building of schools and hospitals. Until the establishment of the National government of China, American missionary societies not only led the educational work of the country, but practically carried the entire burden. A number of other countries sent missionaries there, but in education America did five times the work of all the rest put together. When the Japanese started the indiscriminate bombing of defenseless towns, it was inevitable that many American schools and hospitals would be destroyed because there are few important towns where they are not to be found.

Following the example set by the missionary societies, the American government gave to the cause of education in China by remitting the Boxer indemnity to be used for educational purposes. This resulted in sending hundreds of Chinese young men to American universities and they returned to instill new ideas



ANTI-JAPANESE DEMONSTRATION. From "First Act in China."

* Titles, authors, and publishers of all books discussed in this article are listed at the end.

about American life into every section of China.

There were many causes which led to the downfall of the Manchu regime and the birth of a new China, but the constructive force which made this inevitable was the educational movement started, by Peter Parker. This new China, which was so rapidly coming to a mature growth when the present hostilities started, was the spiritual offspring of America and provided us with a foreign alliance of friendship and common interests in which there were no political entanglements. America's good neighbor attitude was not confined to China.

When Japan was opened to foreign trade, our missionaries raced with our merchants to take advantage of the new opportunities for humanitarian work. As in China, so in Japan, they were the first to establish schools and hospitals. At first these were gratefully accepted, but were later discouraged as the Japanese government frowned on a program of education over which it had no control.

Of the many pictures of a segment of the Far East which have appeared in recent years, one of the most brilliant is "Red Star over China," by Edgar Snow, a first-hand story of the heroic efforts of the Chinese communistic experiment in Northwest China. However, it remains but a segment of the China picture, and should be viewed as such—that is, against the background provided by Mr. Fry's book. In fact the very brilliance of Mr. Snow's journalistic achievement appears to have given the comparatively small communist group in China an importance which is out of all proportion to the facts. "First Act in China," by James M. Bertram, is supplementary to Mr. Snow's book and adds to the details of the kidnapping

of Chiang Kai-shek at Sienfu, an event which historians of the future will have to appraise for its importance. Both Mr. Snow and Mr. Bertram would have written books with a broader view of the China scene if they had set their typewriters up anywhere in the world but in Peiping.

This has been the home of the political reactionaries of China, one of the most vigorous centers of opposition to the aims of the National government of China. It would, for example, have been impossi-

ble for Robert Berkov to write such a sympathetic sketch of the life of Chiang Kai-shek ("Strong Man of China") had he been manager of the Peiping rather than the Shanghai branch of the United Press. To write the life of a man who is in mid-career with possibilities of brilliant success or tragic failure is an ungrateful task, but Mr. Berkov has made the most of his opportunities. The picture he presents of the man who is China's outstanding leader is necessarily incomplete, but is the best that has yet been presented.

"Japan Defies the World," by Dr. James A. B. Scherer, is a book written by a sincere old gentleman who has spent the greater part of his life as a teacher in schools of Japan, formed many friendships, and has been highly honored by the Japanese government. With the wanton attack on China and the domination of the potentially peaceful and lovable Japan by the ruthless military dictators, Dr. Scherer found the Japan in which he lived destroyed. He has been treated, I think, very unfairly by the New York critics, especially by that growing number of realists who appear to have a contempt for honest moral indignation.

A more satisfactory book for the student is "Japan over Asia," by William Henry Chamberlin, a dispassionate and careful study of Japan's accomplishments, ambitions, and resources. It tells about the same story as that told by Dr. Scherer, but in more detail, and without the capital letters or the exclamation points of indignation.

Each volume of this small shelf of recent books to the Far East contributes its own restricted scene to the larger canvas. There are many contradictions as to statement of fact and disagreements as to opinion, but out of

them all emerges a certain unity. During the same century the isolation of China and Japan was broken down by impact with the West. At that time each country was ruled by a divine "Son of Heaven" and neither country knew anything of what is generally called "Western civilization." Japan was a small and compact country in which the rights of the individual were entirely subservient to the will of his feudal ruler. The adoption of Western ideas was forced on the people from above and so Japan became



RED CITADEL IN NINGHSIA PROVINCE. From "Red Star over China."

a modern nation as far as the outward trappings go, but both politically and socially remained medieval and feudalistic. Huge, sprawling China, a nation of individualists who paid but scant heed to the mandates of their Son of Heaven, was cautious, resentful, and suspicious. While the Japanese were Westernized in wholesale fashion by the orders of their war lords, the Chinese became Westernized individually, slowly, one by one. Thus the progress of China was slow and halting but, from the American point of view, their Westernization was sounder and more complete, for they absorbed American political ideals even more readily than they took up the use of Western machines. Thus the conflict in China is seen as one between medieval and modern political ideas. A Chinese victory would mean the establishment of a strong democratic nation. A Japanese victory would return all of Asia to the sort of tyrannical rule against which freedom-loving peoples of the world started revolting centuries ago.

Until this issue is decided, there will be interested readers for every book which adds to our knowledge of this complicated problem.

WAR IN CHINA. By Varian Fry. New York: Foreign Policy Association. 1938. Cloth, 95 cents. Paper, 25 cents.

AMERICANS IN EASTERN ASIA. By Tyler Dennett. New York: The Macmillan Co. Out of print.

THE FAR EASTERN CRISIS. By Henry L. Stimson. New York: Harper & Bros. 1936. \$3.75.

RED STAR OVER CHINA. By Edgar Snow. New York: Random House. 1938. \$3.

FIRST ACT IN CHINA. By James M. Bertram. New York: The Viking Press. 1938. \$3.

STRONG MAN OF CHINA. By Robert Berkov. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1938. \$3.

JAPAN DEFIES THE WORLD. By James A. B. Scherer. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1938. \$2.50.

JAPAN OVER ASIA. By William H. Chamberlin. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1937. \$3.50.



ANTI-COMMUNIST FORT AT SHANSI
From "First Act in China."

The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

Mandrake Pills

IN a train to Baltimore I had fun thinking; or wondering. I saw again the old barns painted with the sign MANDRAKE PILLS, so familiar to my youth. It suddenly occurred to me, what were the pills taken for? Mandrake—mandragora—a drowsy syrup? Was that why it shrieked, hated to be disturbed? A soporific? Yet there used to be other rumors about the efficacy of mandrake, quite the opposite. But perhaps no one ever knew, not even Schenk who made them?

Whatever their purpose, apparently they served some need that doesn't exist North of Latitude Forty. Are there any barns painted MANDRAKE PILLS this side of Philadelphia?

There was a young lady whose suitcase was plastered with ecumenical baggage-labels, obviously phony. What a parable of education. We love to paste on our skull the labels of the Aristotle-Plaza, the Chaucer Inn, Shakespeare Falls, Walt Whitman Park; how rarely we've actually visited them.

The U. S. A., more than any other, is the land of Make-Believe, of Peter Pantheism, of fairy tales and Fortune Magazines. Its national anthem can't be sung, and now we have a machine (the "Exercycle") which (for \$285) gives "exercise without exertion" and is smilingly bestridden (see Abercrombie &

Fitch's circular) by young women in shorts. Even American dogs have little treadmills so they can exercise without going outdoors.

Nothing in the U. S., not even the trains, can be started without a jerk, or stop without a bang.

But the most astonishing tribute to human pertinacity is that there are still people, in a fatigued and dubious civilization, who have energy enough to wear spats.

On this train two books were being read. In a Pullman, a lady reading *Gone With the Wind*. In a day coach a man reading a life of Leonardo Da Vinci. This seemed to me a brief history of what that Harvard professor calls the Structure of Social Action.

An editorial (*Herald-Tribune*) says that some hospital is installing an exhibition room to amuse and pacify the Expectant Father while he's waiting for the news. But nothing will ever be more appropriate than the old engraving that used to hang in the little lurking-room for Fathers in the Sloane Maternity Ward. It was Landseer's *The Stag at Bay*.

Nothing, I told the young man in the diner, can surpass your privilege—a quite new one—of living in an era when everything is uncertain; when even middle-aged people, whose only excuse for existence was their absolute assurance, now titu-

bate with doubt.—If it was not for Bishop Manning (I cried) the whole conception of Certainty would have perished from the earth.

No soda, I told the waiter: I'll take it straight. I don't believe in miscegenation.

But you can still believe in the Moon, I encouraged the young man. She is the original Glamor Girl.

Returning to the smoker, I found myself compiling two definitions of Literature. Unfortunately they exactly cancelled out, so I was left with nothing:—

<p><i>Literature is an attempt to step down the voltage of life so as to make its contemplation endurable. . . .</i></p>	<p><i>Literature is an attempt (by selecting and intensifying) to melodramatize the dull rote of living into a higher order of composition. . . .</i></p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Any old grizzled baggage man on a railroad platform has seen things funnier or more dreadful than literature would dare to approach.

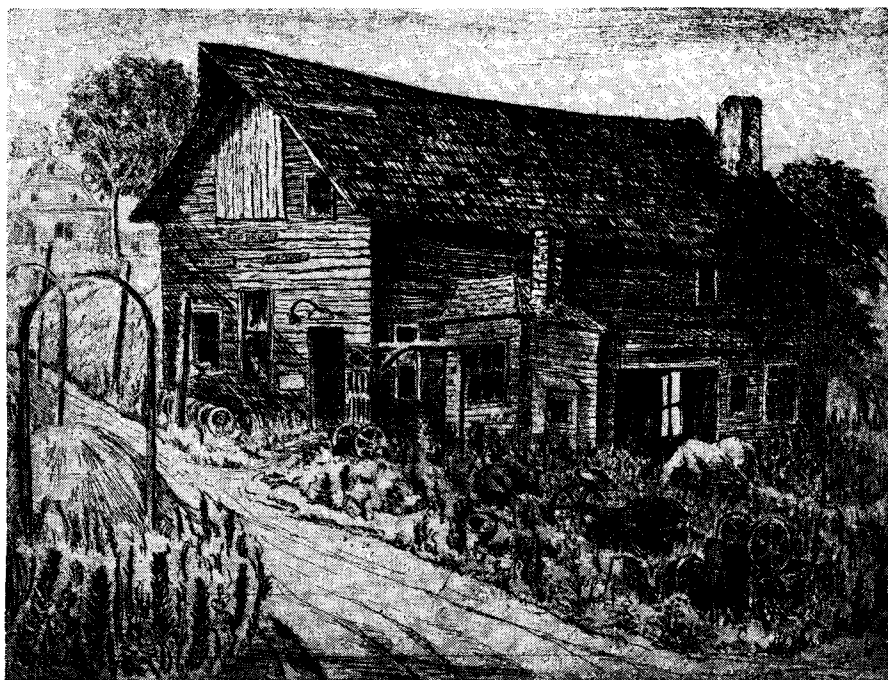
Goudy to Kuppenheimer to Kennerley

Goudiamus igitur (we have said before) has been the motto of printers for a good many years. As Stanley Morison has remarked, the types designed by Fred Goudy "have transformed the advertising pages of every magazine in America." (And also a good many abroad.) I am glad Morison laid the emphasis on advertising, for the artistic taste of frankly commercial print is often more sure than that of the de luxe literary publishers. Goudy himself began under a heavy influence of William Morris—whose dense illegible type and vast fringes and clots of decoration always seemed to me horrible. But Mr. Goudy made steady progress toward simplicity.

His time in late years must have been cut up by the hospitality of those wishing to do him honor. I see now that the Typophiles, a group of frolicsome guttenbergs, are going to dine him at the Amherst Club on March 8, in celebration of his 73rd birthday. Because Mr. Goudy has boldly fought against the horrors of excessive doodad in print, and because he has always preached that the finest type design is aware of handwriting as its norm, the Green is happy to add a humble applause.

The exciting story of Mr. Goudy's career has often been told—never better than by Milton MacKaye in the *New*

(Continued on page 18)



BLACKSMITH SHOP, WAUBEEK, IOWA: Etching by Don Glosell.