

Cultural Conflicts of China and Japan

THE REAL CONFLICT BETWEEN CHINA AND JAPAN. By Harley Farnsworth MacNair. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1938. \$2.

Reviewed by T. A. BISSON

THE following sentence occurs toward the end of this interesting study of Chinese and Japanese ideologies: "Physical factors such as population pressure, raw materials, and development of mechanical and industrial revolutions, while of perennial importance, must not blind the observer to the basic significance of the nonphysical aspects of the situation." Reactions to this statement will differ. Perhaps only a few will concede that the "real conflict" between China and Japan lies in the realm of their contrasting psychological attitudes and backgrounds. Whatever the decision in this regard, it should not be allowed to stand in the way of a reading of Professor MacNair's book. He has documented a fascinating subject—much of his work consists of quotations, not easily accessible for the most part, drawn from a variety of first-hand Chinese and Japanese sources in all historical periods. If the reader chooses to differ from the author, he is at liberty to impose his own interpretations.

Even while admitting the aptness and catholicity of the quotations, there is wide latitude for discussion and dispute. Professor MacNair's strictures with regard to the Chinese tend to ignore some of the more recent phenomena of China's political life. At one point he asserts that, in recent times, despite Chiang Kai-shek's valiant attempts and "despite the formation of the United Front of the Nanking-Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist armies in 1937-38, no effective national army—to the exclusion of local armies under provincial war lords—has ever been formed." Granted that provincial troops under their own provincial leaders are participating in the current struggle against Japan's invasion, is not the fact that these forces are operating on a unified program and subject to a centralized command a significant point which properly deserves emphasis? It is a new thing in this century, and may well be a prelude to an "effective national army." Are "dissension, disloyalty, and decentralization" typical of China's historical past? What, then, should be said of China's great conquering and unifying dynasties—the Ch'in, the Han, and the T'ang? Environmental conditions seem to have overcome this supposed radical tendency toward disunity, and to have emphasized unity, for long periods in the past; if this is so, may it not well be true again in the future?

Space prevents a discussion of the author's analysis of the components of Japan's ideology; they are illustrated by a wealth of important material. Professor MacNair concludes as follows: "Nor are the leaders of China likely to forget the declaration of the Nipponese foreign minister, Koki Hirota, addressed to the Diet, and to the world, on March 22, 1938,

that 'the Chinese must be made to realize that they are inferior to the Japanese in culture and arms and must follow in the footsteps of the Japanese. . . . In order to stabilize the Far East it is essential to heighten the awareness of Japanese culture.' A heightening of the awareness which Hachiman's agents cultivate by the use of the bomb, the bullet, the sword, narcotics, fire—and rape."

T. A. Bisson is on the staff of the Foreign Policy Association.

The "Best" Poems

THE BEST POEMS OF 1938. Selected by Thomas Moul. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 1938. \$2.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

THIS is the seventeenth annual selection of what Thomas Moul, a minor English poet who figured in one issue of *Georgian Poetry*, considers the best verse of the year. To understand the editor's taste as well as his method, the reader is recommended to the first sentence of the introduction: "To understand the position of poetry as this issue is published we must go back to the time, not so very long ago, when the tribal bard sang his songs of love and hate to a group of listeners and inspired them to do daring deeds."

Thus, by more than implication, the reader is prepared for a more than usually active poetry, for verse which vividly reflects the temper of the times, for words which, as Robert Frost put it, have become deeds. The reader will be cumulatively, comprehensively, disappointed. There is no daring in this volume. If there is an occasional clarion call it is uttered through an effectively muted trumpet. The music, consistent with the preceding volumes in this series, is all for thin flutes, sweet violins, and well restrained woodwinds. "Obscurity" is Mr. Moul's black beast; his introductory two pages protest volubly, if not too plausibly, against the poet who is out of touch with the market-place.

The reader now knows what to expect: a compilation of well-oiled competence, "priceless treasures," and pretty mediocrity. With the exception of three pages, novelty is taboo, experiment never raises its ugly head. There is not a line here by such vigorous post-war poets as W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice; on the other hand there are no poems by such distinguished if more orthodox English contemporaries as James Stephens, John Masefield, and William Butler Yeats. The American contingent is represented by a host of facile versifiers, but not one page is devoted to any of the recent poems by Robert Frost, Archibald MacLeish, Carl Sandburg, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Louise Bogan, Mark Van Doren, Merrill Moore, Muriel Rukeyser, and Kenneth Fearing. The only new names that carry the proverbial promise are Edward Ames Richards ("Poems on the War"), Eleanor A. Chaffee ("Old Man"), Willard Maas ("Transcontinental"), Frederic Prokosch ("Song"), and Louise McNeill ("Midnight Song").

England's New Deal in the Pre-War Era

ECONOMIC HISTORY OF MODERN BRITAIN. Vol. III. By J. N. Clapham. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1938. \$7.

Reviewed by RAYMOND J. SONTAG

IF you are beginning to suspect that your love, or hatred, of the New Deal has become too exclusively emotional, regain your sanity by studying England's New Deal of a generation ago in this concluding volume of Professor Clapham's masterly work. A word of warning is needed. This is not a book to be skimmed in an evening. It contains the knowledge and wisdom of a lifetime, and it requires study if its value is to be appreciated.

Pre-war England had its C.I.O. In 1895, the skilled craft workers still dominated British trade unionism. By 1913 the numbers of men in unions had doubled, partly because of "the Socialist-inspired propaganda of the new, the fighting, unionism of Tom Mann, John Burns, Ben Tillett." By then, the formerly dominant craft unions had been swamped by the hordes of transport workers and general laborers. Britain also had combinations of employers. "They put pressure on one another to come in or to stand fast, not by picketing or outward violence, but quietly over dinner-tables and in hotels, as employers can." There were strikes, but the wonder is that so few heads were broken, or so little working time lost. In the end, unionism prevailed, and craft and industrial workers held together. Are these results explained by the "animated moderation" which Bagehot thought the secret of all British success, by that "eminently British spirit of non-logical compromise" praised by Acworth, or were there human and institutional elements which we may imitate with profit?

In pre-war England, as in America today, the state was steadily growing in power. Omitting police, there were in 1911 twice as many servants of the central government, and considerably more than twice as many servants of local governments, as there had been in 1891. Budgets soared, to the alarm of cautious men. As early as 1895, the *Economist* complained that "little by little, and year by year, the fabric of State expenditure and State responsibility is built up like a coral island, cell by cell." Social security, wages and hours, securities and exchanges—all were subjects of legislation. There was even a housing act: "its results were negligible." That sounds very familiar.

The parallels can be found in every part of social and economic life. There were monopolies and coöperatives, fanatical reformers and a British Medical Association which "required long and dextrous handling." There may or may not be differences in the position of Britain in the world then, and America today. Economically, England was no longer young. "There was a rigidity in starting and a stiffness in working. . . . Risk and adventure have lost something of their charm." Again, the rulers of

England "lived and worked on two planes—the public plane of social reform and the hidden plane of possible war." Are these contrasts, or parallels?

If in the reading, this story of England's maturity comes to have interest for its own sake, turn back to the earlier volumes, and relive the youth of industrial England. At the end, it will be evident that the history of British economic life since the eighteenth century has at last been told in a manner worthy of the greatness of the subject.

Raymond J. Sontag is in the department of history of Princeton University.

No More Frontier?

OUR PROMISED LAND. By Richard L. Neuberger. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1938. \$3.

Reviewed by MARGARET WALLACE

WHILE other journalists lament our vanished American frontier, Richard Neuberger has been engaged in observing it. What, says Mr. Neuberger, no more frontier? What else would you call an empty land, approximately twice the size of France, whose natural resources are still virtually untapped? Visitors to the thriving cities of Portland and Seattle may wonder at the adjective empty—but Mr. Neuberger has marshaled his figures. He has the reporter's aptitude for putting his ideas into concrete images.

Massachusetts has 528 people to the square mile. There are only five people to the square mile in Idaho. There are men in the great Cascade forests who never have seen a trolley car. A girl from the uplands of Utah who won a national slogan contest has just had her first glimpse of a two-story building. In this wilderness dwell cowpunchers, sheepherders, lumberjacks, mountaineers, ranchers. "I have heard these men talking about remote valleys no one has ever explored and secluded ranges no one has ever penetrated. . . . It is a frontier, and some day the country will spill the surplus population over into it."

One imagines the taxpayers of the region, who have found their relief rolls jammed with refugees from the Dust Bowl, may look upon this prospect without enthusiasm. But what, Mr. Neuberger would say, of the Grand Coulee Dam? This tremendous hydroelectric project already has cost the nation more than the Panama Canal, and dwarfs it as an engineering feat. On its result, he believes, depends not only the entire power program of the New Deal (if Bonneville kilowatt-hours hum merrily over the transmission lines, Passamaquoddy may be revived) but a vast westward shift of population.

While he is frankly a reporter, and his discussion is sometimes thin or repetitious, as news hot off the griddle is bound to be—there is no denying that Richard Neuberger is a good reporter. He is completely alive to the color of his story. Here is the Pacific Northwest as the potential treasure house of the nation, or as the basis of our future operations in the Pacific.

UNFORGOTTEN YEARS

By Logan Pearsall Smith*
Author of "Trivia"

A Few of the Enthusiastic Reviews:

Katherine Woods in the
New York Times Book Review

"ITS AUTHOR blends frankness and reticence in the narrative of a remarkable boyhood, presents a succession of celebrated men and women not only as living portraits but as actors in amusing or amazing events, and infuses into his memoirs a mood of intellectual excitement, as well as philosophy and wit."

William N. C. Carlton in the
New York Herald Tribune "Books"

"UNFORGOTTEN YEARS records the memories of friends of a rare quality . . . The roll of their combined names includes the intellectual and artistic élite of the past fifty years: Walt Whitman, William James, Henry James, Jr., Matthew Arnold, Sir Edmund Gosse, Robert Bridges, Laurence Binyon, Max Beerbohm, Bernhard Berenson, Bertrand Russell, George Santayana, Lowes Dickinson, Whistler, Walter Sickert, Roger Fry."

Irwin Edman in the
Saturday Review of Literature

"MOST OF ALL the reader will enjoy, I think the savor and quality of the writing itself, and the temperament and realms of feeling which the book conveys . . . This gallery of portraits and of memories is beautifully given us by a writer who contagiously loves and exhibits the art of writing."

*"No one needs to be told that Logan Pearsall Smith is one of the foremost stylists of our speech and our day."

—New York Times Book Review.

107th Thousand

Co-selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club for January

An Atlantic Book • \$2.50

LITTLE, BROWN & CO., PUBLISHERS, BOSTON

