WAR BILLIONS FILL UNCLE SAM'S STRONG BOX TO BURSTING

Treasury Vaults Antiquated but Not Wanting in Protection—Officials More Concerned Over Lack of Room Than Question of Safety

BURDENED as he is with much of the wealth of the world, as wealth is commonly reckoned in cash and securities, Uncle Sam's sock has become too short.

The nation's strong box, loaded with cash to meet the war needs of this country and nearly all of the Allies, has become filled to bursting. The Treasury vaults, one of the show places in Washington, have begun to bulge.

But with all of this wealth, or much of it, lodged in the Treasury in Washington and in his keeping Secretary of the Treasury Carter Glass and John Burke, Treasurer, are unable, because of technicality of appropriation, to spend a paltry million and a half to protect, in a modern vault structure the billions on billions now scattered in sixteen vaults and five strong rooms all in the Treasury Building, and all so full that the bulk of securities and currency cannot be handled.

Not an Insurable Risk.

The Treasury vaults are popularly regarded as impregnable, and they are because of the protection that can be given them, but if the ancient structures were in any private institution, any bank, the institution would not be regarded as a good insurance risk Uncle Sam, of course, needs and can hold no insurance, but if he could there is probably not a company in the world that would grant it.

These conditions have prompted Treasury officials to appeal to Congress for an appropriation for a new and modern vault structure. The old one, or old ones, all antedate the civil war by a great many years. Were they in any structure other than the United States Treasury they would be exceedingly unsafe. Though officials will not publicly admit it, some of the places where the nation's wealth is stored could be as easily blown as the most antiquated country post office safe. That is, if they could be reached. Even a second rate yegg would laugh at the job could he reach any one of the strong rooms.

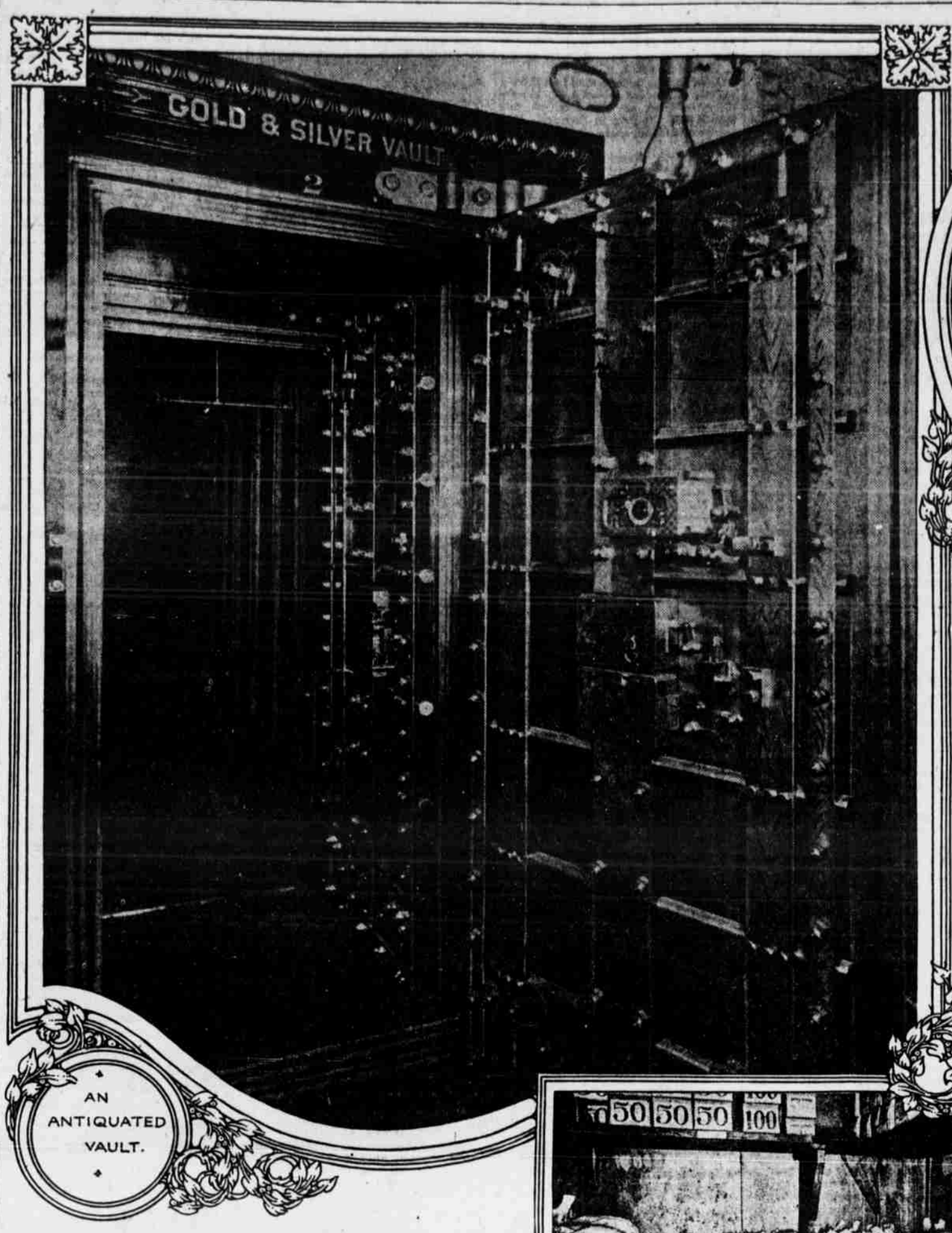
To reach them, however, is another matter. Every one is fully protected electrically. No one unknown and without a pass can enter the Treasury Building. There is a strong and well armed watch force on duty always, and the Treasury guardroom resembles an armory. In addition, there are electrical connections everywhere, which the moment they are touched bring a special armed guard with rifles, and practically the entire metropolitan police force of Washington, as well as the military police to the Treasury.

With the alarm system set a step near a vulnerable door, the lightest kind of a blow on a wall, or a touch on any combination would bring armed guards a running and have the building surrounded in not much over the proverbial three shakes of the well known sheep appendage.

Would Abolish Human Equation.

As a result, Treasury officials are possibly more concerned over the lack of space in the old vaults for the money, bonds and securities that must be stored than they are over safety. But they feel that the Treasury vault should be modern and the safest place in the world under any circumstance, possible or apparently impossible, such as sudden secession of every guard and all of the police to the Bolsheviks or other terrible tribe. In fact, officials would rather leave absolutely nothing to the human equation, either collective or individual.

Details of construction, location and condition of the old vaults have always been regarded as a State secret.



AN ANTIQUATED VAULT.

There are many persons in Washington, officials and employees, who know much about them, but there is little if any outside knowledge. Photographs of the vaults either inside or outside are not permitted. Newspapermen who know details of construction and location are under pledge not to make them known.

It is a popular belief that there is one great vault in the Treasury in which most of the nation's wealth is stored. There is such a vault and thousands upon thousands have visited it, but the popular belief that it contains millions and even billions in shining yellow gold and glittering silver is all wrong. Most of the precious metals of coinage are otherwise stored. In fact, it is not a secret that much of it is out of Washington, and officials believe that for currency safety and to keep the currency and coinage structure fully protected there should be more of it in the United States Treasury proper. That is another reason why a new Treasury vault modern in every particular is desired.

It is not the nation's $3,000,000,000 or more in gold that is bulging the vaults in the Treasury. It is principally the billions of Liberty bonds, certificates, currency and other negotiable paper, securities for circulation and loans, that have filled the vaults to the very doors and caused the use in some exceptional cases of ordinary storerooms that are not regarded as safe because of the great number of employees who could have access to them.

Just how much of this paper there is in all of the Treasury vaults, there is not an official who can state. It falls to the custody of half a dozen or more and is carried in many separate accounts. They would have to be tabulated, checked, and go through many revisions.

The total, however, would be astounding. There are billions in Treasury bonds alone, bonds that have been retired, bonds not issued, bonds turned in for conversion and bonds held for customers. There are endless stacks of Federal reserve notes, of national bank notes, of United States currency, gold and silver certificates, bonds held against circulation, and accepted securities held as collateral by the Farm Loan Board, by the War Finance Corporation, and other paper held ready for issue.

It cannot be denied that there is much gold and silver and coins to great value, but much of the metal wealth is at sub-treasuries, at United States mints and other places.

What is known as the Treasury vault is the old "silver vault." It is not letting out a secret to say that it is in the north court of the Treasury Building, or rather under the north court. It covers considerable of the court area, and when it was built was considered the largest and safest in the world. It is a huge masonry structure, reenforced with steel, and has been strengthened since its completion in the early 30s of the last century. As long as thirty-five years ago it was necessary to build supports for the roof, which was sagging from the great weight. While still one of the largest vaults in the world the old structure is no longer regarded as the safest. It is far from present day vault construction.

CARTER GLASS
SECRETARY of the TREASURY.

Even Approaches Secret.

It is this vault that is popularly known as the "Treasury vault." There was a time when it contained practically all of the silver held by the Government and nearly all of the gold. That, however, was before the United States became possessor of more than $3,000,000,000 in gold, which is the greater part of the entire world supply.

For generations the vault was the Mecca of visitors, who felt that they never had seen the sights until they had been in the Treasury and visited the great vault. Chosen ones, with an official as guide, have been handed sacks of gold eagles, or packages of $25,000 in bills, aggregating a million or more, to hold, and they thrilled at the experience. They were led to the vault through the only passageway, and there were few who knew anything except the general location. Other visitors have seen the lesser vaults, but in general the locations of these lesser vaults are not known. Approaches to them have been kept secret from all but trusted employees of the Treasury. They are not all under ground but are in different sections of the building. There is a vault for the Comptroller of the Currency, one for the Division of Loans and Currency, one for the National Bank Redemption Agency, another for the Farm Loan Board, another for the War Finance Corporation, another for the Register of the Treasury, and still another for the Director of the Mint, and for other official agencies, and in addition many for the Treasurer of the United States. All of them are filled and many if not all would not be safe in any building except, perhaps, the Treasury. Its great granite walls are as heavy as those of a fortification.

There have been many rumors of attempts to tunnel under them, but these have always been without foundation. There was a sensational rumor once of an attempt from the old Seventeenth street sewer, a great culvert that ran not so far away, but this was without foundation. Any such attempt, officials can show, could not be successful even if it was well directed and developed from expert and exact knowledge. No approach could be made without an alarm.

Many False Alarms.

An indicator set in the office of the captain of the watch, always attended, would give the exact point of approach before the danger was great. There have been many false alarms, but these were all due to the mistakes of officials. A time lock signal set too late or too early, or a motion to open a vault by an official who absent mindedly forgot to close the signals or forestall an alarm when he was performing routine, has brought out the whole watch force and the Washington police. There have been times, too, when atmospheric or seismic conditions have caused alarm.

Great care is taken to avoid any false alarm because of the effect on morale. There was a time a few years ago when some hidden difficulty in the complicated electric signal apparatus brought many alarms. As a consequence police reserves and the guards did not jump to their positions with the necessary enthusiasm. They were inclined to leave the cribbage game slowly with a curse at "that darn thing gone crazy again."

The new vault, plans for which have been sketched, will occupy all of the north court of the Treasury Building. It will be an enormous structure, proof against any attack or any natural catastrophe. It will afford space for many years of growth. A detailed estimate has been presented to Congress with a request for an appropriation, for, with all its funds, the Treasury cannot spend a cent unless authorized by Congress. It is axiomatic that a dollar turned back to the Treasury can never be released, but must be appropriated. This is responsible for many claims against the Government. Once a dollar is covered into the Treasury, whether it belongs there or not, it cannot be brought out until Congress makes an appropriation.

The full details of the new vault probably will be guarded as a State secret, as are those of the old ones, but a partial detailed description may be given out in time.

Technicality of Appropriation Blocks Plans for a Modern Structure—$3,000,000,000 in Gold Is Small Item Compared to Paper Securities

TEN MILLION SILVER DOLLARS STACKED in BAGS in the TREASURY

CHINA'S HOLY MOUNTAIN LOST BY SHANTUNG DEAL

By JULIA ELSWORTH FORD.

ABOUT two years ago I was in Japan and China, and I came back with a deep pity and love for China, which I believe every one feels who has visited that wonderful, barbaric land with many highly civilized inheritors scattered all through it. Japan was like a beautiful lyric poem, China a great epic poem.

When I heard that Shantung was to be turned over to the control of the Japanese Government through drastic economic concessions my first thought was: Could it be possible that Tai-shan and the vicinity of the Holy Mountain was included in that treaty? Imagine the indignation of the Japanese if their worshipped Fujiyama had been given by the Big Four to China for her part in the war! It seemed difficult to find out the truth about Tai-shan. One or two articles in the papers said that it was not included in the deal, but for the most part the question was not touched upon. Turning over the Holy Land of China—sacred since 2,000 years before Christ—to a country which was supposed to be China's friend and ally seemed a matter of small account, not only to the Big Four but to Western public opinion.

Japan a Real Menace.

The following letter is from a young Chinese who was kind enough to answer some of my questions:

"The transfer of all German rights and privileges in Shantung would necessarily mean a complete surrender of the Holy Mountain to Japanese control. To substitute Japan for Germany as possessor of rights in this territory is to endanger greatly the welfare of the Chinese republic, because Japan is much nearer to China than is Germany and because she already claims a sphere of influence in Manchuria, close to the north of Shantung province. Moreover, by the secret agreement between Japan and the Government in Peking, which was signed September 14, 1918, by delegates under Japanese duress and trickery, Japan holds among other things two important railways in Shantung province as well as the Kiao-Chau-Tsi-nan railway. Since this secret agreement has not been declared void by the council at the Paris conference the concession therefore remains in effect, notwithstanding its violent challenge against the principle of open diplomacy repeatedly enunciated by President Wilson. As a result of all this Japan gets absolute control over the economic interests in Shantung. The economic control will inevitably result in political domination. Therefore it is easily seen that the present Shantung settlement virtually gives the whole province of Shantung, instead of a mere German lease of Kiao-Chau."

The Holy Mountain, Tai-shan, is thirty-five miles from Tsi-nan-fu, the capital of Shantung. It is probably the oldest sacred mountain in the world. Pilgrims worshipped on it as many years before Christ as we have lived since, and the annual pilgrimage still takes place in February and March, and as many as 10,000 people have made the ascent daily.

There were no hotels for us in Tai-shan-fu, so that we had to arrange with one of the missionaries, who housed us very comfortably. After breakfast on the veranda with his little family we were prepared to ascend the mountain. Chair bearers were procured to carry us up and back in a day. The chair is unlike any other chair used in China. It is peculiar to Tai-shan. One man walks in front and one behind. They have a strong strap over one shoulder, thus suspending the pilgrim. Each of our chairs had four men, so that they might be relieved. The men in the Shantung district are larger than the men in southern China. Our powerful head guide was 6 feet 3 inches tall, and, though speaking almost no English, was quick to understand and most kindly and courteous. Strange to say, the chair bearers are not of the religion of those who worship in the Tai-shan temples, but are Mohammedans, who have long held this concession.

The ascent is very steep. There are 6,000 steps about 15 feet wide, a remarkable piece of engineering done by the ancient Chinese. A deep ravine, cascades, rushing water, great pines and gnarled old cypresses add to the wonder and beauty of the ascent. The first of the gateways to the old temple, third of the Gates of Heaven, was like a vision in the clouds. When we reached it it seemed the top; but after we passed through it another ascent confronted us. Here we climbed a winding path to the temple at the very summit, from which was seen one of the finest views in all China: China's Holy Land.

Shih Hwang-ti, Chinese Napoleon.

Most of the pilgrims mount on foot. Some of the most devout crawl on their knees. We saw Chinese women with their small deformed feet wearily dragging themselves up the steps. We saw luxurious natives too, borne in richly ornamented palanquins. In olden times emperors and members of their court, who worshipped and sacrificed here, were carried in this fashion. The temples are filled with presents from the emperors of the various dynasties. The largest temple is dedicated to Yu-huang, Taoist Emperor of the Sky. Another was built to honor the memory of Confucius and contains a copy of the famous image of China's greatest philosopher and sage. At the top, near the cliff from which religious fanatics used to throw themselves in such numbers that the authorities had to guard the place with a high wall, is a stone monument with the inscription, "This marks the spot where Confucius stood and felt the smallness of the world below." Confucius, Mencius and Lao-tze were all born during the Chou Dynasty, the longest dynasty in the history of China, lasting from 1122 B. C. to 249 B. C.

Then came Shih Hwang-ti, the Chinese Napoleon. From his date, 221 B. C. (the founding of the Chin Dynasty, from which China takes her name) China remained an empire for two thousand years. This emperor built the Great Wall, to keep the Tatars out. I wish to-day another wall might be built to keep the grabbing English, French and Japanese out. He also burned the libraries. I wish there were a library to-day containing all the treaties imposed on China and a power to burn them!

In the following Dynasty of Han, Prince Han, who by the way restored the libraries, set the example of offering sacrifices at the tomb of Confucius in Chu-fou, which is in Shantung province not far from Tai-shan. Here Confucius was born, lived and was buried. His descendant, the Duke of Kung, still lives in Chu-fou and has been able to forbid a foreign railroad to defile so sacred a place. The magnificent temple in Chu-fou is the finest in China. It is in a park of stately cypresses. Tablets marking the resting place of the great Confucius—if to-day he rests! Confucius taught loyalty, faithfulness, sincerity, simple, honest precepts for the relation of man to man! The exclamation at the end of my sentence is all that is needed.

Chu-fou is also the burial place of the son of the famous emperor who built the Great Wall—and who had birds embroidered on the uniforms of civil officials, and beasts of prey on those of military officers. The latter might be appropriate symbols to offer to-day to China's European friends for the uniforms of their diplomats and statesmen.

And what is Japan's point of view? Japan doubtless feels that China's independence of Western nations is desirable for the security of both Japan and China. And she must maintain her hold against both England and France, whom she sees not contented with what they had before the war—England, to be sure, with "spheres of influence" ten times the size of those of France. Although China has not been their enemy but their ally, they are both quite willing, in return for further concessions on the horizon or already over it, to give Japan, under subterfuge of surrender by Germany, the powerful economic rights of Shantung, which Germany by the terms of her agreement with China, had no legal ability to assign. "Japan will return Shantung." When? "She means to be most generous to China." What shall she be judged by? Her actions in Manchuria and Corea? Her present treatment of the Chinese in Shantung?

Huge Trade in Drugs.

I met a man in the Orient (whose word I have every reason to credit) who told me that 1,000 Chinese had died in one year in a single town in Manchuria from the effects of morphine illegally imported and imposed by the Japanese. In fact Japan's whole record in Manchuria has been as oppressive, immoral and brutal as her record in Corea.

To quote W. W. Willoughby, formerly American legal adviser to the Chinese President: "In numberless ways no attention has been paid in Shantung by the Japanese to the Chinese people. In violation of Chinese law many tons of copper currency of the common people and the copper cash have been collected and exported to Japan. The salt administration has been defrauded of great revenues, and worse than all, tons of morphine have been introduced into this country in the form of military supplies or through Japanese parcels. From this infamous traffic alone it is known that millions of dollars have been received by the Japanese in Shantung."

To quote from Thomas F. Millard's book, "Democracy And The Eastern Question," as to opium from India and Persia: "One must emphasize that this opium is not imported into Japan. It is transshipped in Kobe harbor to Tsingtao, from which point of vantage, assisted by the Japanese controlled railway to Tsi-nan-fu, it is smuggled through Shantung into Shanghai and the Yangtse valley. . . . Through Tsingtao morphia is showered over Shantung province. . . . When Chinese police raid the morphia shops along the Tsi-nan-fu railway in Shantung, as they have a right to do, for the traffic is illegal, Japanese gendarmerie rescue the arrested and exact a fine from them, not from the guilty be it understood, but from those who attempt to uphold the law. . . . No inspection of parcels in the Japanese post offices in China is permitted to the China customs service. . . . Article 3 in the Agreement of August 9, 1915, provides that any goods landed in Tsingtao under 'certificates of government' shall be free from customs examination. The way has thus been opened not only for the illegal import of opium, but of contraband in arms, by which the bandits of Shantung province are provided with the means of harrying and looting and murdering the peaceful peasants of the most sacred province of China."

The Black Story of Opium.

It is not only land and self determination that foreigners have taken from China. That is bad enough. But through the introduction of opium from British India and now morphia from Japan they have pretty nearly submerged her physically and morally.

British Indian opium was early forced on China by the British Government. In 1839 China determined to abolish the traffic. Opium was seized and 20,291 chests destroyed. A year later, as punishment, Hong Kong was ceded to Great Britain and $21,000,000 had to be paid, $6,000,000 of which was for opium that the Chinese had destroyed in their efforts at self-defence against the vilest of weapons. What would England do if another nation landed opium on her coast? And yet, because opium was a profitable Government monopoly Britain was within a year or two systematically plying the Chinese, whom she was supposed to be guiding as a friend, with a drug which she condemned and prohibited among her own people.

The Shanghai opium combine was making recently $22,000,000 per annum importing from British India, where the Government for growth of opium, and for no other purpose, loaned money without interest. The well known ten years contract apparently concluded the importation of India's opium into China in April, 1917. But the Shanghai opium combine had somehow $20,000,000 worth of opium on hand. The Chinese vice-president is said to have been bribed for $5,000,000. The Chinese Government, poor as it was, had to buy it, presumably for medicinal purposes. Great credit must be given to China that in the winter of 1918 she burned it. But now the Japanese, following the example of England in India, are busy growing opium in Corea and Formosa and are imposing it on China in the shape of morphine, the effects of which are even more deadly. According to Thomas F. Millard: "Her profits from it in 1913 were $8,400,000, and they have increased enormously during the war."

We note that opium has never been imported into England or Japan. Why has it been forced on China? For material gain? Or to ruin the people, to enslave them, to make them helpless against interference and oppression?

Here the Boxers Organized.

It was in Shantung that the organizing of the Boxers took place. The defeat of Corea by Japan, with other acts of aggression by foreign Powers and the granting of railroad concessions, was what stirred anti-foreign feeling, and it was most intense in Shantung. Its purpose was to expel all foreigners from China and to get rid of their influence. The movement was prompted by a union of high conservative officials and the illiterate classes. It was a movement of violence.

Five hundred years ago the Chinese used successfully, to expel or subdue the Mongols, a different method, a method called "The Ten Group System." To-day this system, by which each man pledges nine others, ten groups of ten units to make a group of a hundred, ten of those to make a thousand, &c., is being organized, for commercial and social boycott, by which Chinese students and merchants, who insist that the Japanese twenty-one demands be cancelled. The movement is spreading and threatens to be overwhelming, if it be not diverted to serve the interests of political factions.

While China is trying to help herself what are we doing to help her? What shall be given her for sending 250,000 men to Europe to assist France and England and ourselves? Some of her own land and rights which had been stolen from her? Alas, while the Allies were urging China to enter the war, telling her of the great advantage it would be to her they were secretly planning and agreeing to control and exploit more of her territory.

Why was Shantung, one of the richest provinces in China, with net profits in 1912 of $300,000,000 a year from her railroads, yielded to Japan? Was it in order that England might presently have further control over Sze-chuen with a population of 65,000,000? Or that she might exploit Thibet, whose autonomy, just arranged between Britain and China, is doubtless the opening for British kindness, as in Egypt and Persia? And what is France's share of the bargain?

America has been China's only friend. Our record in the Far East is well nigh irreproachable. Shall we play her false now?

President Wilson admits himself that he does not like the Shantung award and looks to Japan to right it. Does he infer this from Japan's actions in the past? He looks to the League of Nations to bring about revisions if Japan should not voluntarily do so. When we consider that the powerful parties in the league are Great Britain and France, who have treaties with Japan, how can they force Japan to evacuate stolen territory unless they return territory they have stolen themselves? Otherwise Japan will prefer to keep Shantung as England and France will keep their stolen possessions.

Balfour's Strange Oversight.

Although Lord Balfour assured Parliament during the war that America was informed of all secret treaties among the Allies, it now appears that he must have forgotten the treaties with Japan concerning China. Hardly fair treatment of the United States in return for our conclusive help! It appears to have been a dishonest and high handed slight, but, as it happens, a slight not to our discredit, in that it leaves us now a free hand to help a nation we had almost been forced to betray.

Mr. Millard suggests a remedy: "You can fix it up without changing a line or a comma of the League of Nations covenant or of the treaty. . . . Just write a clause into the proposed French alliance under which the United States and Great Britain undertake to go to the aid of France in an emergency—just add to that a clause whereby Great Britain and France in their turn agree to support the United States if the Hay doctrine of the open door is threatened. Make it a fifty-fifty alliance. As it now stands we agree to do something for France, but we get nothing."

China and her European allies!

Chinese students are reading Shakespeare. When they read of Shylock they may well think of Europeans demanding for Japan, and even more for themselves, the pound of flesh—and the life blood of a nation.