



# BOOKS



## Will China get justice at new conference?

### At the 'peace' table nobody offered her so much as a crumb

CHINA: CAPTIVE OR FREE? By Gilbert Reid, Dodd, Mead & Co.

THAT China's entrance into the war resulted in her undoing—in the further violation of her territorial integrity and the virtual closing of the so-called "open door," and that America, China's traditional friend, is largely responsible for her present plight—is the conclusion reached by Gilbert Reid in his latest work, "China: Captive or Free?"

No amount of diplomatic chicanery on the part of the other allies could have drawn China into the maelstrom that resulted in the revolution and the disunion of the Chinese people, leading eventually to Japan's securing the preponderating political and commercial influence in the "Flowery Kingdom," which before had been almost equally distributed among the other great Powers. In fact, China had asked America to remain neutral in her relations with the Far East.

Not until President Wilson called upon all nations at peace to protest against Prussian ruthlessness and, if necessary, to sever diplomatic relations with Germany, did distrustful China, with no more grudge against the Central Powers than she had against all other countries which have exploited her, obey the behest of America, and thereby were unawares sowed the "dragon's teeth" that must be uprooted at the disarmament conference in November, or from the controversy over Far Eastern questions will spring hosts of armed men from the world's most densely populated area.

What the coming conference may do for China only time will tell. "We suspect," says Dr. Arthur J. Brown in "The Mastery of the Far East," "that in spite of the virtuous and well meant declarations of the various Powers regarding the rights of weaker nations, poor, helpless China will get only what the representatives of stronger governments deem expedient and that Japan will have a good deal to say as to what that shall be."

Few, if any, British or American writers have resided so long in China or have occupied such a unique position as that held by Gilbert Reid as director of the International Institute, the object of which is to promote friendship and harmony in the relations between China and other countries and also between adherents of different religions. This has enabled the author to secure a comprehensive educational, religious and political survey of the "promised land," upon which the eyes of greedy imperialistic nations have for years been focused, circling closer and closer, like vultures above their victim.

Besides this volume and "Sources of Anti-Foreign Disturbances in China," 1913, the author also has the distinction of having written six books in Chinese, a task which involves an intimacy with the life and language of the Mongolian race both thorough and profound.

Throughout the book the reader may feel the vibrant ring of truth. Although during the war through Chauvinistic legislation the human conscience was abolished, Dr. Reid bravely adhered to his convictions. "Out of love for China," he writes, "I was made to suffer not only for China but with China, undergoing some tragic, amusing and puerile persecutions from the great diplomats of four legations—British, French, Japanese and even American—while the United States Constitution and the Sermon on the Mount both slumbered and slept."

The contact of European civilization with the people of Asia, Africa

and the American continents," continues Dr. Reid, "makes sad reading for the man of justice. As to the one country of China, with a long record of civilization, statescraft, philosophy, art and religion, the question arises: 'Has China been blessed or cursed by western civilization?'"

The necessity for the coming disarmament conference grew out of the murder in 1917 of two Catholic missionaries of German nationality by a Chinese mob. This led to Germany's lease of Kiaochow, in the province of Shantung, for a period of ninety-nine years, which, together with all other rights and privileges granted to Germany, was turned over by the peace conference to Japan. Thus the "Big Three" generously gave away something which did not belong to them and thereby established Japanese supremacy in China.

Suppose British battleships should steam into New York harbor, land marines and seize all the German owned property in the metropolis, shooting any citizen of the United States who was insolent enough to resist, would there not be a bare possibility that our feelings might be somewhat nettled and that, when opportunity offered, the American nation would proceed to repeat the Battle of Bunker Hill, or some more extensive operation of a distinctly disagreeable character? But it has not been China's custom to resort to war, unless such a disaster is forced upon her. Considering our grave responsibility it is nothing more than poetic justice that America intends to afford China's representatives at the disarmament conference an opportunity to "speak trumpet tongue" against the violations of her territorial integrity, especially against "the rape of Shantung," the sacred province where China's "Prince of Peace," Confucius, was born.

"In the identical language of the Versailles treaty," writes Dr. Reid, "what Germany had in Shantung was certain 'rights.' If she had any rights they were granted to her by China, and by China alone. Moreover these rights were determined by treaty of the two governments of China and Germany, and by the action of no other Government. . . . According to the terms of the grant the rights acquired by Germany were unassignable and non-transferable."

Gilbert Reid is convinced that there was no excuse for bringing the war from Europe to Asia, resulting in calamities to China and a decided gain to Japan. In the words of Marquis Okuma: "The war afforded Japan the one opportunity of ten thousand years." Certainly Japan's nefarious "twenty-one demands" on China would never have been proposed if the great Powers had been free to act.

The outstanding hope of the disarmament conference is the commercial rivalry that exists in China between Japan and Great Britain, which aroused the British Government to protest against Group III of the "twenty-one demands" relating to mining interests in the Yangtze Valley. By the payment of \$100,000 silver, plus \$900,000 to Tsuchun McE. Wing-Sun, the Military Governor of the Province of Kwangtung, who was recently ousted by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, England has secured a strategic hold on the source of southern China's coal supply. As Japan's mineral resources are wholly inadequate there is a fighting chance that Johnny Bull and the little almond eyed men from the "Knigdom of the Rising Sun" will not be completely harmonious cronies when the disarmament conference is on and the big guns begin to boom.

It is decidedly unfortunate that on account of secret treaties America was deluded when she entered the war. The fact that these secret agreements were not disclosed to the Peking Government bespeaks no real friendliness to China," writes Dr. Reid. "The fact that they were not disclosed to the Washington Government at the very time America's help was being sought by the Entente Allies and at the time American arguments were sounding the Chinese bells, bespeaks no real friendliness to the United States."

"According to the statement of Secretary Lansing, August 11, 1919, before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, neither Mr. Arthur Balfour nor Mr. Viviani nor Viscount Ishih, coming to the United States in 1917 on special missions, confidential and far reaching, disclosed to any one in the American Government the arrangements arrived at in Tokio during the early part of the same year. . . . 'You may rest assured,' said Great Britain's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 'that President Wilson is kept fully informed by the Allies.'"

Upon the results of the disarmament conference a war sick world waits with trembling hope. The solution may be found only in obedience to the lesson taught by all the great teachers of every age. In the last words of the late Governor General of Canada, Earl Grey:

"I want you to make my voice sound from the grave. I want to say to the people there's a real way out of the mess materialism has got us into. It's Christ's way. Mazzini saw it. We must get together. We must realize that all are members of one family. Love is the way out and the way up. That's my farewell to the world."

JESSE WILLIS JEFFERIS.

## SOUNDINGS IN THE SEA OF INK

The magazine certainly belongs to the book family. We can imagine some famous history's Vol. XIV, looking royally down with the air of Louls of the same number, upon the current periodicals of the library table. And the magazine, with equal spirit, would remark, impersonally yet loud enough to be heard by the dogears of all the books alive enough to have dogears:

"They'll put me on the shelf, too; when I get old, I'll be bound!"

The attitude of magazine editors toward their authors must affect, both directly and indirectly, the entire literary product. In some cases they help by enabling good writers to devote themselves to work which would not give them a living through book royalties alone. On the other hand, when editors urge established authors to overwrite—as some of them certainly do—they are enemies of the reading public and, in the end, of the authors themselves.

"Stories Editors Buy and Why" (Small, Maynard and Company), edited by Jean Wick, has a baker's dozen of tales from as many different magazines. Most readers will find a favorite or two in the list, good enough to keep and to read more than once. There is more meat here than in most popular novels.

But anybody that likes to meditate on the conditions that affect American life will find something unusual in the last fifty-five pages.

Here are the professions or confessions of some fifty men and women who stand between the public and thousands of writers. "American fiction explained by the editors of the American magazines," reads the defining label on the book's jacket. Undoubtedly a good deal of American fiction needs explaining.

Some of the editors go at their task very earnestly, explaining to the extent of two or three pages. But Mr. Sedgwick of the Atlantic answers with a smile:

"It really would not serve your purpose if I were to write you about my principles of accepting stories. They are too capricious, and would only tend to lower the feeling of respect which you are inculcating in your readers."

He represents a fair proportion of the witnesses, who declare or imply that they accept the stories that please them personally, trusting that their tastes are near enough to those of a million readers to elevate—the circulation.

This is the only sound basis. If the editor is fit for his job he will be able to give the magazine a character as well defined as his own. Buying stories he thinks might please somebody else will take him farther and farther into hypocrisy, unreality.

Mr. Siddall wants the fiction he buys to bring "news of human nature." But he avoids the unpleasant, which must necessitate a rather strict news censorship, the said human nature being what it is.

Miss Betty makes the refreshing remark that there is "no sex in reading," and Mr. Vance likewise insists that he does not pick out stories because they are "woman's magazine stories." Both these editors manage magazines aimed to appeal to women. Their attitude is characteristic of a woman suffrage era.

There is an amazing absence from these letters of interest in the author himself and the relation of his own inner life to the kind of stories he will write. Harry Maule comes nearest to the heart of it when he says, after commending self-analysis:

"Many writers suffer from lack of understanding of their own material. Don't, Mr. Writer, try to force yourself to write something you yourself do not like. You cannot write down to a field successfully, and you must develop into a higher literary class naturally, by hard work."

That is good medicine for all of us. Maybe even an editor could lift his magazine into a higher literary class naturally by devoting some attention to his own inner life.

## Renan a modern son of light and tolerance

ERNEST RENAN. By Lewis Freeman Mott, D. Appleton & Co.

OF all the great sceptics Ernest Renan is the only one whom I would qualify as "charming." He was a charming sceptic, as Pascal was a tragic sceptic, Montaigne a gay sceptic and Voltaire a militant sceptic. Charming sceptics are rare. There are only two now living that I can recall offhand—Anatole France and Havelock Ellis.

It was this charm, this spell of his smiling style, the exquisite ease with which he drifted from dogma to heresy and back again, the laughing dimple in his tremendous paradoxes and the mellow note in his "blasphemous" aphorisms—it was these things that brought down on his head the tempest when he published his epoch making "Life of Jesus."

His enemies raged not so much because he denied, but because he denied in sweetness and light. He smiled and smiled and was not at all a villain! There was a magic in his destruction! His critical faculty had the sparkle of Prospero's wand! Anything might be forgiven an unbeliever but those things.

As Mr. Mott points out in his book, Renan's nature was antithetical to system of any kind. Each mood was valid—and he gave vent to it, let the aphorisms fall where they may. He was an apostate—but never to himself, the one thing needful. "Do I contradict myself? Very well, then, I contradict myself!" he uttered implicitly before Walt Whitman uttered it actually. "His religion," says Mr. Mott, "was not a logical system, but an experience. . . . His frankness in giving vent to his unstable moods is one secret of the charm, the vivacity and actuality of his writings." Renan's maxim was, "Woe to him who does not contradict himself at least once a day!"

Renan was thus throughout his life a spectator of himself. He was in his profoundest and most stable part of his psychic nature merely the recording secretary of the things "received through him" from an Elsewhere of which he had no knowledge. There were no conflicts in his life. It was an orderly development of his subconscious nature into his conscious nature.

The profound scholarship which he displayed in the "Life of Jesus," "The Origins of Christianity" and "The History of the People of Israel" was only a voluminous footnote to his genius for letting himself go. He seems apocryphal at times because he was so simply profound. Simplicity always puzzles and offends the doctors of philosophy and ecclesiastical rigmarole.

When he said one day nonchalantly that God was a Becoming and was not yet he was accused of atheism. But he had only reformulated the profound thought of Hegel (Renan was the spiritual brother of Hegel and Spinoza) that God is an eternal Becoming. It is the most beautiful and the profoundest thought ever uttered—and, at least to me, the most religious. For in the eternal Becoming of God all of us go along with Him; we become part and parcel of Him, live, move and have our being through Him, rise and fall in his glow and wane, as in the Hindu legend the finite worlds and all that they contain fulgurate and evanesce in the opening and the closing of the eyelids of Brahm.

At another time, at a dinner, the talk turned to God, and each one present, as recorded in "The Journal of the Goncourt Brothers," attempted to give voice to his concept. Renan, after a breathless silence all around, announced naively that God, to him, resembled an oyster with its vegetative existence. In which Renan himself joined. But the laughter of Renan was of another kind than the laughter of the others. His definition was a satire on the gossamer of all finite beings in the presence of the incomprehensible.

In early life Renan had a dogma. It was the superstition called Science. In 1848, the year of the great European political upset, he produced his "The Future of Science." He was then twenty-five. He confesses the need of a new faith. He glorified science, preached the "perfectibility of the species" through knowledge, and glimpsed Utopia in "organization." He did not need to live to the Apocalyptic year of 1914 to see his dogma crumble in ironic dust. He outlived it in his lifetime, although never quite denying the panaceas of conscious intelligence and will. Renan never lost sight of the sordid earth for a moment. If his head bobbed in metaphysical vacuo, his

body was firmly rooted in clay, up to his heart.

In his essay on Amiel's "Journal Intime" Renan has a passage that Mr. Mott enlarges on, one that comes apropos in the America of to-day. The great Frenchman advances the opinion that drunkenness should not be suppressed, but should be rendered kindly, amiable and moral. This is a plea, it would seem, for wine and beer which I recommend to the perusal of the Congressional intelligentsia (not a contradiction in terms, for Congress is not quite all that it seems).

Mr. Mott has written his book without flourish or ornament. He has endeavored to show that the work of Ernest Renan and the man himself are so closely knitted together that the man was the work and the work was the man. It is an evolution more than an estimate. The author does not defend Renan or attempt to propagate his ideas. He explains, but nowhere urges. The book lacks sympathy.

No one interested in the intellectual history of the human race can sidestep Renan. He was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of the modern Sons of Light and Tolerance. As a mere "life" Mr. Mott's book is invaluable to English readers.

BENJAMIN DE CASSERES.

## The new biography shows philosopher a charming sceptic

body was firmly rooted in clay, up to his heart.

In his essay on Amiel's "Journal Intime" Renan has a passage that Mr. Mott enlarges on, one that comes apropos in the America of to-day. The great Frenchman advances the opinion that drunkenness should not be suppressed, but should be rendered kindly, amiable and moral. This is a plea, it would seem, for wine and beer which I recommend to the perusal of the Congressional intelligentsia (not a contradiction in terms, for Congress is not quite all that it seems).

Mr. Mott has written his book without flourish or ornament. He has endeavored to show that the work of Ernest Renan and the man himself are so closely knitted together that the man was the work and the work was the man. It is an evolution more than an estimate. The author does not defend Renan or attempt to propagate his ideas. He explains, but nowhere urges. The book lacks sympathy.

No one interested in the intellectual history of the human race can sidestep Renan. He was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of the modern Sons of Light and Tolerance. As a mere "life" Mr. Mott's book is invaluable to English readers.

BENJAMIN DE CASSERES.

## How the crops are financed

THE FEDERAL FARM LOAN SYSTEM IN OPERATION. By A. C. Wiprud of the Minnesota Bar, vice-president of the Federal Land Bank of St. Paul. With introduction by W. G. McAdoo, former Secretary of the Treasury. Harper & Brothers.

FEW persons, possibly a few thousands of persons, may still cling to the old haysed philosophy regarding the agricultural industry, a philosophy which places the American farmer in the rear instead of in the vanguard of progress. A generation ago, twenty-five years ago or even a decade ago, the term haysed went practically unchallenged as a synonym for a farmer. But of late years we city folk have discovered how effete we really are and how badly mistaken most of us have been regarding the country gentleman who furnished us with our eggs and butter, milk and cheese, wheat and corn, beef and pork. We look across the Atlantic and see that when the farmer ceases to farm it means hellamaria for the rest of the population. Strange we never thought of that before.

But a few persons have been thinking what would happen to this country if our agricultural industry was not kept up to top notch, and they began thinking about it long ago—as far back as 1732, when sixty-one landowners in Connecticut formed the first cooperative rural credit scheme. Since then foreign countries, particularly Germany, have evolved highly efficient rural credit machinery, while this country dropped out of the running, except for the wild land office speculations of 1880-90 or thereabouts, and

our farmers were left to shift for themselves. This was only natural. Necessity usually precedes action. The American farmer until a comparatively short while ago had an abundance of cheap productive land at his disposal, and there was not the great difference between city and country wages and living conditions to urge him to abandon cultivation of the soil and take up the easier and more remunerative role of wageworker in town.

Now, almost in a twinkling, farm land, except in certain irrigation areas, has risen in price, labor for farm work has become scarcer, general farm costs have advanced. In short, a combination of circumstances has arisen which increases the incentive for the farmer to emigrate to the city, with no compensating incentive to urge new hands to move to the country.

The Federal Farm Loan act was passed in 1916 to make it easier for farmers or prospective farmers to borrow money to buy land and thus mitigate one condition, and possibly the most important one, which was driving farmers to the towns and converting American agriculture into a tenure of absentee landlordism, depending more and more on tenant farmers shifting from pillar to post. This tenant army commanded limited credit and its outlook was restricted to gaining a livelihood from year to year.

A. C. Wiprud, of the Minnesota Bar, vice-president of the Federal Land Bank of St. Paul, shows in this book how the Federal farm loan system has begun to restore agriculture to its old position as a sound and attractive profession. Above all, he shows that the old theory of every man for himself, which was always considered the foundation of agricultural philosophy in this country, due to the isolated conditions of rural life, was as far wrong as the earlier discredited belief that the world was flat.

The farm loan system depends on cooperation among the farmers, because loans are made through the twelve land banks only to farm loan associations voluntarily formed by ten or more farmers who agree to pool their assets and assume mutual liability for the pledged mortgages on which loans are granted and against which are issued the farm loan bonds.

In less than four years 3,995 farm loan associations were formed, or a number in excess of the total counties in the United States. To the associations the farmer must confide all his business secrets and agree to live up to its rules before he can borrow money. This he has readily done, and at the end of last October 131,035 farmers had obtained loans aggregating \$367,834,014.

W. G. McAdoo, former Secretary of the Treasury and chairman ex-officio of the Farm Loan Board, writes in the introduction to the book that the Federal farm loan system "is one of the crowning achievements of the Wilson administration." By force of circumstances it was all of that and more. The farm loan system under supervision of the Government was on its way, with the farmers solidly behind it, before Mr. Wilson took office. It was bound to come. The old epoch of farming had passed. Finance had come up from a minor place to first position in the list of farm problems. Farming the farmer, so to speak, had seen its day. Some legislators, some bankers and some middlemen still think they can continue to farm the farmer for the sake of votes or profits. But the farmer has recognized the benefits of cooperation, and he has not hesitated to adopt that method of getting what he wants. From now on the farmer is going to have his day.

## The poet's place in education

THE University of Michigan announces that Robert Frost has accepted a fellowship in poetry at that institution. The founding of this fellowship and its acceptance by a poet of Frost's national importance adds certain recognition and impetus to a movement begun by Percy Mackaye and President Hughes of Miami, who have been tireless in their efforts to interest universities all over the country. In an article in a recent Forum Percy Mackaye writes enthusiastically and convincingly of the need of such fellowships and of their great possibilities. He reminds one of Lowell's assertion that democracy is a failure "if it do not in some sort satisfy that inextinguishable passion of the soul for something that lifts life away from prose, from the common and the vulgar, no matter what it does for the body." And Lowell believed that creative art is that something which will save our democracy. So Percy Mackaye is urging that the universities become instrumental in creating as well as in teaching it. The plan is that they should give fellowships "in art—poetry, painting, sculpture, drama, music—to creative artists of established reputation, with no academic duties attached." The artist is left free to pursue his chosen work in his own way, untrammelled by class work or financial worries. The university in its turn would greatly benefit. Even though the artist is to hold no classes his very presence on the campus and his friendship with the students would have a certain influence on the life of the university.

Just how great would be that influence would depend upon the personality of the artist—how naturally he can give of himself to other people. Robert Frost is the neighborly kind of genius that makes you forget you are talking to a great man and rejoice in the new friendship you have found. He makes it easy to talk about all manner of things. He shares his personal experiences with you, but with a certain fine reserve. And he will query you about yourself—your work—with such evident, real interest that your heart warms within you. As you tell him about it he will offer a wise comment here and there, but never in the spirit of giving advice. It is little wonder that he is loved by the hill people of Vermont.

Such a friend the boys and girls at the University of Michigan are going to have. He is already interested in college students, having worked with them at both Amherst and Bryn Mawr. At Amherst he held a chair in the English department for four years and conducted small classes in what he calls "free writing." The boys in school who chose voluntarily to write came to his classes, no matter whether they were interested in writing poetry, drama, fiction or essays. At Bryn Mawr last year it was arranged for him to meet with a club of some twenty girls who were writing poetry. He attended four or five of their for-

mal meetings, and met them individually in consultation. This companionship with young men and women who were interested in writing meant a great deal to Mr. Frost, who likes to talk about the friendships which resulted. When he was asked what he did for these ambitious young writers he answered: "I gave them my frank advice. I would sit down with a boy and discuss his piece of work from the vantage point of my experience. He never urged them to write, to make literature their life work. 'I told them that the urge had to be in them—that I could not put it in them.' Perhaps he disillusioned a good many, for he told them frankly what a lonely job it is all the way through to be a writer."

According to the terms of the fellowship Mr. Frost is to have no academic duties at Michigan, but it is very probable that a club of young writers will grow up about him. In a recent letter he mentions his special interest in the problem of teaching English, and outlines the prospects of what he calls the studio method: "The experienced older painter allows inexperienced younger painters to set up their easels alongside of his for what they can get out of his example, stimulation and shop talk. So the experienced writer might receive inexperienced but promising, or at any rate ambitious, writers into companionship. He might, at intervals, that is, and their gain be no loss to him." And it is in order to add these other words of the poet:

"We are sure to be great in the world for power and wealth. But some one who has time will have to take thought that we shall be remembered 5,000 years from now for more than success in war and trade. Some one will have to feel that it would be the ultimate shame if we were to pass like Carthage (great in war and trade) and leave no trace in the spirit."

DOROTHY DUNBAR.

The death of Harriet Prescott Spofford on August 15 at Amesbury breaks one of the most cherished links with the past. It is perhaps sixty years ago that she as a radiant young girl suddenly appeared in the office of the Atlantic Monthly with the manuscript of "The Amber Gods." Her reputation was made almost immediately upon its publication, and to this reputation every line that she has written since has added. Her success as a writer, her charming personality, won for her the friendship of the great literary figures of the day, among whom should be especially mentioned Hawthorne, as he was an ardent admirer of her work, and Whittier, whose home, like hers, was in Amesbury. Mrs. Spofford continued her writing with unflagging power and increasing wisdom up to the very end. Last year, in her eighty-third year, she published a volume of short stories, "The Elder's People" (Houghton Mifflin Company). The critics who reviewed and praised it were at least a generation removed from the reviewers of sixty years ago, who had first acclaimed her as one of the great literary women of New England, but they felt as keenly the magnetism of her charm.