

York County Chapter, which permit themselves the costly luxury of governing their action in various important cases by their narrow-minded and bigoted views.

The issue is clear; there are no two ways about it. For the American Legion to endure as an active force in our national life, the watchword should be: "Hands off politics and leave the individual members to think and speak and write as conscience dictates!" Our ex-service-men brotherhood will thrive best under a constant discussion of the conflicting opinions concerning the great problems of the day.

In order to reestablish itself in the good opinion of the American people, the Legion through its National Executive should unequivocally repudiate the action of the New York County Chapter in expelling Lieut. Col. Alexander E. Anderson and demand his prompt restoration to his former place of honor in the post.

Hurley, South Dakota, April 5

ISADORE BERKOWITZ

Correcting a Historian

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Mr. Charles Andrews, in a recent issue of *The Nation*, characterizes Lincoln Colcord's attempt to demonstrate similarity between the struggle of the American colonies for independence and the present Irish struggle as not "particularly good history." Without entering into the issue under immediate controversy, upon which I have nothing to say, may I point out a statement in Mr. Andrews's letter which is not "particularly good history." Mr. Andrews states that "in the middle of the last century the concession of representative government [to Canada and Australia], the repeal of the corn laws and the navigation acts, and the eventual granting of responsible government brought to an end all desire for independence." Professor Andrews should know that the repeal of the corn laws and the navigation acts was deeply resented by the colonies, and that instead of conciliating them to the British connection it led to the development in Canada in the late forties and early fifties of a formidable movement for annexation to the United States.

Chicago, April 11

JACOB VINER

The Initiative, Referendum, and Recall

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The foundations of our liberties are being destroyed. In fact, the cornerstone—"freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the right to peaceably assemble"—has been blasted by legislative action, executive policy, and judicial decisions and interpretations. Our supposed Bill of Rights has been treated as a "scrap of paper." There is no need to elaborate, for everybody knows that our boasted liberty is the standing joke of the world. I am not writing this as a protest. The tyrannical usurpers care nothing for protests or petitions. I am writing to urge action, from one end of the land to the other, to secure the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall—an amendment to the Constitution restoring to the people the power to initiate and make laws, to demand a referendum upon laws made by Congress or unmade by five of the Supreme Court judges, and to recall representatives who fail to do their bidding, such as all employers have.

If in the face of all the legislative blunders and outrageous wrongs of our representatives, the rulings of departmental chiefs, and court decisions the people fail to exercise their sovereign power and demand to be clothed with the power to approve or disapprove of the acts of their servants, then there is little hope that they ever will. If the Bolsheviks' regime of the dominating few is to continue unchecked, who can deny the possibility of a real bolshevist revolution?

Paicines, California, March 21

J. W. WELLS

I Should Like to Live in a Ballad World

By EDA LOU WALTON

I should like to live as a ballad maid
Who loves, is loved, and dies,
Or bears four sons as a matron staid
To her lord's amazed eyes.

Birth, and youth, and womanhood,
Ripe lips and golden hair,
Death and a lover understood,
And a black silk shroud to wear;

And all the long years left untold
The long hours left unsaid,
While swift, rare moments of life unfold
Bronze and silver and red.

I should like to live in a ballad world
While vivid lips of song
My leaping, lingering tale unfurled
Of a fate six stanzas long.

Plaint

By VIRGINIA WOODS MACKALL

You can do so many things!
And I only one.
You can build monuments of triumphant stone,
You can compass large and awesome subjects,
You can subdue the sea with tree trunks,
And catch the stars in steel nets.

All I can do is to tell you about it—
To sing how great you are!
Naturally, you listen with impatience;
You have known it for a long time.

Books

On Fighting Japan

Must We Fight Japan? By Walter B. Pitkin. The Century Company.

THIS is a powerful and compelling book, packed full of meat and worthy of the most careful consideration. It is a non-partisan study of the conflicts, corruptions, and conciliations where East meets West and greed meets greed across the narrowing Pacific. The author aims to dispel illusions whether roseate or sinister and strikes hard at some of those most widely cherished. In places its tone is dogmatic, a fact to be forgiven in view of the author's wide studies and evident sincerity.

The unsophisticated visitor to the Far East is surprised and bewildered at the apparent absence of any middle ground in the judgment of Japan. Every American or European is anti-Japanese or pro-Japanese and does not care who knows it. Fulsome praise and biting criticism are heard on all sides, and each is in its degree founded on fact and each subject to gross exaggeration.

In the pro-Japanese view, the busy people of the islands are

human beings like the rest of us, simple-hearted, sincere, courteous, lovable, idealistic folk for the most part, acutely patriotic, sensitive to praise or blame, very hospitable, very fond of companionship, prone to making judgments gregariously, and having a special genius for adaptation and cooperation. Their speech, dress, and customs have grown up in isolation, but such matters are skin-deep, in no wise fundamental to race or nation. Politically they do the best they can under changing circumstances, for the traditions and conciliations of two thousand years cannot be obliterated in a half century. The status of a people cannot be judged by present conditions, but rather by the line of direction in which it is moving.

The anti-Japanese view goes somewhat as follows: The Japanese know that Western civilization cannot be escaped, but they despise and fear it. They imitate what they cannot understand, therefore undertake what they cannot carry through. Being extremely clannish they are bad neighbors to outsiders. Individually eager for wealth, pull and graft beset every walk of life. Militarism they cherish because Germany has taught its value and it has already brought Japan into the front rank of the nations. Hence its ruling forces follow German models. The Government is a close corporation of bureaucrats, directed by the "Elder" statesmen (Genro), a clique of leaders of the three "fighting clans" (Satsuma, Choshu, Settsu), exploiters, militarists. Bureaucrats direct foreign policies and the Government subordinates personal freedom to its system of public welfare (minhon). Their water-front mobs clamor for war because war brings a livable wage. The village boss controls the rural population. Only fear of revolution gives the people any voice, and that voice, through the adroitness of the Circumlocution Office, is mostly still and small. The prophets cry in the wilderness, most earnestly, no doubt, but unheard by either of the chief political parties.

These two paragraphs I wrote in 1911. Each can be defended as true so far as it goes. They represent merely different points of view. The first arises from knowing the student-class and the bourgeoisie of the provincial towns. The second pictures some phases of the political life of the capital.

But American opinion, friendly as a whole, has become embittered by recent events in which the rulers of Japan are concerned. Toward China Japan has behaved even as the other powers have done and to the scandal of her rivals in spoliation. The twenty-one demands, the operations in Siberia, the control of Shantung, the mandate-absorption of a chain of coral reefs, have shocked our moral sense. The assertion of a "Monroe Doctrine" of monopolistic spoliation as unlike that of Monroe as our own worst attempts at perversion is naturally offensive to our own exploiters, who cannot admit it unless they can indeed strike hands with its perpetrators.

Hence arises another picture of Japan, elaborately and accurately drawn by Professor Pitkin as a composite of our "yellow journals." This view (page 40) is as false as malice can make it, but it matches perfectly the portrait of America as drawn by the yellow press of Japan, a vile caricature which seems justified by the atrocious moving picture films which our dealers dump on Japan. The "rising wave of crime" which is breaking over our cities, as shown on the front pages of our great dailies, also serves to confirm the low opinion water-front Japan already has of us.

It is true, of course, that the commercial classes in both nations are on excellent terms with each other. "Hands across the sea" are reached almost daily in San Francisco and Tokyo, and "the Pacific binds together, not separates," "two peoples destined to be each other's neighbors for a thousand years." But friendly banquets, good intentions, and fine words from internationalists and business associates do not reach the heart of the matter. The memory of Perry at Kurihama, our magnanimity at Shimonoseki, and the modesty of General Grant at Nikko do not touch the hearts of militarists bent on exalting their calling. Nor does it reach the narikin (new rich), who, bent on the conquest of Asia, regard army and navy as their

own lackeys. From such conditions, found in a degree in every country, together with the ever present fear of the loss of power on the part of those who wrest it from the people, arises the "hyena theory of nations," to borrow a phrase from Pierre Loti. In accordance with this theory every nation must maintain a perpetual or chronic enemy—which is by no means to be allowed an increase of armament, such as we plan for ourselves.

This abhorrent idea being still "in the saddle," strengthened by the moral and political lapses of the war, Mr. Pitkin asks his question "Must we fight Japan?" His answer, of course, is "No," but he is not blind to dangerous tendencies on both sides of the Pacific. That such a war, whatever its nominal cause or motive, would be incalculably senseless, degrading, costly, and futile will not of itself ward it off. The wisdom of Norman Angell's "Great Illusion" did not save Europe in 1914. Powerful forces are working now for war; greater forces, though less active, are drawing toward peace. War and peace are possibilities; neither is a certainty.

Mr. Pitkin has developed a number of vital propositions, only a few of which I have space to summarize. The Japanese press notes our imperial expansion in Asia, while we are active in blocking all Japanese moves in that direction. In these matters and others our attitude is regarded as both unjust and provocative. From Perry's expedition of coercion through our successive seizures of Hawaii, the Philippines, and Guam we have stood in the way of Japan's normal extension. We have been high-handed in dealing with Japanese who are legally in America and we have drawn lines of racial discrimination such as we have not dared to apply to Europe. We (that is, some Americans) have tried to monopolize Asiatic trade, to withhold Japan's coveted prizes of war, to restrain her salutary entrance into Siberia and Mongolia, to stimulate Korean unrest, to bankrupt Japan by forcing on her a ruinous naval expansion, to say nothing of the varied mendacity tolerated in our press. In every Congress humiliating bills are introduced, without official check, and apparently for no other purpose save insult, our two political parties being alike in these regards.

Without discussing this one-sided view of patent facts, I have found Japanese officials rarely able to understand why our Government allows the press to promulgate slanderous lies. Examples of this are found in the wild extravagances which centered in 1911 about Magdalena Bay and which gave rise to the "Lodge Resolution," fortunately left unsigned by President Taft. We may read any day that the "Japanese have no home life," tea-house and geisha monopolizing men's attention; that Japanese banks employ Chinese tellers, not trusting their own people; and the like *ad nauseam*. In 1911, I had what was called "a heart-to-heart talk" with members of the Sayonji ministry, and the question of why our Government allows such wholesale lying was the first that arose. The answer was simple: A free press, even if venal and mendacious, is safer than a censored one, as it is better for the people to decide public questions badly than to have them adjusted from above.

Mr. Pitkin regards the strongest influence for peace, so far as the United States is concerned, as resting in "the widespread disgust and disillusionment as to the value of war as a method of getting results." The only result of the late victory worth the name has been the crumpling of a pasteboard Caesar, at the cost of a ruined continent. Our author finds further that the intellectual classes of the world are getting together. "In this movement the intellectuals of Japan are playing a worthy part, at times under handicaps little realized by us." Moreover, Japan as a nation is on the verge of bankruptcy without the resource utilized by Germany of wholesale robbery of her own people. Japan's industries are dependent on the United States, and our nation "will not be dragged into any but the most obviously defensive war, unless the public is tricked by politicians or propaganda." That "Europe, as everybody knows, but few like to say, is insolvent from Bordeaux to the Urals" is also "a tremendous insurance against war." "The most un-