

The East Window

REV. James M. Yard of the Methodist Mission, who is now at home on leave, declared in the course of an interview appearing in the *New York Times*, that the greatest intellectual awakening in the history of the world, is now taking place in China. The recent rioting in Shanghai and elsewhere and the civil wars are but surface manifestations of the great "Renaissance," which is taking place in China, in Mr. Yard's opinion, and he expressed the belief that the Chinese will eventually produce a civilization which will make a stable government, and ultimately produce one of the great nations of the world. In China there is now a conflict between two cultures, said Mr. Yard. China is beginning to judge us by our own Christian standards and "it is up to us now whether this conflict is to continue. If we are able to meet China half way and treat her fairly in the spirit of brotherhood and justice, we can solve the questions," he stated. When asked regarding the anti-Christian movement, Mr. Yard said that Fundamentalism and Modernism had caused considerable confusion among the students and had caused a cleavage in the mission body, but he did not believe the intellectual awakening of China would adversely affect the teaching of Christianity any more than the Modernist attitude would destroy the Church in America. Rather he thought the intellectual movement would make it possible for every student to realize such a thing as religion as apart from superstition.

M. R. S. J. Powell, civil engineer of Shanghai suggests as a solution of the Shanghai problem the creation of an international state, suzerain to the Chinese Republic and under the protection of the League of Nations. According to his suggestion the "international" state would include an area of approximately 12,000 square miles and would include Soochow on the North and Hangchow on the South. The new state would pay tribute to the Government of China to the amount of 5 percent of the state's total revenue per annum and would not interfere with the present system of customs revenue collection. Owing to the international population of the district its status would be protected by the League of Nations and in the event of disputes arising between the State and other States the final decision would rest with the League. According to the scheme the government of the district would be managed by a President, an Executive President and a Senate of 12 members. The President would be Chinese and the Executive officer of the nationality having the largest financial and property interest in China. Each of the departments such as finance, public health, public works, and so on, would be headed by a Chinese executive with a foreign officer working with him. The Consular and Mixed Courts would be abolished and the New State would create its own courts with Chinese judges sitting with foreign judges, all judges to be appointed by the State. There is considerably more to the plan, which is most interesting and deserving of consideration, especially by the Chinese interests here who have been striving for a considerable period to create about Shanghai an independent Chinese civilian state which would be free of military control. However, in view of the present and growing nationalist sentiment in China and of the undoubted support which this sentiment is receiving abroad, if we are to judge from what is happening in Peking in connection with the Tariff Conference, this scheme for creating a new semi-independent state at Shanghai has about as much chance of success as the proverbial snowball in the warmer regions.

ACCORDING to an *Eastern News Agency* (Japanese) dispatch which appeared in *The China Press* last Wednesday, a number of public bodies in Peking were planning a demonstration of protest against the stand of the American and British delegations on the point that likin should be abolished as a precedent to the granting of tariff autonomy. Since the conference finally decided not to make tariff autonomy dependent upon the abolition of likin, it is not known whether this demonstration took place or not, but the fact that it was under consideration illustrates an interesting phase of Chinese psychology. Although the likin or inland transit tax, especially when illegally applied, constitutes a handicap upon foreign commerce, the troubles which foreign merchants experience in this regard are infinitesimal when compared with the extortions to which Chinese merchants are subjected. A cotton mill owner in the city of Wusih recently stated that likin constituted the greatest single handicap to the development of industries in China and expressed the opinion that if likin could be abolished, that he could immediately double the capacity of his cotton plant. The likin tax, which was instituted in China at the time of the Taiping Rebellion about sixty or sixty-five years

ago, is simply a transit tax on merchandise shipped through the country. It is collected at certain specified places, known as likin stations, and since there is little uniformity, the likin collectors charge all the traffic will bear. In recent years since the military came into power, the liking taxes have been increased to such an extent that in many places they have paralyzed Chinese trade and although China is bound by treaty not to charge more than 2½ percent on foreign goods going into the interior or upon Chinese goods intended for export, the militarists have violated this treaty by instituting various "illegal" taxes, such as those which are assessed against foreign cigarettes in various parts of the country.

IN view of the fact that the chief burden of likin falls upon the Chinese merchants and people and in addition to preventing the internal development of industries and commerce, it raises the price of merchandise to the consumer, it would seem that China would welcome the assistance of foreigners in working out a scheme for the abolition of the tax. According to the tentative plans which have been worked out at the Special Tariff Conference now in session in Peking, the Powers are to grant tariff autonomy and China of her own volition is to abolish likin simultaneously and then some plan is to be worked out whereby the provinces are to be reimbursed for the legitimate losses which they may suffer from the discontinuance of likin. Just how this is to be done is still to be explained but the inability of the Government to abolish likin, unless assisted by the Powers, has been generally realized. Therefore instead of opposing, the Government officials as well as the Chinese people generally, should welcome the help of foreigners in effecting relief from this oppressive tax.

HOWEVER the new nationalistic spirit must have its way and the foreigners are criticised for proposing a reform which any Chinese business man, banker, manufacturer, or official will admit privately is for the good of the country and if carried out would do more to stimulate internal development of the country than anything else with the possible exception of railroad construction. Mr. Tong Shao-yi, former premier and veteran statesman, recently emphasized this point in an interview in which he called attention to the fact that all of the reforms which foreigners are demanding in China, are important, not from the standpoint of the foreigners, but from the standpoint of the Chinese people themselves. In Mr. Tong's interview he referred to the need of reforming the courts; of abolishing militarism and developing a national army; of the establishment of an independent judiciary which would be independent of official intimidation; of the need for establishing a national financial system; of the need for general public education; of the need for taxation reform; and of the need for honesty in public life. All of these things are important, not because the foreigners are demanding them, but because they would bring peace and happiness to the Chinese people. Therefore, since the Powers are now demonstrating a conciliatory spirit by agreeing to tariff autonomy and otherwise trying to assist China to the position of equality to which she aspires, it would seem that Chinese generally would welcome a friendly offer of assistance in effecting reforms which principally are for the benefit of China herself.

THE Soviet seems to be having difficulty in educating the rest of the world regarding the new regulations pertaining to marriage and family relations which exist in present-day Russia. The *Tass News Agency* which has its headquarters in the Soviet Embassy in Peking issued on November 11 another "explanation" of the new laws on the family and marriage which are now in effect. In the first place marriage is recognized as a free union between a man and a woman, same to last as long as conditions for that union are favorable to it. Therefore "divine" or indissoluble marriages are not recognized and may be dissolved at the request of both or only one of the parties and on the basis of complete equality of the sexes, the request for dissolution of the marriage may come from the woman as well as the man. Church marriages are not valid and the law provides for the registration of marriages before a Registrar. Births and deaths of children must also be registered. The purpose of the registration, according to the report, is for statistical use only as marriages which are not registered are equally valid before the law. In event of a dispute over property or other matters in the case of an unregistered marriage, proof of the marriage must be presented. The Registrar of marriages has power without recourse to the courts, to complete the formality of marriages and divorces and to arrange an understanding with regard to division of property, possession of children, and so on. All properties are regarded as the possession of both parties, whether the wife is a wage earner or not, but the husband and wife have the right to make private agreements in respect to their property. In event of divorce, the property must be divided equally between the husband and wife. Parental responsibility for children is strictly enforced, but the interests of the child have preponderance over the interests of the parents. The parents are regarded as holding the rights of the children in trust. In the event of divorce, the children go with the mother, but the father must contribute to their support. There are no "illegitimate" children according to Soviet law and the obligation of the father of children resulting from temporary co-habitation is the same as in the case of children resulting from "legal" marriage. Children may be adopted and after adoption have the same rights as other children, but before adoption the parents must prove their fitness to adopt children and permission must be obtained from the local Soviet. Miss A. L. Strong, an American magazine writer who has spent four or five years in Soviet Russia and who recently was in Shanghai, stated her opinion in the course of an interview, that family conditions in Russia and especially the status of women, has been improved under the Soviet. According to Miss Strong, under Czarist Russia women had no rights and were considered the property of their husbands; now, although there are abuses of the new "freedom" the Russian family is readjusting itself and the status of women has been improved.