

New Books and Publications

Interpreting Japan

*What Shall I Think of Japan, by George Gleason.
The Macmillan Company: New York: 1921.*

AN arresting title gives to this work of George Gleason, whom we are informed has for nineteen years been a Y. M. C. A. secretary in Japan, a trifle more importance than the author is able to carry out in his subject matter and his methods of presentation. Just at this time when the Pacific Conference occupies the forefront of news in the public eye and questions of international diplomacy, commerce and social relationships are paramount an unbiased presentation of Japan's faults and virtues would be of the greatest importance.

Mr. Gleason sums up his object in the following sentences: "The people of Japan are too often disliked, or as they say 'misunderstood.' Neither they nor their neighbors fully comprehend the reason. Dare we Americans delay a sympathetic attempt to interpret her struggles and help Japan find her place among the family of nations."

To the "Old China Hand" it is quite clear why Japan is misunderstood when her actions in regard to the German islands in the Pacific, the Shantung question, the question of Manchuria, the Twenty-One Demands, the Anfu Regime, and similiar cases are taken into consideration.

Mr. Gleason begins his exposition with a justification for the book taken from the exaggerations which he said were given to Japanese acts in Siberia during the Allied intervention, he being present at that time. Outside of this chapter one finds little of Mr. Gleason's own opinion but instead copious quotations from various publications and peoples.

Interspersed with these are documents, such as the Twenty-One Demands, the Chinese treaty with Germany regarding Shantung, and papers regarding the Siberian expedition, that have been used pro and con by many other writers.

The work is liberal in that the reader is left to draw his own conclusions but the material from which these are to be obtained is often confusing. In illustrating how Japan has been maligned in a number of in-

stances, Mr. Gleason fails to take into consideration the press regulations of the nation itself and the various and varying brands of propaganda, adapted to the nation to which it is sent which are fostered by the Island Empire.

Mr. Gleason is unquestionably sincere in his efforts to clear misunderstandings but unfortunately he is dealing with a subject upon which strong prejudices exist and which requires strong views and arguments to combat. Misunderstandings are created by intrigues, the suppression and warping of information and by secret diplomacy. No compendium of clippings can allay suspicions so created.

In concluding his volume, Mr. Gleason gives the reader a bibliography from the viewpoint of pro and anti-Japanese tendencies closes with those which he considers unpartisan. As pro-Japanese he lists the works of Joseph I. C. Clark, Kiyoshi Karl Kawakami, Inazo Nitobe, Count Okuma, and Charles H. Sherrill. As anti-Japanese appear Frederic Coleman, Carl Crow, F. A. McKenzie, Thomas F. Millard, B. F. Putnam Weale. The non-partisans are: James W. Bashford, Arthur Judson Brown, Ames T. Hershey, Stanley K. Hornbeck, Cornelius H. Patton, Robert Porter, and John Spargo.

