

partments by manufacturers and retail stores may not be objectionable, but the lack of governmental control and supervision in their management is much to be deplored.

Japan's National Characteristics

READERS of the last issue of the Critic will perhaps recall that in the special article entitled "*Japan's National Characteristics*," an effort was made to prove that the Japanese are "communistic." "The Chinese," said the author, "are individualistic whereas the Japanese are communistic." He further endeavoured to eclipse the moral moon of the Chinese by the "communistic" sun of the Japanese by saying that "China has been an isolated empire where the people have been poisoned by the idea of only looking after selfish interests and never sharing other's sorrow or joy." This must have sounded like music to Japanese ears; and if the Japanese government were to look for a spokesman whose job it is to exalt the noble Japanese at the expense of the rotten Chinese, a better man than the author could not have been selected. However, although the Japanese may like the author's disparagement of his own people, it is highly questionable that they would like his advertising them as "communistic." If there is anything that the Japanese don't want, it is communism. Had the author lived in Japan in 1928 when the Japanese government in an sudden paroxysm of fear arrested hundreds of men and women suspected of com-

munistism, including many Chinese; he would have discovered his error at his irretrievable cost. He would have been at least shut up for a few days in a "pestilential prison with a life-long lock." The Japanese have an almost superstitious horror of anything that smacks of communism. The word "Russia" to the Japanese is like the word "Bony" (Bonaparte) to the English at the beginning of the last century—a word to scare children with into obedient sleep. Anything in the Russian tongue coming into Japan is searched with a microscopic thoroughness that puts to shame the biologist's mollycoddle handling of the amoeba. "Communism" would therefore be regarded by the Japanese as a left-handed compliment to be declined with a wry face. Nor has the author pleased the Chinese by paying them the equally left-handed compliments of "individualism" and "selfishness." No one likes to be told that he is "selfish;" and there are numberless Chinese who can effectually disprove the accusation by showing that out of his income, he gives 50% to his parents, 25% to his children, 10% to his wife, and another 10% to his many relatives and friends, leaving only a miserable 5% for himself. Is this "selfishness"? It would be much more correct to say that the Chinese are "familistic" rather than "individualistic" or "selfish." This incident only serves our purpose of warning our readers against holding the *Critic* responsible for anything said in the special articles appearing under the authors' names.

What We Believe

THE *Critic* has been in existence over two and a half years. As was our aim at the very beginning, we have always strived to promote a better understanding between China and all other nations. We have tried to represent China as she really is, neither what our ultra-patriotic people would like to make out for her, nor what the anti-Chinese foreign propagandists would have the outside world believe. We believe in presenting facts only—untainted, unbiased facts—and in order to be able to do so, we have always strived to maintain an impartial attitude toward all important questions. Truthfulness and impartiality, therefore, are our guiding principles in promoting mutual understanding between China and other nations.

As truthful and impartial statements and opinions are often not complimentary to either party, we sometimes incur the displeasure of both. We have been charged by our compatriots as being sometimes too critical of our own institutions and our own people, while at the same time some foreign friends think we are anti-foreign. The latter misunderstanding is most likely due to our frequent controversies with the die-hard. We regret that we cannot leave diehardism out entirely in all our discussion, much as we would like to, because we would not be doing our duty if we adopt such an indifferent attitude toward what we consider as the greatest obstacle to mutual understanding between China and the powers. As the word indicates,

die-hardism does not take into account the changes of the times, and its superiority complex, its persistent faith in the gunboat policy and its persevering efforts to convert others to their view-point, is certainly more responsible for misunderstanding than any other factor in our international relations. It is a regrettable situation, but we have to face it and overcome the obstacle in order to attain our end.

Although our publication is in a foreign language, and it would be most natural for us to devote our efforts to making China better understood by the outside world, we nevertheless consider our important mission not fulfilled without also making the outside world better known to our own people. This is particularly desirable as we have a large circulation among our intellectual class, including a large number of college undergraduates. Being better acquainted with foreign institutions and foreign ideals, we feel it our duty to make them better understood by our compatriots, and at the same time re-evaluate our own institutions and ideals from the western point of view. Hence our criticism of our own civilization and culture. Conversely, we also attempt to examine critically western civilization and culture from the Chinese point of view, and point out where our ideals have advantages over theirs. Mutual understanding would not be deep-rooted if we were to confine our discussion to current problems, and leave out of consideration the fundamental factors of culture and civilization.

"The East is East, the West is West, and never the twain will meet." The sentiment with which this was written still holds true to a large extent at the present time. Yet there is no reason why it would always hold true in the future. In other words, we do not think the "twain will never meet." If the situation persists forever, there will always be misunderstanding and constant friction, and these will in time lead to war, which is a very poor solution of such fundamental problems. Civilization is a nation's contribution to humanity, and as such should be made the best use of by all nations. It is only through mutual understanding, and appreciation of each other's culture and civilization that the "twain" will be finally brought together. To this end we have therefore devoted much of our energy, and will continue to do so in the future.

On account of her extensive boundary and peculiar historical background, China did not rise as the birth place of nationalism. In fact, not until recent years has a national consciousness been awakened among the people. But it is necessary to a real unification of the country, the long delay of which has been regretted by Chinese and foreigners alike. Yet, paradoxical though it may seem, there are people both at home and abroad who see in the growing nationalism a menace to the peace of the Far East. *The Critic* has also been characterized by a well-known year book as nationalistic. Is nationalism, then, entirely incompatible with international understanding and cooperation? Must we sacrifice either the one or the other?

Our efforts toward international understanding have already been explained; we shall now explain our

attitude towards nationalism. On account of the prevalence of militant and narrow-minded nationalism in Europe, which has more than once led to war, pacifists and liberal-minded people are inclined to view nationalism with suspicion and distaste. Nor do we hold any brief for the militant type. But it would be a serious mistake to think that nationalism in China is necessarily destined to reach that stage. In fact Chinese nationalism is not incompatible with international understanding and good-will. It should not be so in any country if it were not pushed to the extreme by mis-guided public opinion. With the peace-loving Chinese and especially with their experience of prolonged civil warfare, it is even less likely to become jingoistic. On the other hand, it is necessary to national unification, because political unification without national sentiment is like a body without a soul.

Just as the East and West should meet in the future, nationalism and internationalism should also be harmonized. The Chinese people should cherish a national sentiment while promoting international understanding and good-will. They should even cherish a national pride. But the pride should not be in military strength or economic power, but in intellectual achievements and contributions to the world civilization and culture. As the scholar stands highest in the esteem of our nation, so as a nation we should gain the esteem of the world by our intellectual attainments. This is the direction in which we should develop our nationalism, and this is the key to our efforts in harmonizing it with internationalism. *The Critic* may therefore be regarded as either nationalistic or internationalistic, because we strive to be both.

"Goodwill Ambassador" at \$80,000

MEI LAN-FANG, the famous actor, will soon complete an engagement in Shanghai which commenced on December 4. The motive for the actor's present appearances is different from what it has been in the past. He is playing for no personal remuneration; he is not playing for charity. After his return from his recent triumphal tour of the United States, Mei was told by his financial backers, (so we are reliably informed) that the material result of his tour was a deficit of \$80,000. Mei Lan-fang is playing to pay for their losses.

The story is interesting not because a deficit of such proportions has been uncovered. Not one person in a million could have been found to believe that the tour would have succeeded in any respect, least of all financially. But according to the voluminous reports from the American press, Mei's visit not only appeared as a social and cultural triumph; it was a financial success as well. And this seems to accord with the current rumor that if, in spite of the huge receipts realized from the tour, a deficit has nevertheless resulted, it must be due to the inefficiency in the management of the tour. From responsible quarters, we

learn that the engagement should have brought a profit of something like \$40,000 gold.

However, we are not concerned with the unfortunately pecuniary end of what might be a perfectly happy story. We interest ourselves in the question as to whether, in view of the results, it is worthwhile for Mei Lan-fang or anyone else to pay \$80,000, if that amount perceptibly contributed to a real improvement of the feelings between China and the United States. We understand that the actor thinks so. Our examination of the American reports inclines us to share the opinion, though certain critics have differed on this point as seen previously in *The Critic*.

There is no doubt that Mei Lan-fang has won the esteem and affection of many thousands of Americans of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, if press criticisms were the criterion for such esteem. He was the object of voluble and sincere praise in the American press in all parts of the country. He was hailed as an "Ambassador over the Footlights," "Ambassador in Art," "Ambassador of Goodwill," etc. In short he was received with a warmth and