

former colonies, provided that the Reich in return agrees to sign a convention for the limitation of armaments. Fundamentally, there seems to be little objection to the return of Germany's former colonies, but the fear exists, and not unjustifiably, that the fulfilment of these claims may lead, instead of to a satisfied Germany, to a Germany demanding more and still more concessions from the democracies. That the latter should require guarantees from Germany in return for the restoration of her former possessions is only natural.

Indications are, however, that Herr Adolf Hitler will reject the idea of any connection between German colonial claims and a more general settlement. He will demand, it is believed the return of the German colonies without being willing to undertake any commitments in connection therewith. If this is the stand which Herr Hitler is to adopt, it is difficult to see where there will be any room for negotiation. It is also noteworthy that although both M. Daladier and Mr. Chamberlain emphasized in their recent speeches their readiness to join in an international conference between the interested powers to settle current urgent problems, no reference was made to this suggestion in Herr Hitler's Reichstag speech. It would seem, therefore that the Reichsfuehrer has other ideas in mind as to how he intends to resolve the colonial question to Germany's best advantage.

His forthright declaration as to his attitude should Italy be involved in war—"whatever might be its cause"—seems to give some clue as to the future course which his actions are likely to take. Signor Mussolini is expected to make a statement in the near future setting forth Italy's claims against France. A crisis of the first magnitude is anticipated as a result, with Germany backing Italy to the hilt. Unless France is ready to fight and her ally Great Britain to support her, these countries will be forced to compromise, in which case colonial concessions will be expected of them. Germany would probably be the one to be asked to use her good offices in paving the way to a peaceful settlement and her reward will have to be commensurate with the value of the services rendered.

Whether this is 'actually' the course of action contemplated by the two dictators and whether, granted that it is, it will succeed in accomplishing their aims, still remains to be seen. One can do no more than guess at motives behind actions and seize here and there upon possible indications of the trend of future history. But that momentous events are ahead, none can deny. Though the fear that Europe will see war in the spring, as expressed by the American President, may not be fulfilled, it seems certain that the world is coming very near a crisis upon which the question of war or peace will hang, much as it did at the end of last September.

"China Relief"

By GEORGE KAO (高克毅)

*Love in Chicago,
Love in China,
In Santiago,
And South Carolina.*

—Ogden Nash.

NOW I am not harping on the familiar, and certainly important, subject of flood-drought-and-famine. For that is no longer peculiarly Chinese, as one in America realizes today. But a new term I am trying to introduce—"China relief," more or less like "comedy relief" in the realm of literature and the arts.

*"Let observation, with extensive view,
Survey mankind, from China to Peru."*

It all began when I first came across these lines from Dr. Johnson and audibly wondered why the two countries in particular were named by the great lexicographer. My professor in eighteenth century literature suggested that it was probably because the two are so far removed geographically from each other that they would be supposed to embrace the whole wide world, or maybe the dictates of rhyme and meter had made the choice. Then, too, China is often mentioned to illustrate the extreme. "Even China, etc., etc.," as one would say. From whatever source the inspiration—a fondness of our country or just an accidental use of the name for no reason in particular—certain it is that "China" sounds a fresh note and lends a novelty touch to the piece, the more attractive to the piece, the more attractive to the reader who is

a Chinese. Nor is this reference to China in English limited to a mere mention. One of the most delightful of Lamb's Elia Essays relates what a Chinese father and his offspring had to do with the Origin of the Roast Pig. De Quincey, in his *Opium Dreams*, evolved strange images of China which he did not fail to put down in exquisite English. W. Somerset Maugham writes understandingly of a Chinese philosopher in a book entitled "On a Chinese Screen;" while in his great autobiographical novel one is surprised to come upon a chapter devoted to the amorous effrontery of Herr Sung.

I must say I am by no means well informed on this subject, nor could I lay any claim to its discovery, else I should be producing a dissertation on "Orientalism in Western Literature," or some such august title. But an hour or two of browsing everyday and a weekly movie leave me with the impression that these Americans are today probably the most adept in the use of "China relief"—as I have come to term it—as a kind of technique to achieve rhetorical, literary or dramatic effect. It can be introduced in a thousand and one ways, from general atmosphere, vague insinuations, irrelevant interjections, to a book-length novel among the season's crop of new books.

Take a look at the list of best sellers of the recent years and see how many of them, strangely enough, have something to do with China—something, no matter how little. It took Thomas Wolfe, the giant of contemporary

American masters, six years to turn out a second novel, "Of Time and the River." Somewhere in its 912 pages, a "fat, stupid, indolent, and good-hearted" Chinese student at Harvard, Mr. Wang, is pictured, among many, many other things of course—but that is just the point. James Hilton made a big hit with the American reading public in his very English and very nostalgic "Goodbye, Mr. Chips!" But whoever could believe that by the same author is the revived and successful "The Lost Horizon" in which is spun a highly imaginative yarn of Tibetan mountains and immortality? Perhaps it was Pearl Buck who started it all with her phenomenal "Good Earth." From her own pen since then a succession of novels has flowed. Although with each new book she is trying to depart a little more from the Chinese scene, it is plain that the employment of "China relief" has been her *forte*, her protestations in her advice to unborn novelists (see *The Saturday Review of Literature*, March 2, 1935) to the contrary notwithstanding. The influence of her success can at once be gauged by the fact that even such a Ladies Home Journal-Cosmopolitan type of serial-writer as Faith Baldwin did forget her public once to go Chinese in a novel called "The American Family." While Mrs. Buck's childhood is well-known to us, I would certainly give two bits to find out where Miss Baldwin obtained her Chinese background.

Among the recent non-fiction works, Vincent Sheean's "Personal History" is one of the most popular. And, as expected (for I have had my "China relief" theory quite well formulated by now), the most popular chapter in this popular book seems to be one about China in the year 1927, entitled "Revolution." In it this foreign correspondent writes some fascinating journalism, considering that a few chapters back he is but a Chicago freshman bent on joining the right fraternity, although at one point he does make a slip and describes Chiang Kai-shek as a "nervous, short-tempered Cantonese." Then there is the little book written by that remarkable woman, Mrs. Anne Morrow Lindbergh, "North to the Orient." A Lindbergh plus a touch of China, who could possibly have denied success to this sure-fire combination? Of course, you are waiting for me to enumerate the volumes that have been devoted entirely to things Chinese, but Lin Yutang's "My Country and My People" seems to have had the last word of them all. However, I am not cataloging recent books on China as much as to take a stroll along the byways of "China relief," making discoveries at every corner, the more intriguing where they are least expected.

The same principle of the spice that is Old Cathay explains the recurrence of Sax Rohmer's sinister Fu Manchu stories in the otherwise very American Collier's weekly. And not to forget our friend Charlie Chan, the wisecracking sleuth from Honolulu, I bring myself to the movies which furnish a wealth of data on what I call "China relief." There has, for instance, always been avalanches of pictures with the background of old San Francisco, the Barbary Coast, and in them one never fails to spot a couple of "Chinamen" sneaking in and out of

gambling dens or fleeing from the Great Earthquake. This illustrates what I have mentioned above as the atmospheric use of "China relief." The film that added to the lustre of Broadway with its name "China Seas" spelled out in electric lights six feet high affords a sample of the use of the insinuating ingenuity by an allusion to "China." One is attracted to it with grave misgivings lest one should be treated to a pretense of his fatherland which is such stuff as to be banned by the Board of Censors at home. But what does one find but the same Jean Harlow-Clark Gable-and-the-other-girl plot with only a few harmless Malayan pirates thrown in!

I don't for a moment think that Hollywood does not dare to attempt the "genuine" thing. A few censors in Nanking are not to stop the movie magnates from bringing a laugh-provoking, exotic, or even mysterious note to the American screen, all for the glory of the box-office. Undaunted by the Shanghai setback to his "Welcome Danger," Harold Lloyd came back more Chinese than ever in "The Cat's Paw." Of course, novels like "Good Earth," "Oil for the Lamps of China," and "The Lost Horizon," are simply duck soup to the China-conscious motion picture producers. These being not enough, there are other more typical Hollywood concoctions like "The Shanghai Express," "The Bitter Tea of General Yen," "The General Died at Dawn," "The China Clipper," and so forth, *ad infinitum*.

My thesis of "China relief," which heretofore had been mere artistic conjectures, reached the heights of scientific precision when I turned my glance from the more universal medium of the screen to America's legitimate stage. On two successive Saturday nights I went, first to the comedy "Personal Appearance," and then to the musical "Anything Goes," fully prepared to relax and forget everything about China and enjoy myself heartily at the expense of these Americans with every gag and double-entendre line served up in red-hot Broadway manner. Need I tell you that I found all those and what's more, the vindication of my "China relief" theory both by word of mouth and in the person of two of my fellow countrymen from lower Manhattan's Chinatown?

That sealed the argument for me then and there. Later I had occasion to read that Noel Coward had at first thought of making his very sophisticated "Design for Living" a triangle with a Chinese as the third angle. Noel Coward, whose manifest knowledge of our country does not exceed the bounds of this classic expression: "Oh, yes, China; very large, China!" But I have been case-hardened and should not have wondered had the versatile Mr. Coward thought fit to keep his original notion. Indeed I am so used to it now that I believe I can step into a Harlem night spot anyday and watch those chorus girls swing it to the words of—

"Dinah, if she wandered to China,

I would hop an ocean liner....."

—and without batting an eye,