

## OVERSEA CHINESE

EDITED BY LIN YU

## THE LITTLE CRITIC

## Better Treatment Of Overseas At The Customs

THE complaints of our compatriots who returned from abroad concerning the trouble they had with their baggage at the customs at Swatow have at last brought about a change in the procedure of the examination of their personal effects. Instead of the hit and miss examination, all the baggages of the passengers will be numbered and sent to the custom house to be duly examined. This will protect not only the customs from smugglers but also the overseas who often had unnecessary troubles under the old system.

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A COUNTERFEITING plant was recently seized by the Batavia police. Subsequent investigation found that it was international in character, as one Dutchman, one Javanese, two Japanese and several Chinese were involved. However, it was the Japanese who formed the backbone of the illegal enterprise. They supplied technicians and threatened the Chinese and Dutch partners when they wanted to withdraw.

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SINCE the application of the quota system on textiles in Malaya, Chinese piecegoods were reported to have made considerable headway. However it was reported that there were cloths that passed for Chinese textiles which cannot be considered Chinese goods, though "made in China."

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A SMALL band of Japanese youths who are interested in their oversea affairs have been cruising the south seas, visiting all of the more important ports. It traveled on its own small steamship and was said to be on a goodwill trip. But since the Japanese have often given English words peculiar meanings which are not usually ascribed to them, we are at a loss as to what they mean by "a goodwill trip."

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THE Chinese mechanics' unions in Singapore and other parts of Malaya have risen as one man to oppose the conference of all the Chinese mechanics' unions throughout the country called by Li Pa-hsiang, chairman of the reorganization committee, appointed by the Canton authorities last year. Li was denounced as a usurper who deceived the government authorities and oppressed the workers.

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THE volume of trade in Malaya for the first half of this year, was reported to have surpassed that of the same period last year by \$63,816,000 Straits currency. But the businessmen and the press too are demanding a reduction of taxes.

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THE export of petrol and its products last year from the Dutch East Indies replaced sugar at the top of the

## Apropos Of The "Shanghai Man"

WALKING along Nanking Road in a sunless Sunday afternoon, I recalled in a flash the concluding lines of Baudelaire's *Le Couvercle*:

"Le ciel! couvercle noir de la grande marmite  
Où bout l'imperceptible et vaste Humanité."  
(The sky: the black lid of the mighty pot  
Where the vast human generations boil!)

The lines seemed suddenly to embody themselves before my eyes. The gloomy overcast sky and the seething throng of human animals conspired to jerk, so to speak, these terrible lines into concrete visualisation. And especially the vast throng of Sunday-making people, so stupendous and overwhelming! The very thing to move Xerxes to tears over the sentimental reflection that not one of these multitudes would be alive when a hundred years had gone by.

Just as the "Peking Man" (that paleontological reconstruction) is the Chinaman of the past, so the "Shanghai Man" is the Chinaman of the present, and—who knows?—might be that of the future too. In current Chinese literature, the term "Shanghai Man" has long been used as the synonym for a Babbitian sort of person, smart, efficient, self-complacent, with ever so slight a touch of vulgarity. He has the best of everything and is healthily innocent of all spiritual fermentations. Mammon is in Heaven and all's right with the world! Like the poet, the "Shanghai Man" is born, not made. Not everybody living or buried alive in Shanghai can be the blessed "Shanghai Man." We poor journalists, for example, have certainly no claim to that honorific title. And of that huge Sunday-making crowd at least twenty per cent have been merely compelled to seek their living here, unadapted and unadaptable to Shanghai. I know many persons who have spent twenty or thirty years in Shanghai and yet remained to the end strangers in a strange land.

Now this failure to adapt oneself to one's milieu may be a case of what Bergson calls "*raideur*" and therefore fit for ridicule. But we might be mistaken; for this apparent *raideur* is perhaps the sign of strong character and superior intelligence. Have not men of powerful intellect and fine sensibility often complained within our hearing that they felt out of their element

list of exports in the previous year. The percentage of petrol among the other items of exports in 1933 gained 4.27 per cent over that of 1932, while sugar lost 4.69 per cent. The exports to various countries did not change much. Holland lost .72 per cent, Singapore gained .19 per cent, U.S.A. lost .46 per cent, England lost 3.39 per cent, Japan gained .50 per cent and France also gained .80 per cent.

in Shanghai, or that they at once despised and envied the contentment of the "Shanghai Man" with his environment? It is no sheer accident that the campaign for Humor inaugurated by the *Analects Semi-monthly* should have started among the Shanghai intellectuals. In an article published in the *China Critic* several years ago, Dr. Y. T. Lin made a superfine analysis of the varieties of Chinese Humor. But this New Humor (of which Dr. Lin is himself the sponsor) is the Old Humor writ small: there is no Rabelaisian heartiness or Shakespearean broadness in it. It is full of subtle *arrière-pensées*, refined petulance, and above all a kind of nostalgia as evinced in the loving memory of the academic life in Europe, the rehabilitation of the culture of the Ming dynasty, etc. This shows that our New Humorists are really out of humor with their surroundings, and laugh probably because they are too civilised to weep.

A publicist lately spoke on the lack of "Culture" in Shanghai. He talked of founding libraries and other "cultural" institutions with a view to bringing sweetness and light to Shanghai. Sweetness and light indeed! Can there be anything other than sourness and gloom under "this black lid of the mighty pot"?

*Ch'ien Chung-shu*

## BOOK REVIEW

EDITED BY QUENTIN PAN

### The Universe Of Science

By H. LEVY

Pp. xiv & 226, London: Watts & Co., 1933.

HOW pure is pure science? Is the distinction between pure and applied science a real or simply an artificial one? Can the advance of science, however trivial, however theoretical, be isolated completely from the social milieu in which it finds itself? Should science be regarded merely as a sort of mental gymnastics of interest and consequence to the scientists alone, or as a social venture and a social outgrowth, and for this reason could never be cultivated in an intellectual vacuum? Is the impartiality of science a claim which can be trusted implicitly; or must we admit that since the highly specialized and technical developments of science are to be interpreted not only to scientific movement but also ultimately to the society which gives its birth, these interpretations will therefore inevitably be colored by the ideology of the class that has stirred its expositors most deeply? These are the problems that all thinking people are asking themselves today, and in their attempt to solve them, perhaps all can turn with profit to Professor Levy's book.

Briefly stated, Professor Levy's thesis is that present day science suffers from two defects. In the first place, although it is inevitable for the progress of science to employ the method of isolation, or, in other words, of obstruction, yet this necessary procedure has been over-emphasized to such an extent that science has come to be looked upon as an activity having no roots in society and bearing no relation to life itself. The result is that people have got into the habit of thinking of science as ethically or socially neutral, whereas in truth, "if the scientific movement is to be appreciated for what it is, it is essential that its isolation artificially introduced to allow of neutral study, must be ultimately removed." A steel shaft, for example, has not merely a mechanical, but also a social function. It may be part of a turbine, which functions in the world of production and transport, and as such, has social properties. As a social instrument, therefore, it is entirely legitimate for us to ask a *propos* of which such questions as: In what way does it operate in production or transport? Which individual, which nation, which race will it serve or benefit? and so on and so forth. In short, as long as it is through science that the instruments of production and of destruction are sharpened, science can never show itself as a movement capable of being divorced from the rest of changing society.

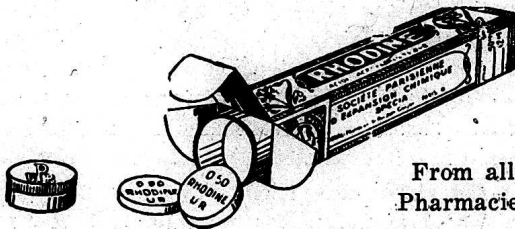
From the above, we may draw the conclusion that "the line of ethical demarcation between pure and applied science can not be maintained... In so far as the products of science are misused, the responsibility cannot be removed from the shoulders of every individual scientist." The scientists have a duty which goes far beyond the discovery of truth that may be applied to industry. Neither

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