

THE GEST
CHINESE RESEARCH LIBRARY
at MCGILL UNIVERSITY

BY BERTHOLD LAUFER

Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill.

NEXT in number of volumes to the Chinese Division of the Library of Congress the important collection of Chinese literature made by Mr. Guion M. Gest of New York is the most outstanding and most comprehensive and at the same time outranks others in number of rare works in America. It is justly characterized as a research library, as it enables the student to carry on serious and fruitful investigations in almost any department of Chinese civilization as history, literature, religion, and science. All students interested or actively engaged in Chinese research owe a debt of profound gratitude to Mr. Gest for his unselfish devotion to an ideal which he has pursued for many years of his life. Fascinated by Buddhism since the early days of his boyhood, he has maintained a steadily growing and intelligent interest in the civilizations of the Far East and has created a lasting monument which will be still more profoundly appreciated by future generations as the spiritual bonds connecting us with the Orient grow more intense.

It was my good fortune to spend two days in the Gest Library at Montreal on July 11 and 12 of this year, and I deem it my pleasant duty to record briefly my impressions of what I saw and learned there.

In bringing together a vast collection of Chinese books and depositing it under the name "The Gest Chinese Research Library" at McGill University, Montreal, Mr. Guion M. Gest was actuated by two principal motives: (1) to promote through the study of Chinese literature a better understanding of China and a closer relationship and amity between China and the Western World (it being Mr. Gest's conviction that an *entente cordiale* between nations can be far better accomplished by education, *i.e.*, through a knowledge of Chinese literature and civilization, of which comparatively little is known and translated, than by any other means), and (2) as implied by its name, the object of the Gest Library is to place its books at the disposal of scholars for research work, especially in co-operation with the faculties of McGill and other universities, as well as with sinologists in the United States, Europe, China and Japan. Research work of this character has already been done in medicine, pharmacology, astronomy, etc. A plan is on foot to found a chair of Chinese language and literature at McGill, which was chosen by Mr. Guion M. Gest because of the excellent and pro-