

A Canadian Chinaman's Opinion

WHILE Germany weaves plans for world domination and dreams of spreading her commercial influence to the farthest parts of the earth, the nations that have as yet been drawn but slightly into the great conflict are giving the future very careful consideration. Germany's predatory methods and aggressive military ideals have not been lost on China, notwithstanding the shroud of mediaevalism in which she is wrapt, and far removed as she is from the whirl of European politics. Twelve months ago the new Chinese republic split into two great divisions, when the southern and more progressive portion at once decided to declare war upon the European nation that had persistently sunk ships with Chinese citizens aboard.

"Ever since we declared war on Germany a year ago we have been too much occupied with our internal strife to take any active part in the struggle," said Chen Sze Yin, editor of the New Republic, the Chinese morning paper published in Vancouver, on his recent visit to Eastern Canada. "Nevertheless, we are heartily in accord with the cause of the Allies, and are anxious to assist them by all means in our power. At the present time the people of South China have sent a small force to Vladivostok to aid the Japanese who have joined the Allies in their fight against the Bolsheviks. It is but a small force, but the South is hard pressed at present by the North who are fighting with superior numbers of troops and greater supplies of ammunition. Still it serves at least as an expression of our attitude."

This virile little man, who has been spending the summer visiting the 60 branches in Canada of the Chinese Nationalist League, of which he is president, takes a lively and sympathetic interest in the Allied cause. Travelling east from the Rockies, Chen Sze Yin was greatly impressed with the endless fields of grain and the tremendous need for labor for cultivation at a time when the yielding capacity of every acre of farm land is being strained to the utmost to produce foodstuffs to tide over the food crisis that threatens the world. Becoming thus conversant with the situation, he realized at once that while the Chinese in their native country, paralyzed as they are by civil war, are unable to take their part in the European struggle, the Chinese in Canada could render service of great value to the cause by cultivating the land. So enthusiastic is he over this inspiration that he is making agriculture one of the main topics of the addresses that he is delivering to his fellow countrymen throughout the Dominion.

"The Chinese can do more useful work for the Allies than running laundries and restaurants," he is telling his compatriots in all the leading cities. "You have a natural aptitude for farming, but out of the great numbers of Chinese in British Columbia there is but a handful of farmers working on the land. Go out into the country and help the Canadians to develop their natural resources, and in so doing increase the volume of foodstuffs to be sent overseas to Europe."

Whether the Chinese should work as farm hands or take up land for themselves independently, Chen has

STROLL through Lower Town, Montreal, any evening, and if you go zig-zag enough away from the main thoroughfares you will see the second or third biggest Chinatown in Canada. In summer you know it by the Chinese lanterns. It looks dreamy. You are interested. So many chop sueys. Such a lot of little balconies and staircases. You are in a patch of some old world—of narrow streets and red lamps, as far from any farm or barnyard as possible. And it was among the thousands of landless Chinese, domiciled in Montreal's Chinatown that Chen Sze Yin, editor of the Vancouver New Republic, gave the accompanying talk to a Canadian Courier representative, on what advanced opinion in China thinks about Europe and the World War. Chen Sze Yin thinks that if Chinamen are to work out any future in Canada, they must do more than run laundries and restaurants. He wants his co-patriots in Canada to go on the land; because as intensive agriculturists, the Chinese are more famous than even Belgians. A good Chinaman can live on a fair-sized back yard.—The Editor.



CHEN SZE YIN, editor of the Vancouver New Republic, his wife and family. The young lady on the right has already demonstrated her father's regard for Japan by graduating from a Fine Arts school for girls in Tokio.

Interview by DORIS HEMMING

not yet decided, although he is already planning a series of agricultural articles to be published in the New Republic on his return to Vancouver. His brilliant inspiration came too late to achieve any practical purpose this year, but the need for foodstuffs will be more insistent than ever next summer, and by that time this leader of the Chinese in Canada will have had plenty of time to recruit. In this connection it is worthy of passing note that the few Chinese who till the soil in the Pacific Province are regarded as unequalled by any other agriculturists in intensive farming.

It is somewhat difficult to understand why China, in her Oriental isolation, should feel so bitterly towards Germany. Enquiry, however, soon elicits the fact that the taking of Kiau Chow by Germany at the time of the Boxer Rebellion has rankled as deeply in the Chinese breast as did the loss of Alsace and Lorraine in the minds of the French.

"But the French and British came into China at the same time as the Germans and took possession of coveted stretches of the coast," one suggests.

"That may be," he replies decisively. "We have no quarrel with the French or the British, they are our Allies. It was the Germans who showed them the way at the time of the Boxer trouble, and had they not interfered with China first of all, the other powers would never have come. Germany ruled Kiau Chow according to the most up-to-date methods, and we have never looked for any further penetration by her. But we don't like her ways and we are afraid of her militaristic policy."

For a man of but 35 years, Chen Sze Yin looks back on singularly varied experiences and accomplish

ment interest in the welfare of the New Republic. Before the war a definite policy of sending Chinese students to Europe and America was adopted, and although very few remained in the European universities after 1914, there are still at least 3,000 men studying in the United States.

Chen Sze Yin speaks only fairly good English, although he understands it and reads it fluently as the result of his course in St. Paul's College in Tokio. He is thus well able to appreciate the beauties of English literature. Despising cheap magazines and modern novels, he turns to Shakespeare with unerring instinct, and insists that no one has ever written English or Chinese to equal the illustrious bard. Of Shakespeare's plays, Hamlet is his favorite and Macbeth holds second place.

"I like him for his keen mind, and I understand this kind of English," Chen explains quite frankly as he tells of the Shakespeare translations he is making into Chinese to be printed in his paper as they are completed.

Although there are over 30,000 Chinese living in Canada at the present time their colonies are so self-contained and their knowledge of English is so imperfect that Canadians know little of their aims and ideals. A Chinaman of the education and polish of Chen Sze Yin is unfortunately rare in this country to which the Orient comes only as a last resort when unable to make a living for the family in his overcrowded home. For these reasons the average Canadian is apt to form his opinions on foreign and domestic politics without taking the Orient into account, until he meets a Chinese visitor like the editor of the New Republic.

ments. At the time of the recent revolution he acted as private secretary to Dr. Sun Yat Sen, the first president of the Republic, and, under the influence of this great leader, became imbued with the vision of a modern China freed from the heavy yoke of the Manchu dynasty, and progressing according to European methods and customs. Japan, her small but lively neighbor, was forging ahead and actually turning the Chinese to her own account in her dealings with America and Europe. Japan, for example, was buying wheat from China and sending it to America milled into excellent flour. Japan was establishing in her principal cities, schools and universities where English literature was studied. In order to obtain anything beyond a smattering of English, such as is taught in some of the schools in the Chinese cities, it was necessary to go to Japan. The Chinese had long ago invented many of the necessities of life in use in Europe such as paper, gunpowder, compasses, etc., but they had always been perfected by other nations. Science was at a low ebb, for the Manchus were too corrupt to permit of advancement or progress. Shipping was confined to the inland waterways and manufacturing was in the most primitive stages.

A REALIZATION of these things has been the impelling force that has induced Chen Sze Yin, and men of his calibre, to devote their lives to the task of bringing European civilization into China, and of creating in other countries an