

BOOKS

WORLD POLITICS.

The Conflict of Colour. By B. L. Putnam Weale.
Published by the Macmillan Co., New York. 1910.
Price, \$2 postpaid.

The corner-grocer's air of assurance about village politics is Mr. Weale's in speaking of the peoples of the world. Be they black, brown or yellow, this Englishman of the Orient arranges and disposes the races of the earth while the non-commissioned reader wonders at the tactics and his own ignorance. The Negro's place is to encircle the globe for a few degrees each side of the equator. India must one day—the sooner, the better—become a self-governing dependency like Australia; and Great Britain can never really govern Egypt, for “the government of a people by itself has a meaning and a reality—but such a thing as government of one people by another does not and can not exist,” as the author quotes from John Stuart Mill.

This feeling for democracy, coupled with an insight born of long years spent in China, makes the author's remarks and prophecies about the Yellow World of timely value.

“These so-called Yellow Races,” he writes, “have one and all an excellent moral and social system. . . . They have been happy in their lives, exact in their mutual observances, and have multiplied and fructified exceedingly. Their democratic feelings are in the main far above anything that western culture has yet evolved. The East is in many ways the home of pure democracy—the region where the cobbler may always magically become the great Minister. Their sense of mutual or family responsibility is so great that where no alien influences have been at work, millions of people still govern themselves without police or any of those artificial restraints which the West has been methodically adding to during the past centuries; and their individual reasonableness is such that they are not easily prompted to attempt a thousand stupid things which the white man is constantly doing.”

China, vast, democratic, peaceable, clever, but rent by intense, narrow loyalties and bound to a dead theocracy under an alien's rule, with Russia stealthily creeping on by land and Japan hovering hawklike by sea—China must be rescued intact and powerful. If she be not guaranteed her independence by Europe and America, she must accept the selfish friendship of Japan and must help that ambitious little nation to lock the doors of all Eastern Asia upon the white man and the whole of his commerce.

Such the omens when our author was reading them. But at the exact moment when the persuaded reader is certain that the integrity of the Chinese nation depends upon the astute magnanimity of the Western hemisphere—at this precise instant

there flashes across the world the news that China has become a Republic, given some of its women the franchise, and is seriously considering the Singletax! Such is the like of prophecy. But this prophet is nevertheless worth a hearing.

ANGELINE LOESCH GRAVES.



MUNICIPALITIES.

Commission Government in American Cities. By Ernest S. Bradford, Ph. D. New York. The Macmillan Company. 1911. Price \$1.25 net.

Municipal Franchises. A Description of the Terms and Conditions upon which Private Corporations enjoy special privileges in the Streets of American Cities. By Delos F. Wilcox, Ph. D., Chief of the Bureau of Franchises of the Public Service Commission for the First District of New York, and author of “The American City,” etc. In two volumes. Vol. II.—Transportation Franchises; Taxation and Control of Public Utilities. New York. The Engineering News Publishing Company. 1911. Price \$5.00 net.

An excellent history and reference book on “commission government,” which the author wisely and truly distinguishes from “government by commission,” is Dr. Bradford's volume. It is a book that has been much needed, and one which cannot fail to be highly serviceable to students of municipal affairs and advocates of democratic progress. The author recognizes as essential to the idea of “commission government,” not only concentration of power, which in itself would be autocratic, but also its democratic checks, among which he finds “the most direct and valuable” to be the Initiative and Referendum.

Since transportation facilities horizontally through the streets of a city are analogous to elevators perpendicularly through its buildings, a book which describes the terms and conditions upon which special privileges are enjoyed in American cities in respect of such facilities, can be neither uninteresting nor unserviceable to the public-spirited citizenship of municipalities; and such a book is this volume of Dr. Wilcox's on Municipal Franchises. It is extraordinarily comprehensive, and while replete with detail is in no wise neglectful of principle. Among the cities dealt with are New York, Chicago and Cleveland; and among characteristic franchise privileges discussed are the perpetual, the indeterminate and the exclusive. Railway terminals also are included. Under the general title of “Taxation and Control,” Dr. Wilcox considers the Initiative and Referendum favorably; and of ownership he sums up the present situation with a paraphrase: “In the era of franchises, prepare for municipal ownership.”

Both books will be found instructive, the one in aid of the democratization of American cities, the other as a treatise on one of the most important of municipal functions.