

CHRONICLE AND COMMENT

ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE, for many years editor of THE BOOKMAN and who resigned just Arthur B. and who resigned just a year ago to go to Belgium for work with the Maurice Relief Commission, has His New Book just brought out his account of the three months he spent inside the German lines. *Bottled Up in Belgium* is the title of his book. Mr. Maurice left New York on January 7th last year, and was the last delegate actually to get into Belgium; others started later, but were returned. His adventures began at landing at Falmouth dock—he had failed to obtain the necessary papers from the commission to account for his business in England. It looked like a serious *impasse*, but Mr. Maurice was saved from a possible detention by a lucky incident. Before leaving New York Frederick Palmer, the American war correspondent, now official censor with our expeditionary forces, had given him the manuscript of his *My Second Year of the War* for delivery to the British War Office for censorship before publication in this country. This manuscript saved the day. A royal messenger from the War Office was there in response to a cablegram from Mr. Palmer and took all responsibility for Mr. Maurice's proper conduct while in the United Kingdom.

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But this was a mild annoyance to the events that followed. In Holland he was deprived of everything of a suspicious nature, even of a pack of cards with which he had provided himself with an eye to solitaire in the dull hours, and, of course, binoculars and a camera joined a pile of other such *impedimenta* left for "safe keeping" by previous delegates—we wonder if Mr. Maurice ever recovered the various pieces of luggage he "discarded"

And His
Bottle

en route to Belgium! An automobile dash took him to the neck of the Bottle: a great double gate across the road with a thin ribbon of steel stretching to right and left—the famous electric wire stretched across Northern Belgium to prevent the Belgians from escaping into Holland. Mr. Maurice tells us that the system of search conducted by the Germans was "childish compared to the system that I had encountered in England and the system that I was later to encounter in France. . . . One day crossing the frontier will mean being stripped and having your back painted with acid to be sure that you are not carrying any secret writings; the next you could carry a message of military purport from the British War Office to every able-bodied male subject in Belgium."

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The work of the commission in Belgium aroused Mr. Maurice's highest admiration, although he He Tells of seldom mentions his Hoover own part in it, and that only to develop the story he has to tell of Belgium under Germany's cultured guidance. One anecdote in particular of the work there is well worth describing because of the interesting sidelight it throws on the character of Herbert Hoover. Let us use Mr. Maurice's own words:

To the helm a great man had been called. I have never met Herbert Clark Hoover. But it was not necessary to meet him to know him. . . . The evidence of the C. R. B., the organisation's unswerving loyalty, profound belief, deep-seated admiration, were enough. If they were not I would accept the verdict of the Belgian, Émile Francqui. Once the wrangling over agreements and concessions was more than usually acute. The occupying military authorities felt that theirs was the whip hand, and they were not gentle in pushing their

advantage. The Chief bided his time. One day, like a bolt from the blue, came his sweeping order: "Stop the work. Disband the commission. Send the men home." He had seized upon the exact moment, the one hour above all others when the Germans stood in greatest need of our work for the Belgians. Panic-stricken, they yielded upon all points. When Francqui heard what had happened his hands were tossed skyward in astonished tribute. The equivalent in Americanese of his comment was: "Some diplomat!"

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We have one quarrel with Mr. Maurice, a little one, but an ardent one.

An Ancient Quarrel

Mr. Maurice went to Princeton (we never knew why) and since that time he has faithfully attended every Princeton-Yale football game and with an almost equal regularity he has sacrificed good coin of the realm on the altar of Sport. Now, it so chances that Yale's college song, *Bright College Years*, is set to the music of *Die Wacht am Rhein*, which implies nothing in any way derogatory either to the German song or to Yale University. And, of course, it was inevitable that the German bands in Brussels should indulge in the strains of their ancient hymn. Once, says Mr. Maurice, across the Place Royale came the tramp of the grey column and the flash of the bayonets and directly opposite to him the band leader turned, waved his baton, and lo, *Die Wacht am Rhein!* It is impossible to explain, says Mr. Maurice: "The moment, the scene, the green-grey column against the trees of the opposite park, passed from the vision and from the mind" and in their place came "the green turf and the chalk lines and the teams running on the field for the beginning of the second half, and in the great stand opposite the swinging hats of the cheering sections," and "the music was moulding itself into the words of *Bright College Years*." It is a pretty conceit of happier days—may they come again soon. And when they come, as come they must, it is our hope that when

Mr. Maurice again sits among the orange and black stands he may hear *Bright College Years* to as good purpose as ever, but may he never mar his enjoyment by a thought of that *Die Wacht am Rhein* in the Place Royale during the Great Devastation!

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Mr. Maurice writes with charm and vivacity—he would be sure to be enter-

As He Writes

taining no matter in what unfortunate surroundings the chances of war—or peace—might throw him. His book abounds in anecdote, in "colour," in that precious sparkle of the perennially happy mood. We wish he had seen more—we even wish he would go back to the Europe he used to know so well and tell us of all the changes, of the human changes especially, that war has brought over the country and over the spirit of life. We venture the prediction that when peace comes again the call of the Old World will prove too strong for him and that again he will cross and we shall have more accounts from his bright pen of those interesting salients of life that the bizarre "war" reporters never see. But in the meantime Mr. Maurice is staying in New York, engaged on the literary staff of the Boston publishing house of Little, Brown and Company.

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In the just published *Mark Twain's Letters* two interesting commentaries are

From the Letters of Mark Twain

found concerning Rudyard Kipling and the great American humourist: "Rudyard Kipling wrote to a friend that 'I love to think of the great and godlike Clemens. He is the biggest man you have on your side of the water by a damn sight, and don't forget it. Cervantes was a relative of his.'"

"And when this was transmitted to Mark, he wrote: 'It makes me proud and glad—what Kipling says. I hope fate will fetch him to Florence while we