

on the other. Austria was to be enlarged, as a counterpoise to Germany's possible military ambitions. But this 'temptation in the desert,' where all the glories of the wonderful paradise of peace and prosperity were spread out before the eyes of Austria, reached no result, because Mensdorff was strictly forbidden by his instructions to discuss a separate peace under any circumstances. Vienna then made other overtures to President Wilson. Last of all, early in February 1918, a second meeting occurred between Revertera and Armand.

All this occurred when the old Royal House on the Danube was already beginning to creak and quiver with pre-

monitions of its coming collapse. Who will dispute the author's conclusion, that in view of the unmistakable portents of the coming hurricane speeding toward us from the horizon, the Emperor and his advisers must have been strongly tempted to follow Bismarck's precedent of seeking safety beyond the borders of an existing alliance? The fact that this was not done — that the Hofburg and the Ballplatz during these last hours unhesitatingly rejected the overtures from the West — will disperse many shadows that have gathered over the history of the relations among the Central Powers during the last two years that they fought side by side.

A THEOLOGUE IN A STREET GANG

BY FRANZ MÜLLER

From *Vossische Zeitung*, October 31
(BERLIN LIBERAL DAILY)

OF late a new word has begun to appear in the daily papers: *Werkstudent* — working-student. The pitiless severity of the times has forced a great number of students to take up the pick and shovel and earn by the sweat of their brow and the toil of their muscles money to pay for the education to which they aspire. I say aspire, because unless a man has a healthy, vigorous aspiration, he will not spend his vacation mining coal, digging excavations, building roads, cleaning lamps, relaying rails, or in other like pursuits.

I am one of those to whom his future profession appeals so strongly that he would rather undergo a thousand hardships and humiliations than sacri-

fice it for a different career. I am the son of a government official's widow, who was left with a large family. When I returned from the army to begin my university course, I realized that we had a hard struggle before us to make ends meet, but I had not the slightest premonition of what the reality was to be. After my fourth semester, I spent my vacation as an office clerk, and during my fifth and sixth semesters I taught during my extra hours, at a boys' school in Breslau. This practical experience as a teacher has in many ways been more valuable to me than any amount of theoretical training. I planned to make up for the time lost teaching, by studying this last vaca-

tion. But almost immediately I found it necessary to devote my afternoons to giving private lessons, and when the recent tremendous fall in the mark occurred, I was forced to relinquish the idea of vacation study. Thereupon my experience as a pavement-layer in Berlin began.

The father of one of my student friends is a contractor's foreman. He readily gave me a little card bearing the following legend: 'Laborer M. is in my employ. B. H.'

The next morning I put on my *wichs* or working togs: a pair of old army-shoes, a clean pair of overalls, and my old military tunic. I was not fortunate enough to have a red handkerchief to take the place of my collar and cravat, which I naturally left at home.

At the usual University interval, fifteen minutes before the hour, I was on hand, ready to begin work in Belle-Alliance Platz. I waited for my comrades, who presented themselves promptly at the very moment when our working time began. But they had already spent fifteen minutes on the road with their tool wagon and asphalt kettle.

I spied my foreman, went up to him with a bold but still somewhat intimidated feeling, and handed him my work-card with the following Spartan greeting: 'Morning! I am ordered to lend you a hand here.'

'Bully good of you,' he replied with a sarcastic scowl. 'Where was yer last job?'

'Siemens-Schukert,' I answered with great presence of mind. For it was a fact that I worked in the shell-shop there for ten weeks during the war, before I was called into active service.

'Ah so, no matter, I just wanted to find out what you were good for before I put you on a job. You look like a bright fellow, and you can probably

lend me a hand, as you said, but I don't want any smart talk. Take your pick and get that stuff out of there.'

So I took my pick, thinking to myself: 'With a job like that a fellow does not need many orders. All he has to do is to go ahead.' So I swung my pick with all the zeal of a beginner; but I had hardly taken half a dozen strokes when I had to stop because several electric cars must pass the place where I was picking between the rails. I discovered promptly that there would be more resting than picking in this job, because I already heard another car grinding around the corner, headed toward me like a fire engine. I reassured myself with the reflection that the tramcar had an airbrake, and picked away merrily and busily at my lumps of cement. But I was interrupted by a flood of sarcastic comment from the motorman, who had pulled up just behind me.

'Come now, old faker, trying to make out you are doing an honest job! *Magnificent!*' A moment's pause — in the sarcastic comments, not in my picking — before the fellow resumed: 'I never expected to see it. Our laborers are getting more reactionary every day.' Then raising his voice to a roar, he fairly megaphoned from his tremendous beer-funnel: 'Get out of the way there! Do you think I've forgotten to say my morning prayer?'

The laborer next to me retorted: — 'You had better shut your mouth and say an "Our Father."'

About ten o'clock the foreman shouted, 'Fifteen!' That meant breakfast. We laborers quickly gathered around the gravel wagon, the wheelbarrows, and the asphalt kettle to swallow our bread and butter and drink a cup of coffee. I had delayed hitherto to introduce myself, and took the occasion to do so now.

'My name is Franz!' — and like the

echoes in a forest: — 'Otto' — 'Ernst' — 'Karl' — 'Albert' — 'Harry' — 'Yustav-Adolph of Sweden!' came from the gang.

'Yustav-Adolph' was already a little exhilarated by a couple of early morning drinks, and started to recount all the famous exploits of his royal family. He lauded to the skies the monarchical form of government, although a copy of *Rote Fahne* was sticking out of the pocket of his coat.

I made my first venture into friendly conversation with my associate: — 'Come, come, Gustav, a Monarchist and a Communist in a single Gustav — that does not go. It is a paradox.'

'What is that thing, paradox?'

'Faking,' I said by way of explanation. But Gustav came back with a quick retort: 'No, no, Franz, with those specs and those white arms, and that pious phiz, you are no class-conscious proletarian. Do you get me?'

And Albert chimed in: 'Sure, he is a disguised doctor.' Otto suggested to Ernst that he should try some of his book lingo on me, whereupon Ernst soberly addressed me with the following classical remark: 'Parlez vous frang-sée. Je'tais prisonnier ang Frangs étang Marokko! Mä nix bong mangje.'

Thereupon I replied to him in a longish French sentence, which he understood and answered fairly well. We did not observe how absorbed we had become in our conversation until our breakfast time was over, and we found we had not eaten. During our dialogue the others listened with great interest. They were demonstrative in their admiration of Ernst, but exhibited diffident reserve toward me, after they discovered I was a student. But this attitude wore off before the day was over, and after two or three days we were the best of comrades, especially when the men discovered that I was intensely interested in labor questions

and in their own practical economic problems.

I studied with deep sympathy an elderly man of the laboring class, already worn out with his years of toil, who spoke very rarely, and ate his bread and drank his coffee in silence. The evidence of a life of hard and unremitting toil was deeply imprinted on his countenance. Whenever his face did lighten up with a friendly smile, a feeling of relief shot through my heart.

Otto and I were standing bent over, side by side, each plying as if for a wager an iron 'toothpick,' scratching the gravel out between the joints of the paving stones into which hot asphalt was to be poured. As we labored away busily at our job, Otto suddenly inquired out of the clear sky: —

'You partner, what's spiritualism, anyhow?' Without straightening up or stopping my work, I delivered a lecture to him upon spiritualism, hypnotism, and suggestion. He listened the way a child listens to a fairy story, and when I had finished said, with a sigh: 'Ah, that must be fine, to have an education like that; then you don't have to believe everything they tell you.'

Gustav and I were boiling asphalt and pouring it out of cans into the joints we had just cleaned between the paving stones. It is very heavy work, for it takes all the strength a man possesses to keep from slopping asphalt unnecessarily upon the pavement in carrying the cans to and fro. I showed him my blistered hands, and asked him for a piece of adhesive plaster. He grasped my hand and started to smear hot asphalt on it. I thought it was a trick, and tried to pull away. But he merely laughed and said: 'Evening gray and morning red, make a sailor shake his head. — Look up there, Franz, see the bride in the window crying her eyes out'; and before I had time really to protest, he had covered the

broken skin with his tarry remedy. It worked like magic. When I told him so he remarked with a grin: 'Yes sir, Franz, when I was a lad I wanted to be a physician. It must be a fine trade, patching people up like that, but my old folks always said: "No, Gustav, you are going to be a preacher." But none of your black coats for me — the scheming, tricky fellows.'

I began to feel like Daniel in the lion's den. But I already knew him well enough to realize he meant only half what he said. It suddenly occurred to him to ask me: 'What are you studying to be, anyway?'

On my replying that I was a theological student, he exclaimed: —

'Oh, my God, no. You studying to be a preacher! What's in your noddle? What kind of one?'

I said, 'Catholic.'

'Oh God, no! Surely not! Man alive, Franz, you won't be able to get married!'

When I insisted seriously that this was my intention, he made a joking pass at me with his fist: 'No, no, you'll change your song, you won't do that.'

Then assuming a more serious tone he added: 'Well, you are not such a bad fellow. I tell you, Franz, let's take a walk to-night, and talk the question over!'

Our friendly walk together was one of the happiest experiences of my service as a pavement-laborer. Words fail me to tell what it meant to us.

Another day, just before we knocked off work. Harry and I had been working side by side for four hours without interruption, knocking the old, hard asphalt off the pavement stones with sharp hammers. We had been steadily

bending over our task for four hours, in a cold drizzling rain. We straightened up for a moment, and the following conversation occurred: —

'Look there, Franz, do you see that? That fine carriage with the rubber tires? That is the way they travel now!'

'Thunder and lightning,' I said, 'it is a fine carriage. Those magnificent horses and the black vehicle behind them make a picture.'

'What's a picture to me? I'd pitch a bomb into that picture.' And clenching his fists until the knuckles were white, he muttered: 'The classes! I hate them!'

'But, Harry,' I said soothingly, 'just wait a minute. Am I riding in that carriage, or am I standing here in the dirt and gravel like yourself? Do you think I have a spark of hatred in my heart at seeing that? No, Harry. Hatred is a beastly thing. It does not make us any happier. I enjoy seeing those fine horses, and even if a man does not own them he can take pleasure in them. You are a hard-working fellow, Harry. Stop and think a minute. You may have property of your own.'

Just a suspicion of a smile flickered across Harry's toil-worn countenance. He took his *Rote Fahne* out of his pocket, tore it in two and thrust it into the fire under the asphalt kettle.

'Franz, old boy,' he said, 'Maybe I talk too much. Write me sometime when you get back to Breslau. You have got different ideas.'

I could repeat many conversations, sometimes touching, sometimes humorous, sometimes serious, like those I have mentioned. No student who is forced to get out and work shoulder to shoulder with the ordinary laboring man will ever regret his experience,

A PLEA FOR THE REPUBLIC

BY THOMAS MANN

[At the national fête upon the sixtieth birthday of Gerhard Hauptmann, the greatest living poet of Germany, Thomas Mann, who is probably the first literary critic and novelist of that country, delivered a notable address, professing his allegiance to the Republic and Democracy. In view of Mann's devotion to the cause upheld by the Monarchy during the War, and the ideals developed in his book *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, reviewed in the *Living Age* of July 16, 1921, this doubtless seemed to many a sensational recantation. His auditors were mainly university men who presumably anticipated a very different message. We print below the more significant paragraphs of this address.]

From *Die Neue Rundschau*, November
(BERLIN LITERARY MONTHLY)

I AM no Pacifist of either the fanatical or the unctuous school. Pacifism as a world philosophy, as spiritual vegetarianism, as sensible middle-class millennialism, is not part of my nature. But neither was it part of Goethe's nature, nor would it have been under any conditions. And yet he was a man of peace. I am no Goethe; but slightly, indirectly, so to speak, remotely related to his family. And I, too, am a man of peace. For peace is the realm of culture and thought, while war is the realm of the brute. Not of the brute alone, no, but as human nature and our world are to-day, war is little else than a paroxysm of the brute.

The world and the peoples of the world are old and wise to-day; their epic and heroic age lies far behind them. To try to return to that age is to struggle futilely against the laws of time, to cultivate a spiritual untruth. To-day war is a lie and all its works are lies. No matter how noble and honorable the sacrifices that we lay on its altar, war itself has lost all nobility and honor. Therefore it now stands revealed in all its nakedness to every eye not willfully self-deluded, as a triumph of whatever is brutal, whatever is base, whatever is mortally hostile to culture

and reason, as a mere orgy of blood and egoism, of ruin and evil.

Confess the truth boldly, for this is the truth. I do not assert this with political malice. I would not for a moment wound the feelings of you, young veterans of the war, who shed your blood and saw your comrades shed their blood for an ideal. That was an experience that is holy and should be cherished as holy in your hearts. I am no Thersites of pure reason, no spiteful partisan, to rejoice self-righteously in the humiliation and spiritual bereavement of those whose ideals have turned to ashes. I know what blood and death and comradeship are. But a poet whose verses are a constant pæan to the manly hero has himself caught a vision of the true ugliness of modern war—as a reversion to barbarism without object or glory:—

*Des Schöpfers Hand entwischt, rast eigenmächtig
Uniform von Blei und Blech, Gestäng und Rohr.
Der selbst lacht grimm, wenn falsche Heldenreden
Von Vormal's klingen, der als Brei und Klumpen
Den Bruder sinken sah, der in der schandbar
Zerwühlten Erde haufte wie Geziefer . . .
Der alte Gott der Schlachten ist nicht mehr.*

(Escaped from the creator's hand, it rages unrestrained — a monster of rods and tubes, of lead and steel. He who has seen his brother blown to