

with the germs of deadly disease, with specific written instructions for their use? A man who has not forced his imagination into the attempt to draw just that picture, and then forced his intellect to tell him just why it is beyond the power of imagination in the one case and a fact of current history in the other, has never yet got really into the heart of the great moral issue with which the world is now dealing. Berlin could do with her diplomatic service that which an honorable Government cannot even imagine itself as doing, simply because she had deliberately prepared her diplomatic service for just such work. She did not run the chance of proposing the commission of crime to men whom she did not know to be ready to commit crime. And how terribly complete that criminalization of the personnel of her diplomatic force was, we know from the fact that at none of the many points where criminal action has now been proved did any Berlin diplomat resign rather than do the dastardly work asked of him.

To me, a conclusive reason against any verbal screening of these hideous facts is my firm conviction that President Wilson is right in his belief that the great bulk of the German population is morally capable of an overwhelming revulsion against this brutal debasement of their Government agencies to serve the purpose of the militarist's dream of world domination. This revulsion will come not by using soft and shining speech for facts that are hard and dirty and cruel, thus soothing moral distinctions to sleep, but by keeping the world intensely alive to the naked ugliness of these facts and the identity of those responsible for them—the head of the House of Hohenzollern and the conscienceless military junta by his own choice surrounding him. I have said nothing on this subject more severe than has just been published by a German of the Germans, Dr. Harry Stuermer, who fought on the Kaiser's side for more than two years in this very struggle, and then at the sacrifice of his citizenship and the risk of his life, unable longer to be a part of that at which every fibre of his manhood revolted, deserted from a Government unworthy of any true man's allegiance and fled to neutral soil to denounce the crimes which he had witnessed. His words are but a foretaste of the scathing denunciation which will flow from countless German lips and pens when once those lips and pens are set free by a complete and indisputable victory of the Allies—the one thing which will put an end both to the Hohenzollern dynasty and to the unspeakable crimes of which it stands convicted. When that is done there will be room and welcome in the world for a Germany which can respect itself and win back the now absolutely forfeited respect and confidence of others. Let us not delay that day by cultivating a spirit of fatal folly and softness and falsity which would say, "Oh, well, we're all about as bad. Let's forget it all."

W. H. JOHNSON

Granville, Ohio, October 13

GERMAN TRANSLATION

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Within a month I have been told on three occasions—twice by persons of academic rank and engaged in the active profession of professing—that very much of the evidence (German soldiers' letters, etc., as well as German speeches and war philosophy) of German atrocities is the result of ignorant translating.

I should like to raise a question. Why, with so much able

teaching—school and college—of the German language as there has been in this country for years past, are so few people able to translate that admittedly difficult language with a fair degree of accuracy?

The plea of inaccurate translation has been, and is, constantly put forth in defence of Germany. It does seem as if the ideas, if not the beauty and elegance of merely ordinary German, might be translated by the ordinary person who has had the advantages of a fair share of all this able teaching, even granted the subject is so exceptionally difficult.

ALFRED M. BROOKS

Indiana University, October 10

BOOKS

Ambassador Gerard's Observations on Germany

My Four Years in Germany. By James W. Gerard. New York: George H. Doran Co. \$2 net.

THE declaration that Mr. Gerard would write of his experiences in Germany aroused great and natural anticipation. Expectancy was, indeed, tempered by some doubt as to the propriety of such publication, and it was recalled that the question of good taste had before been raised when a predecessor published reminiscences under circumstances a great deal less striking. Nor was this feeling diminished by advertising to foretell the appearance of the parts of his story in a newspaper, since these announcements contained so little that was sensational and extreme. Now, perhaps, some may think that, while no regulation of diplomatic custom has been violated, best taste and finest feeling have been rather ignored; though they who feel so will doubtless join with many others in declaring that the extraordinary and dangerous crisis justifies what will certainly be of public and national service. For we think the telling of this story was a service to the American people; and at a time when there is so much to be read that this is distinctly one of the books to be chosen. It contains little not previously conjectured or in some form seen elsewhere, but the effect is very different and the influence far greater when the relation is by him who had, of all our countrymen, best opportunity to see and to know.

Apparently Mr. Gerard is straightforward, courageous, and sincere; though not one who has by inheritance that aristocratic fineness and grace which the European diplomatic caste so often brings into foreign affairs. In magnificent ceremonial he was doubtless ill at ease; and in reminiscence now he speaks of life at court with the humorous condescension of a plain American man of affairs. We do not imagine him achieving very much by chicanery or intrigue, and we are thankful for it. These pages portray him shrewd, downright, and forceful, and also kindly and humane.

Some of the things which he speaks of must have taken no little courage. He said to the Chancellor: "If I cannot get an answer to my proposition about prisoners, I will take a chair and sit in front of your palace in the street until I receive an answer." In a conversation with von Jagow he intimated that he might go and shoot some of the savage dogs at a prison camp; after which they soon

disappeared. When it was represented to Bethmann-Hollweg that certain deported Belgians were being forced to make shells contrary to all rules of war and the Hague Conventions, "he said, 'I do not believe it.' I said, 'My automobile is at the door. I can take you, in four minutes, to where thirty Belgians are working on the manufacture of shells.' But he did not find time to go."

The years in Germany were full of cares. The Ambassador was untiring in his efforts to alleviate the lot of prisoners, particularly the English prisoners. The fearful things at Wittenberg are well known now. There he could do little, but after arduous effort and with much difficulty he succeeded in improving conditions in general through an arrangement with the German Government and by repeated visits of inspection. He fails not to praise the authorities for prompt and efficient delivery of packages sent to the prisoners from England; and he declares that at first the Germans, surprised at the large numbers of captives, wanted adequate preparations to receive them. It is nevertheless his judgment that in the beginning prisoners were treated badly; that the Germans did not display much efficiency in dealing with them, and that, in spite of later improvement, the prisoners will return to their homes with deep and bitter hatred of all things German. To a great extent the evil conditions arose, and his efforts for betterment failed, because warring Germany is divided into twenty army corps districts, over each of which is a representative corps commander, clothed with absolute authority, very jealous of his power, and not obliged to report to the War Department. At the time of his departure there were two million captives in the Empire, many of them at work for their conquerors. And he speaks of an evil result: that it is now to the advantage of certain proprietors and manufacturers for the war to continue. The Junkers, obtaining four or five times as much for their products as before the war, are getting their work done by prisoners paid with a pittance. The book abounds in interesting bits of gossip and recollection, in characterizations of great men, and relation of things that they said. The Kaiser is an impressive figure, on great occasions every inch a king. Contrary to general opinion, Mr. Gerard considers the Crown Prince an agreeable man, of respectable intellect, and undoubtedly popular in his country. He believes that von Bethmann-Hollweg is a liberal, who might have attained to far greater power had he resigned rather than consent to the resuming of submarine war unrestricted. The Junkers in the Reichstag are the most important body of conservatives in the world, and Heydebrand, their leader, is known as the uncrowned King of Prussia. Prince Donnersmarck, who, in 1871, advocated taking from France an indemnity of thirty milliards, told the author that at the end of this war so much or more should be exacted. Once the Kaiser remarked that there was no longer any international law, and the Chancellor agreed that this was so.

The description of German government and institutions is excellent; it would be difficult for the ordinary reader to find anywhere a better popular account. The analysis may not appear to be learned or profound, but it has the clearness which comes from actual understanding of operation. The author says many things which our people are beginning to learn: that the German system bears only slight resemblance to real parliamentary government; that actually the Reichstag has little more than the power to debate; that in time of war the military party has abso-

lute control, and that in peace its influence is generally preponderant and immense; that the bulk of the population is kept in the place given it by systems of franchise vicious and old, through the influence of great proprietors who largely hold the land and hold it in tenures lengthy or perpetual like those of the feudal age, by careful control of the press, and by education always directed to conform to the wishes of the class at the top. We recall that at the beginning of the war it was often said that, while Germany did not give to her people the specious liberty of some other lands, she gave them, instead of a false freedom which was license, efficient and orderly government, under which they enjoyed more real comfort, prosperity, and happiness than any other folk, and that her system showed the way to the better condition of peoples hereafter. It is interesting to note the author's belief that German laborers work longer and get less out of life than any other workingmen in the world, and that the laws ostensibly for their protection and so much admired, such as insurance against unemployment, sickness, and old age, are measures which bind them to the soil as effectively as the mediæval serfs were held to their masters' estates. Doubtless this view is not sound, but the comment is none the less striking.

The most important chapters relate to diplomatic affairs, and to the attitude of Germany towards the American people. The author's revelations about state affairs contain little entirely new, for he may not tell a great deal that he would like to relate. Even so, the story is impressive enough. He declares that he had little faith in a final abandoning of ruthless submarine warfare, and when this was for a while put aside felt sure of a future resumption. Apparently much that was yielded to the American Government was for the purpose of getting our President to bring about peace while Germany was still in most favorable position. Often the Chancellor impressed upon Mr. Gerard that Washington must do something towards arranging a peace or public opinion in Germany would compel unrestricted employment of submarines. He believes that orders for beginning it again had already been given while public and diplomatic felicitations were exchanging. "The Germans believed that President Wilson had been elected with a mandate to keep out of war at any cost, and that America could be insulted, flouted, and humiliated with impunity."

What the author has to say about the feeling in Germany towards us is ominous enough. The introductory chapter is almost hysterical. On its appearance it seemed to be part of the effort to terrify our people into sudden action, but after reflection we think much of it little in excess of the truth. He declares that it was von Tirpitz who, advocating ruthless submarine warfare with England, and promising the speedy surrender of that country, stated that, after the capture of the British fleet, a German armada was to sail for America and exact there indemnity enough to pay for the cost of the war. In speaking of the cleverly fostered and universally prevalent hatred in Germany, the author says: "I believe that to-day all the bitterness of the hate formerly concentrated on England has now been concentrated on the United States." And he adds that German-Americans are hated worse than other Americans because they have neither assisted Germany nor kept America out of the war. In respect of our earlier dealings with the Entente, he says: "No German ever forgets this. The

question of legality or treaties never enters his mind: he only knows that American supplies and munitions killed his brother, son, or father. It is a hate we must meet for long years."

The writing is sometimes careless and oftener somewhat crude. It must be merely a printer's error that tells of Sir Edward Grey in conversation in the streets of Berlin two days before the beginning of the war.

Personal Portraits of Celebrities

In Good Company. By Coulson Kernahan. New York: John Lane Company. \$1.50 net.

THIS collection of "personal recollections" superficially resembles but essentially differs from the abundant chirping books and articles about the celebrities of the day. It resembles them in addressing itself to our large interest in the intimate atmosphere and personality as distinguished from the published works and acts of heroes. It differs from them in containing a number of deliberately executed literary portraits, composed and finished with a clear consciousness that portrait painting is a fine art with a technique beyond the reaches of the cheerful chatterbox. Mr. Kernahan tells a number of good stories—a capital one of Lord Tennyson, but he uses them, subordinates them to a central artistic intention.

He hangs in his little gallery a spirited impressionistic picture of Swinburne, of which the dominant note is a white-hot intensity manifested in eye and gesture and voice working in fiery denunciation or in ecstatic praise or in the rapture of poetic creation. The likeness is alive to the inner eye and ear—swift, various, nervous, voluble. Mr. Kernahan tries for a picture of Watts-Dunton in five successive essays from different points of view, in each one capturing some characteristic attitude of the elusive sitter, but in none presenting a steady full view of the face. What he brings out most effectively with many a subtle stroke is the nature of Watts-Dunton's relations with Swinburne. With the instinct of a biographical artist he notes the former's "deeply-breathed 'Ah'" as his most expressive signal of appreciation: "Often it was his only comment when Swinburne, head erect, eyes ashine, and voice a-thrill, had in the past stolen into the same room—noiseless in his movements, even when excited—to chant to us some new and noble poem, carried like an uncooled bar of glowing iron direct from the smithy of his brain, and still intoning and vibrating with the deep bass of the hammer on the anvil, still singing the red fire-song of the furnace whence it came."

His "Lord Roberts" he admits is not a portrait but a bit of adoring commemoration. His chapter on the explorer and mountaineer Edward Whymper, on the other hand, is a masterly piece of delineation performed with a cutting precision of stroke that reminds one a little of Suetonius executing the portraits of the Cæsars. In his "Oscar Wilde" there are some signs of indecision: he sets out intending to be just and decidedly more sympathetic than the British public generally, but he cannot resist the temptation to paint in the insincerity and the obstreperous vanity of his subject, and the effect is somewhat dubious and dauby.

"When Stephen Phillips Read," a brief study, is an attempt, and a surprisingly successful one, to present the pure poetic soul of the man as revealed in the exaltation

and ardor of his voice. In these later days there is something extraordinary in a poet who in casual conversation defines poetry as "the sublimation, the exaltation of the senses into the soul. It is the forgetting of self, the losing, merging, and fusing of one's very individuality into pure thought, and into visions and revelations of the Truth and the Loveliness that are of God." Kernahan has portrayed here what the mystical Blake might have put on canvas and labelled "a picture of the divine fire." It is not an easy feat. It is quite beyond the reach of a literary gossip. One respects the man who can compass it, and wonders what sort of personality it is that mirrors so brightly the images of fine things, the kindness of warriors, the loyalty of friends, the glow of the poet's mind.

In the last of his portraits, that of S. J. Stone, rector of a London church and author of some famous hymns, Mr. Kernahan presents full length and with admirable energy of expression an example of manly modern Christian chivalry, and incidentally he avows that his long friendship with Stone is the best chapter in his own experience. Stone was not a great genius, but for his friend he filled full of pure and valorous meaning the words, "a Christian, a Churchman, an Englishman, and a gentleman." After all that our young radicals have been saying against the ideas denoted by these four terms, Mr. Kernahan succeeds in leaving one with a strong impression that a man who is genuinely a gentleman, an Englishman, a Churchman, and a Christian has shaped his personality into a character in about as effective a series of moulds as society has yet produced for the humanization of our branch of the simian family. Mr. Kernahan is not so much of a Tory as Stone was, who, like a certain old courtier, would have approved the Order of the Garter because "there is no pretence of damned merit about it"; but one cannot fail to connect his clear and swift recognitions of human excellencies with his declared devotion to Stone's general standards. He paints his realistic portraits with precision because he has something like an ideal man in his mind's eye. He understands what has never dawned upon most of our tedious literary gossips and our loose amorphous-minded literary radicals, namely, that seven-eighths of the value of an appreciation depends directly upon the value of the appreciator, that the definition and measurement of a talent or a character can be made only by a man with measures and definitions, and finally that "a winsome style in prose comes from a man whose heart is good."

The Light that Never Was?

Long Live the King. By Mary Roberts Rinehart. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Wolf-Lure. By Agnes and Egerton Castle. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

William, by the Grace of God. By Marjorie Bowen. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

The Wanderers. By Mary Johnston. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

ANY person with the knack of docketing might find it necessary to use a number of pigeon-holes in order to straighten out the historical or "costume" novel. There would be the story that tries to revivify the past, the story that tries to interpret life by way of the past, the story that simply makes use of the properties and atmosphere