

Perhaps

Germany, The Next Republic? by Carl W. Ackerman.
New York: George H. Doran Co. \$1.50.

WHEN the more impartial post-bellum histories of the war are written, volumes like Mr. Ackerman's will have become invaluable source-books. And this solely because of the facts presented, not because of any insight. Subtract the official speeches and notices which are common property to all investigators even today, the individual opinion, the more familiar historical events, the quotations from newspapers and magazines—what remains is, to be sure, meagre. Yet it is fresh and authentic. If a conventional journalist, Mr. Ackerman is also an honest and enterprising one. During the first two years of the war he was sympathetic towards Germany and believed her, as he is frank in stating, "conscientiously defending herself against a group of powers which desired her destruction." He was therefore able to obtain with Count Tisza, Generals von Kluck and von Falkenhayn, Zimmermann and von Jagow, interviews of a less stereotyped and "inspired" kind than those given to the guardedly hostile correspondents who could not forget Belgium. Indefatigable in his search for news, he contrived to avoid the worst of the "special writer" clichés. He tells of the Bavarian General von Kirchoff who, when presented by the Kaiser with a high military order, broke down and wept, saying that the decoration was not his but his soldiers'. In spite of their gallant sacrifice of life and fortune for the Fatherland, the General lamented, they were still called "Huns and Barbarians" by the enemy. Mr. Ackerman tells of the illuminating notice on the wall of the chief telegraph office in Berlin, dated August 2nd, 1914, to the effect that, because of a state of war, service was suspended between Germany and these nine countries—England, France, Russia, Japan, Belgium, Italy, Servia, Montenegro and Portugal. Eventually, as we know, all these enemies were added to Germany's long list, but the notice was only less remarkable in its haste than in its suspiciously accurate prevision of later events. With random generosity Mr. Ackerman supplies these and other equally pregnant facts.

Now to disagree with Mr. Ackerman's interpretation of his facts does not necessarily imply that one maintains the opposed or pacifistic view. It means rather a criticism of his plausibility. For instance, his shift from a sympathetic attitude towards Germany to an openly hostile one is not sufficiently explained. Even when Mr. Ackerman gives two pages of reasons why we did wisely and correctly in declaring war on Germany the argument is thin, without grip. There is no real emotional drive back of these reasons; they seem intellectual after-thoughts. Is it not significant that not a word about Belgium can be found in these two pages? The hate motif, too, is conspicuously absent.

So many flagrant inconsistencies appear in Mr. Ackerman's book because, I believe, his viewpoint towards our entrance into the war is the result of a reasoned rather than a felt conviction. His disunity of belief is evidenced not, of course, explicitly, but by contradictory interpretations. To reconcile his early statement that Wilson's two years of diplomatic patience and appeal to public opinion did more to liberalize Germany than all of England's and France's attacks in the field with his later statement that only a crushing military victory for the Allies will free Germany of her autocratic rulers—such a task would require more dialectical skill than Mr. Ackerman possesses.

Nor do his many statements about the reaction of the German public to "inspired" governmental propaganda present an altogether unified picture. Towards the end of his book M. Ackerman speaks rather despairingly of the docility of German public opinion. Nothing, he says, can break that fatal hypnotic spell except defeat. Yet in other passages he tells of secret protest meetings, labor revolts, subterranean pamphlets, etc. There the implication plainly is that the German people, after many disillusionings and much bitterness, are beginning to think for themselves. Which is true? There is, again, a similar inconsistency in his discussion of the vexed food problem. If Germany is compelled to go through two more winters, he writes, on one page, she will certainly have to surrender. Barring, of course, anything untoward like a separate peace or a decisive submarine spurt, most students of Germany's food and industrial situation agree that the sands of her economic hour-glass have nearly run out. But on another page Mr. Ackerman takes a very different tone when he writes, "Germany can keep on until she is decisively defeated militarily." Correspondents are perhaps tempted to reach conclusions so stimulating to the ready militarists of the United States, yet it is doubtful if there is any conscious trimming of conclusions in Mr. Ackerman's book. One cannot believe that he wishes to be other than wholly fair. His inconsistencies are those of the direct and blundering type which come from an inner bewilderment.

To the alert reader, however, Mr. Ackerman presents a more veracious picture of Germany than would be presented by any forced attempt to keep his sketch in one color. He does humanize the specious Gargantua of popular newspapers, the hydra-headed giant who never fails to think as one and to act as one, always malicious and always cruel. Mr. Ackerman confirms what even the most unenlightened opinion has recently come to see is more than a suspicion, that there are two Germanys to-day, the governmental and official minority clique of proud boasts and dull perceptions, and the saddened, much embittered, hungry and rebellious Germany of the masses. Even Prince zu Hohenlohe can write today, "Confidence in those who are directing the affairs of the Empire is beginning to crumble among the German people." The submarine, a failure; a fourth winter agony of war, almost a certainty—even in spite of Italy and Russia, in fact almost because of them. Gone is the old pan-Slavic menace, the trump card of the militarists. Gone is the once "sacred union" of the political factions. Gone even is much of the ancient arrogance and well-directed venom. Instead of singing hymns of hate, the people dream now of rapprochements and peace. Mr. Ackerman reveals the early origins of this ever-growing fissure in the outwardly solid German edifice.

Especially in his discussion of diplomatic events does he show the beginning of the division of Germany into two main camps. When many of us in America were wondering why Germany seemed to be deliberately breaking her first submarine pledges—a record which culminated in the sinking of the *Sussex*—it was not known that the foreign office, under Hollweg, was doing its level best to live up to them, but that the Admiralty gave orders wholly on its own account. The attitude of the Admiralty was this, to go ahead on its own responsibility and then use the Foreign Office merely to extricate it from the results of deliberate bad faith. When the *Sussex* was sunk, for instance, Zimmermann, however much of a poor diplomatist otherwise, was astonished. He refused to believe, honestly refused to believe, that a German submarine was respon-

sible until presented with irrefragable evidence. Every time a crisis arose the Admiralty and the Junkers tried to capture public opinion by placing the blame either on England for her blockade or on us for our munitions shipments. To put it brutally, the game was to exploit the people's sufferings, making either England or America responsible. But for several months after the Sussex episode this amiable plan failed to work. The people were suspicious, and Hollweg had his temporary victory for moderation. So bitter, indeed, was the internal fight between the von Tirpitz party and the liberal opposition, Mr. Ackerman reports, that the fearful English blows on the Somme were overshadowed. The struggle that interested Germany was the domestic political struggle. Wilson tried to encourage the Hollweg party in his note to all belligerents asking them to state their war aims. The Junkers shuffled the issue and "stalled," hoping that the Entente would blunder. Mr. Ackerman is not especially kind to Allied diplomacy. "Nothing which had happened during the year," he writes, "so solidified the German nation as the Allies' replies to Berlin and President Wilson. It proved to the German people that their Government was waging a defensive war." In other words, the public backed the von Tirpitz party whom hitherto they had begun to doubt when it said its object was just to defend the Fatherland. The submarine was unleashed.

But the struggle has started again in much the same terms, now that the submarine has failed to bring peace. Why does not the government say the magic word Belgium, the German masses are again asking. The old doubt as to whether it is or is not a defensive war has arisen. President Wilson's assurance that there is to be no "war after the war" is the one statesmanlike utterance since February that has helped to increase the German people's suspicion of their own Government. Yet it is not sufficient, and our "bitter end" newspapers are still merrily playing the Junkers' game. Certainly we shall never liberalize Germany by talking of historic injustices, by anticipatory dividing up of Turkey and amateurish solutions of the Austro-Hungarian tangle, by raking up old atrocity tales and breathing mighty words about indemnities. If Mr. Ackerman's book proves nothing else, it proves that much. Yet it proves more. It proves that the German people are desperately weary of the war, that they have begun to suspect their government's omniscience. If the submarine, the disunion in Russia and the military successes in Italy cannot bring peace, they are asking, if anything that the military machine can do can ever bring it. This lack of faith, this suffering and suspicion, are all Allied assets, if we care to make use of them. One year, two years—and Germany must collapse, her economic and industrial life run out, with no more "menace" left in her than in an exploded shell. Without markets, without access to raw materials, she is ruined, and the people of Germany are beginning to realize it. It has been said before, but will bear constant reiteration—there is a fund of bitterness and misery in Germany today. Mr. Ackerman's description of it is of something pitiful and tragic. At present most of Germany's anger at her plight is focused against her external enemies. With tact, with generosity, with honesty, with vision and imagination, we could turn this anger of the German people against the autocracy. We can kill the myth of a defensive war. Then indeed we may not have to wait generations before Germany is the next Republic. Germany is anxious to be free, but anxious also not to be powerless.

H. S.

Mr. Hunecker's Zoo

Unicorns, by James Hunecker. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.75.

MR. HUNEKER'S thirteenth book finds him still in the full flood of his eager, lusty appreciations. He is our gourmand of literature and art, with an enormous appetite, and an unflagging gusto of palate. At any hour of day he is ready to sit down to a full course dinner of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Each book is a banquet, with the proteids, carbohydrates, fats, acids, of cultural nourishment distributed in a scientific manner. No one could put away more calories of spiritual energy than Mr. Hunecker. He has the air of taking you to an opulent restaurant. He runs over the menu card with his practised eye. He knows what to order, he knows what is best, and you let him gorge you with the admirable meal. How many new and spicy dishes from the cultural cuisine of nineteenth-century Europe did we first learn of from James Hunecker! How many of our first appreciations were infected by his exuberance! And if it was usually Mr. Hunecker who was the first to be cordial, have we not seen most of his cordialities ratified by general approval?

After all that he has done for us, it seems a little ungrateful to be bored with *Unicorns*. The title beguiles, but the book contains only an unrelated series of causeries and reviews that have appeared in various papers during the last ten years, about Macdowell, Artzibashef, Cézanne, James Joyce, George Moore, Remy de Gourmont, Henry James, and others. Why they are all unicorns, or why they are any more unicornish than the "egoists" or "iconoclasts," the first chapter does not explain, and we are left to wonder if post-modern music has not corrupted even Mr. Hunecker's sense of literary form. Mr. Hunecker is not only a gourmand but an omnivorous gossip, and both his gossip and his reminiscence begin to run a little thin. Now that he has given us a book with scarcely a new magical name to confound and fascinate us, is it to be his misfortune to find his public, whose taste he has so insistently stretched, turning hypercritical on him? Now that he has ceased to tickle our palates with new and exciting flavors, is our fickle heart going to punish him? We begin to wonder if there is not something provincial in a cosmopolitanism which takes such sheer delight in the mere cultural menus. *Unicorns* is strewn more thickly than ever with names and allusions, apparently from the animal joy of having them to strew. On one page, Mr. Finck, Mary Hallock, Debussy, Mozart, Philip Hale, Arthur Rimbaud, Rene de Ghil, Illowski, Richard Strauss, Scriabine and Modest Altschuler. On another, Proudhon, Rabelais, de Gourmont, Baudelaire, Barrès, Rousseau. Open anywhere at random, and you will find on one page more names, quotations, references than any mind could possibly have anything to say about in a dozen pages. Mr. Hunecker has really never gotten over that juvenility which makes every review or criticism a kind of show-window exhibit of everything one has in stock on one's intellectual shelves. The objection to this gluttonous allusiveness is that the unacquainted reader is touched with depression at this vast learning, while the acquainted reader demands a closer significance than this light skipping touch.

How very skipping that touch may be Mr. Hunecker betrays in confessions like this from the paper on Artzibashef, "As I can't read Russian, I am forced to fall back on translations, and they seldom give an idea of personal rhythm, unless it be a Turgenev translating into Russian