

Morale

Morale, the Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct, by G. Stanley Hall. New York: D. Appleton and Co.

THE late war enabled a utilitarian age to find at last a practical use for art and philosophy. It found useful employment for artists in camouflage painting, and put philosophers to work finding popular reasons to despise the institutions and achievements of the enemy and to justify the policies of the Allies. Now, whatever may have been the practical value of these praiseworthy efforts of philosophers to help win the war, they do not seem to have produced any books of which philosophy in the future is likely to be proud. At any rate this book of President Hall, though it has a distinctly philosophic sub-title, can most fairly be classified as a slightly belated war book, with some chapters on labor, feminism, the League of Nations and the red peril, to fit the present hour.

As *morale* has recently become one of the fashionable words, a philosophic or psychologic analysis of what, if anything, it denotes, would have been a great boon. But President Hall is too eager to get down to practical details of games, songs, and lists of slogans for soldiers to waste much time on definitions and proof. Declaring that morale is "not entirely definable" (p. 10), he finds it sufficient to tell us that it consists in the "cult of condition," "being in tip-top condition." Here an old-fashioned philosopher might object that, except as to bodily health, this is dreadfully vague, and that being fit cannot be the supreme rule of life, because we must first decide what things we ought to be fit for. But these objections may be dismissed as scholastic. By disregarding the few passages which explicitly deal with philosophic themes, the critical reader can find implicit in this volume two distinct philosophies whose incomplete fusion is the cause of the muddled condition of contemporary popular thought.

On one hand we have the old American *laissez-faire* individualism, and on the other is the philosophy of the supremacy of the state or national will which war conditions imposed on us, in spite of the fact that it comes from Hegel, Treitschke, Bernhardi, et al. It certainly requires no stretch of the imagination to suppose that it is an officer of the German general staff who is urging that the influence of the army morale officers should extend to the civilian body (p. 176), that the War Department should take up such work vigorously, and that "there should be much confidential literature, and yet the general press should be furnished with everything that soldiers and civilians ought to know" [in the judgment of the Department]. Somewhat more Jesuitical is the advice to take a leaf out of the Mormon's book and send out young men contaminated with radical leanings as missionaries to make propaganda for orthodox conservatism (p. 241). But this enthusiasm for military morale, and the aggressive affirmation that the point of view of morale is superior to that of conscience, is all spoiled by outcroppings of the traditional American liberalism which causes President Hall to withdraw in one part of the book what he confidently asserts in the other. Thus, in line with the new dispensation, internationalism is characterized as a sin and a curse, but in line with the Americanism of James Russell Lowell and others, love of mankind is regarded as higher than patriotism; indeed, one who loves his country more than mankind

will very strongly tend to love party more than country and his class interests more than those of the community (p. 313). Thus also it is asserted that the war has made us respect the military system (p. 29), and that the ideal soldier is the ideal man *par excellence*; and yet it is admitted that moral corruption, greed, profiteering and crass superstition à la Oliver Lodge, follow every war (pp. 147, 230). "War makes men a little more careless, more or less disenchanted with woman and life" (p. 114). As the point of view of morale is superior to that of conscience, the conscientious objectors are naturally wretches, masochists, etc., in possession of a "suspicious amount of money." But, after all there is the old fugitive slave law, and Dr. Hall as a good Northerner is compelled to admit that sometimes people are right in following their conscience and refusing to obey the law. The interests of morale demand keeping spies in Germany (p. 125), but the traditional American aversion to spying crops up a few pages later.

In the smaller portion of the book devoted more directly to civilian affairs, the safe, sane and conservative views of the generation of McKinley, Hanna and Harding remain relatively unaffected by the new militaristic philosophy or by anything else of recent occurrence. Labor is entitled to an adequate food supply, to the privilege of marriage and family life, recreation, and even intellectual development, but if it tries to profiteer (!) millions of Asiatic toilers will be imported. The whole question of democracy in the government of industry is beyond the author's complacent horizon. In the chapter on prohibition we learn the startling psychologic fact that strike meetings are a substitute for the conviviality of the saloon (p. 224). As a representative of the older generation President Hall does not wax enthusiastic about the lady voter. He still believes that the best woman is the one who has the most children (p. 248). But in his views on religion he gives expression to sentiments to which Senator Harding would certainly not subscribe: "Religion, which is one of the world's chief agents for sublimating sex, has always tended more or less, not only in ancient orgies but also in the history of great revivals, to lapse into grossness" (pp. 264-5). "No human institution is so conservative of things outgrown as is religion" (p. 346). There are also brave words to the effect that belief in an objective personal deity is no more necessary than belief in an objective personal devil, and that faith in another world has been moribund since the decay of the belief in an actual hell. In the end, however, President Hall's religious radicalism, like that of a great many academic radicals, is mainly verbal. It consists in a "restatement of the essential old dogmas;" and to the eyes of the unregenerate there are no obvious advantages in this process of putting new labels on the old tin cans of dogma. Of what advantage is it to substitute "developmental urge" for God, "the subconscious" for the soul, and "natural selection" for divine providence, if the former function the same as the latter, punish the sinner, etc.? A generation ago the people who used the newer terms had a comforting belief that their dogmas were not only superior in point of being the latest, but also that they were proved by scientific biology—just as the older generation of theologians had an undisturbed belief in the superiority of Christianity because it was a religion based on evidence. But the newer generation of scientists has little use for the evolutionary dogmas to which President Hall clings. They flatly reject

sexual selection (which figures prominently in his chapter on Feminism), are sceptical about the inheritance of acquired characteristics, and bring no support whatever to the belief in a universal "upward and onward." Did not Huxley himself show how empty of ethical meaning is the phrase "survival of the fittest"? If we are to accept President Hall's scorn for "the philanthropy and the medical arts that keep the unfit alive," why not keep the terms of the older theologians? They at least had definite views as to who are the unfit or sinners.

President Hall has a deservedly high reputation as a scientific psychologist, and some of the psychologic explanations in this volume are undeniably ingenious. But as to the reality of the facts he explains it is not so easy to be certain. In what has been going on in India and Ireland as well as in Eastern Europe, one can doubt whether frightfulness in war has really received its coup de grace. Also, in discussing a question like the relative effectiveness of prophylaxis and moral suasion as means of reducing the ravages of venereal disease, it might be better to refer to the available statistics. But considerations of fact are, after all, not primary in the author's regard. He believes that facts "cannot and must not" change certain treasured beliefs (p. 367).

Unlike some other of President Hall's books, this one is written almost entirely in English. The words vicariate, nisus, adjuvant, erethic, calentures, projicient, apocatastosis, henotheistically, etc., occur infrequently. Perhaps they are given just a little airing and exercise to prevent them becoming atrophied from disuse. It would be unfair to imply that there are not many notable passages in the book. A really noble one is that about death being the tabula rasa, and the holocausts of war intensifying the consciousness of nescience (p. 53). But the two passages that best characterize the book as a whole are

"gassing, too, is bad on morale" (p. 27),

and

"nothing is more offensive to a healthy soul than to read or hear the platitudes spun to such tedious lengths" (p. 108).

PHILONOUS.

Thirty Years Ago

The Cleveland Era. A Chronicle of the New Order in Politics, by Henry Jones Ford. [The Chronicles of America, Volume 44.] New Haven: Yale University Press.

THIS is not a eulogy of Grover Cleveland; it is not a biography of him, although a fresh brief account of his life is included. But never before in such brief compass, and only once or twice in five times the space, has so satisfactory a picture been given of the part played by this sturdy American in the political life of the nation. And in no previous account has this particular view of Cleveland been presented.

In the course of the past fifty years three Presidents have captured the popular imagination and held it in such a way as to make competition useless for a time. Except for these three, no American citizen has ever entirely filled the public eye for even a brief period. During the period of their ascendancy each of these men has attempted to lead the nation into unaccustomed paths and each has lost control of his political party by so doing. Of the three

Cleveland seemed to make the most signal failure. Perhaps it was in a measure because he was a forerunner for Roosevelt and Wilson. But in this account by Mr. Henry Jones Ford we find a deeper reason.

It is this. Cleveland rose to prominence as a conscientious public official, in Buffalo and in Albany doing his duty. Now this more frequently than not consisted in restraining men from performing illegal or unjust acts; in pointing out things that ought not to be done. So, too, in the Presidency, Cleveland opposed the pension graft, gallantly and within limits effectively; opposed senatorial dictation of appointments stubbornly, and in the case of the appointment of Chief Justice White with facile irony; opposed the free silver movement to the point of risking national bankruptcy and finally achieving the absolute ruin of the political party of which he was the leader. In these matters Cleveland unquestionably chose the part of wisdom. They mark the man utterly immune from party virus or love of mere personal triumph. But by themselves they do not mark the statesman. Definite proposals to meet the needs of the country in the way of an elastic currency, the needs of the farmers for more extended credit, the needs of the laborer for a less number of working hours; these are not found. True, there was the Cleveland advocacy of a low tariff; upon that it is assumed he pointed the way. But did he? As we view it now it seems rather that here again it was primarily an opposition of his to Republican tariffs and their way of making them, rather than a clear view of a new land that he had visioned. As he himself said in his memorable message it was a condition not a theory that he was dealing with; and the Wilson bill that had his approval was, as Taussig has pointed out, a moderate protective tariff.

One is puzzled at the sub-title after reading the book. "The new order in politics" appears in this narrative of the years 1885-1897 to consist of the struggle of Cleveland against a system that bore all others to the wall and him, too, at the end; if so, the new order consisted of an emphatic protest. This is hardly the place given to Cleveland by those who have previously written of this period, but the difference is, I think, one of emphasis or perhaps of the author's interest. Mr. Ford does not see these years crowded with personalities and Cleveland as the protagonist of Good against Evil. He has conceived of the government of the United States as a great machine working cumberously and now and then having grave difficulty because of breaks in the mechanism. He pictures the various public figures of the period at the task of directing, repairing, cleaning this great machine. He finds some negligent, many ignorant, a few grossly in error in judgment. In his sketch of the evils of later reconstruction it is the system, not any individual, that is held up to public condemnation. But taking such a view of government in the period covered by this book he has given a novel view of some of the actors and has arrived in several cases at a more truthful conclusion than have some of his predecessors in their narratives of these years. Quite naturally he gives emphasis to the work of Thomas B. Reed who found a way to run the machine more effectively in 1890. It is surprising that in a book covering this period a portrait of McKinley appears but no portrait of Reed.

Writing less with moral indignation than with the sorrow of a scientist Mr. Ford wastes few words in harsh denunciation. He does speak of "the notorious demagogue, General Butler," and of "the gentle cynic, Matthew Quay." He is more severe in his treatment of Benjamin Harrison. He points out that Grant and Hayes stood out against