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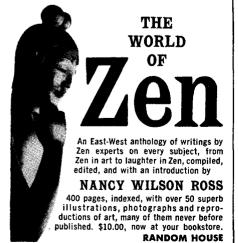
THE REPORTER

Puzzle #23



Acrostician-

CHARLTON HESTON



she might be glad that I was at last a man, she could not help grieving over the awkward adolescent who had depended on her so completely.

But the following Sunday I found I did not want to go to Mass, and at the first and only political meeting I attended I had to be rescued from a passionate young man who called me a traitor. After that, it was friends who believed I had done wrong in opposing the hunger strike, and a girl who said bitterly when we met in the street, "I hear you don't believe in God any longer." I was still so young and easily hurt

that I had to explain all over again what it was I really believed.

It took me a long time to realize what my mother had seen in the first glimpse of me, that I had crossed another shadow line and that I should never again be completely at my ease with the people I loved, in their introverted religion and introverted patriotism. I had got out of one prison, but there were many others I had to escape from. I suspect she saw it all, in the way mothers do, and understood the consequences for me better than I have ever been able to do since.

Lost in Translation

FRANCIS STEEGMULLER

T is well known that translation ■ is a thankless task. Some of the reasons are inherent in the nature of the work. It is only natural for a reviewer to stress the mistakes in a translation, rare though they may be, and to take for granted the most felicitous renderings-precisely because they are triumphantly unobtrusive. It is also natural for a reviewer to blame a translator for a mediocre text, particularly if he is unable to compare it with the original, which may be worse than mediocre. A publisher naturally expects a translator to provide a readable text, and since a translation is usually paid for at a certain rate per English word (in this country a cent and a half per word is generally considered adequate), a great deal of a translator's work is actually unpaid for-his necessary editorial excisions, the rearrangements he must make and the paraphrases that are called for.

In connection with a recent development in book publishing, however, those editorial functions of translators are being abused and at the same time are becoming in themselves an abuse. The market for popular treatments of important themes is widening, and this field is the scene of increasing competition among publishers. Some of them have hit on the idea of issuing versions of scholarly books stripped of all scholarly apparatus and confined only to

the baldest results of a given historian's or scientist's investigation, omitting what is for the serious reader the essence of study: i.e., the methods and bypaths by which these results have been arrived at. In the case of foreign books, this task of stripping-which, if justifiable at all, should at least be entrusted to an expert in the field-is usually confided to the translator, who thus joins the publisher in treading unholy ground. The book is published as being "translated" from the original. Sometimes the word "adapted" or "edited" is added, but the unwary reader is given the impression that the book is essentially the original put into English, and that any editorial changes were made for the sake of improving the style.

What the little word "adapted" or "edited" may mean, or what its absence may conceal, is exemplified in three works that have lately come on the market. Mozart and His Times, by Erich Schenk, edited and translated by Richard and Clara Winston (Knopf), is a book of 452 pages. Paul Henry Lang, who reviewed it unfavorably in the New York Herald Tribune "Book Review" for January 17, 1960, felt compelled, a few months later, to apologize publicly to Herr Schenk, having discovered the American book to be a "travesty" of the almost 800-page excellent German original.

(Continued on page 60)

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Frederick the Great, by Ludwig Reiners, translated and adapted by Lawrence P. R. Wilson (Putnam), was reviewed in the Saturday Review of October 22, 1960, by Professor Joachim Remak of Lewis and Clark College. "The term [adapted], it appears, covers the deletion of long passages and short sentences ' said Professor Remak. "It covers the transposition of whole pages . . . changes of meaning and of fact . . . insertion of large quantities of the translator's ideas and prose . . . the introduction of a variety of errors and mistranslations . . . the successful demolition of the author's wit and style."

In the case of the *Mozart*, one of the "editors and translators" replied to the critic, virtually admitting his charges, but justifying them on the ground of wishing the book to reach a large public. The "translator and adaptor" of *Frederick the Great* replied to his critic more convincingly, setting forth the impossibility of rendering the German literally; nevertheless, he clearly went further than mere improvement of style and correction or errors, and the fact remains that his English version has an eviscerated sound.

THERE CAN BE no doubt that my third exhibit, The Goncourt Brothers, by André Billy, translated by Margaret R. B. Shaw (Horizon), is a wretched mangling of a good French text. Miss Shaw, who at the order of the English publisher had performed a major cutting operation (unavowed by the publishers on the book's jacket), and who had subsequently been admonished by British and American reviewers, has recently raised her voice in rather comical protest: it seems that her publisher had mangled her! "When I secured a copy," she wrote in an aggrieved letter to the (London) Times Literary Supplement, "I was not a little startled to find that a translation. with so many excisions about which I was never consulted, had been published under my name."

In each of those three cases a publisher's disingenuousness has been exposed, and in each case a translator has been rapped for abusing his function. Publishers and translators, abstain! Reviewers, continue alert! Readers, beware!



They Little Noted Nor Long Remembered

MARCUS CUNLIFFE

EUROPE LOOKS AT THE CIVIL WAR: AN ANTHOLOGY, edited by Belle Becker Sideman and Lillian Friedman. Orion Press. \$6

There is a familiar version of Europe's reaction to the American Civil War: gallant support for the Union from Lancashire cotton workers, despite their own hardships; courageous sympathy expressed by some European liberals; otherwise, cold and cynical hostility on the part of the aristocracy in general, and in particular on the part of the British and French governments; contempt and derision from the London *Times* and from *Punch*; and so on.

This anthology reinforces the familiar view, and with a good deal of justification. I am not sure that the collection will appeal greatly to that hypothetical animal known as the general reader, or to the severe creature known as the specialist. It is an anthology of snippets, culled on no very coherent principle and assembled in a rough chronological order that involves confusion and repetition. The editors' annotations are frugal. Offhand comments in letters, eyewitness accounts (not strictly relevant in every case), newspaper articles, diplomatic correspondence, testimonials from the workingmen of Manchester and the students of Perugia-all are thrown into the record.

Nevertheless, a pattern emerges: well-wishers versus (and outnumbered by) ill-wishers. Some of the elements in the pattern are fairly novel, and of considerable incidental interest. There is, for instance, an ardently Confederate letter from the French poet Alfred de Vigny to a former American mistress who had gone back to live in the South. There are lazy-minded comments by Charles Darwin (like some other geniuses a dullard in his spare time),

generous ones by Robert Browning, and eccentric ones by John Ruskin. There is a remarkable bitter poem by Ibsen on the death of Lincoln. There are rather flatfooted newspaper contributions by Dostoevsky, and extremely shrewd observations by Marx. As a whole, though, the anthology gives us the mixture as before; and American readers at any rate will probably feel that Europe comes out of it badly. Such spleen! Such misinformation! Such pessimism!

 $\mathbf{Y}^{ ext{ET}}$ the materials are present in the anthology to provide a somewhat different emphasis. In the first place, why should Europeans in the 1860's have wished for a strong American Union? Discount the more odious forms of snobbery and malevolence; there still remained plausible reasons for believing that an intact United States would be more dangerous to Europe than a fragmented one. An intact America might follow the aggressive policies that Lincoln's Secretary of State Seward appeared to be advocating. It might seize Canada and Cuba, and go adventuring in Latin America. A Union permanently broken into two or more pieces would offer no such threats.

In the second place, why should Europeans have believed that the Union could ever be restored? Historical precedent, including the events of the American Revolutionary War, argued against such a supposition. Liberal sentiment held that new nationalisms were to be applauded. Men of good will in Europe might feel not only that a nationalist rising (in the shape of the Confederacy) was being suppressed, but also that the Civil War was resolving itself into a brutal stalemate. It was the most protracted and bloody af-