

their forces; and the racial issue brought the urgency for meeting the situation at once. Mr. Trotter divides his book into three parts: the first, of ten chapters, outlining the events which led to federation; the second, of twelve chapters, dealing with the economic causes and especially with transportation, as vital to union with the west; the third a summing up. The style is clear, if not brilliant, and the list of authorities consulted reveals the labor involved in the making of a useful book, the most adequate on the subject which has yet appeared.

The Soul of a Nation

GERMANY. By GEORGE P. GOOCH. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1925. \$3.

Reviewed by SIDNEY B. FAY
Smith College

WHAT have Germans been doing and thinking during the last century, and especially during the last decade? A more adequate, unbiased, and generally satisfactory answer could hardly be desired than in this initial volume of a new series, "The Modern World," edited by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher. Mr. Gooch, from his travels in Germany, from his habit of reviewing German works, and from his previous admirable historical studies, not only gives the impression of a thorough mastery of his subject, but really has it. This is saying much, since he attempts to picture the soul of a nation which has been assailed and distracted by such a complex of hopes and fears, ambitions and memories, humiliations and sacrifices. Mr. Gooch does not often obtrude his own opinions. He is content to narrate and to explain. But he has a happy faculty for clever phrasing by which he can sum up a volume in a paragraph and a paragraph in a sentence. Only by this mastery of his subject and by this clever condensation could he have given such a remarkable survey in a single volume of the political, economic, and spiritual development of a great nation like modern Germany. From his Pishgah height he reveals a panorama which complacent Americans would do well to contemplate.

Mr. Gooch first tells succinctly the fairly well-known story of Germany's attempt and failure to secure democracy in 1848, of Bismarck's unification of small weak states into a single strong empire, of the extraordinary industrial development, of the war and final collapse. He points out that as the responsibility for the war was divided and as the struggle was disgraced by atrocities on both sides, we must abandon the delusion that either the German, or any other nation is afflicted with a double dose of original sin, or so far outside the pale of civilization that it must be treated as a pariah in the human family. Less well-known and therefore more valuable, is his analysis of the new German Constitution, the Youth Movement, the new relations of capital and labor under post-war conditions, the tendencies in literature and philosophy, and all the interesting problems and prospects in Germany as they appeared to him when he finished his manuscript, just before the election of Hindenburg. On the whole, he is optimistic, but rightly points out that Germany's future (and that of the world) depends not on the sentiments of the German people alone, but also on the treatment she receives from her neighbors and the world at large.

One of Mr. Gooch's greatest merits is his freedom from prejudice. There is an admirable balance in his book. The glorification of war and the spirit of hate in the ravings of formerly respected scholars like Gierke, Meyer, Sombart, and Lasson is effectively set forth as one of the sad phenomena of war; but it is balanced by a statement of the level-headed courage and wisdom of men like Quidde, Schücking Förster, and Nicolai. The selfish materialism by which Hugo Stinnes shrewdly profited by the flight of the mark to secure his colossal control of a fifth of the total production of Germany with no less than 1388 businesses, is balanced by the noble idealism of the billionaire Walter Rathenau; as economist, philosopher, author, and great captain of industry at the head of the German General Electric Company, Rathenau from his lofty watch tower busied himself with practical dreams for a new social order, when he was shot down by a cowardly anti-Semite assassin in June, 1922.

Reading this volume one has the impression of one walking through a museum or library,—a vast number of interesting subjects intriguing one to further study.

A Faithful Romanticist

JAMES BRANCH CABELL. By CARL VAN DOREN. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1925. \$1.

Reviewed by ARTHUR W. COLTON

IN the last half of the 19th century the conspicuous "Battle of the Books" lay between romantic and realistic, or naturalistic, novels. Mr. Howells battled for realism, it was thought not without some success. In the eighties and nineties however the romantics had the best of it in popular favor. But "after 1902" says Mr. Van Doren "the (romantic) style began to decline rapidly in energy and popularity. Only James Branch Cabell remained faithful, revising, strengthening, deepening his art with irony and beauty, until it became an art peculiar to himself." In 1884 the most popular novel was "Ben Hur," and at the end of the century the "best sellers" were "Janice Meredith," "Hugh Wynne," "When Knighthood Was in Flower," "Prisoners of Hope," "Richard Carvel," "Monsieur Beaucaire." But for twenty years past the realists have held the field, and at present the one who most enjoys the flood of the market along with the esteem of the critics, is probably Mr. Sinclair Lewis. The Middle Western realists lead both in power and popularity.

That romantic era of the eighties and nineties was also the era of the Southern sentimentalists (Page, Cable, Craddock, Hopkinson Smith) and humorists (Harris and Edwards). Undiluted sentiment from the South such as Page's "Meh Lady," was, to me at least, less attractive than the humor of Edwards. When the two were skilfully united as in Allen's "Kentucky Cardinal," you got something very nice. Cable was of course more than a sentimentalist and Uncle Remus more than humor.

If the weakness of the Southern romantics was sentimentalism, the weakness of the Middle Western realists is dullness, too much plodding observation unilluminated of a spark, too stolid a culling of "simples." With a broad clown's back turned broadly to the glory of the stars.

Finally, now, there seems to be a tendency on the part of both schools to satire—to results more pungent and probably as truthful as any dry light photography, more pungent and with more vitamins in the blood than the old syrupy romance. Mr. Cabell is coming into his own and Mr. Lewis has arrived with a crash, both invigorated by their scorn. They shoot barbed arrows into the insensitive flesh of the body social. Welcome the era of the satirist! The more savagely he may get under the skin of society the better. It is a sluggish beast which harbors unclean parasites and is appallingly self-satisfied. You cannot hope to irritate it seriously but to interest it temporarily is worth while. The author will profit even if society does not, and very likely society will.

* * *

The scorn of both Mr. Lewis and Mr. Cabell evidently has some biographical causes. Mr. Cabell was a young brother of the Southern romantics. His first novel appeared in 1902, the year which Mr. Van Doren notes as the beginning of the end of that school. Most of the successful romancers followed the market, or tried to do so, and turned realistic if not doctrinal. Mr. Churchill became political and religious in Vermont. Mr. Tarkington returned to Indiana. But Mr. Cabell, coming only at the end of the era, yet stood by its colors as if knighthood were still in flower, faithful to the faith that the only true art is "to write perfectly about beautiful happenings." Has not his long and faithful journey through the desert of unappreciation had something to do with that "strengthening and deepening of his art with irony and beauty"? If he had been popular all these years, would he ever have achieved his irony? "Figures of Earth," "Domnei," "Jurgen," and "The High Place," are something very different from the sentiment and romance of the eighties and nineties. Those innocuous confections have ripened under neglect and developed an alcoholic content. His romance is a romance with a "kick" in it. The sentiment has been salted. In place of mellow humor there is mordant wit and scholarship.

Mr. Cabell is no longer negligible. He is a

significant phenomenon in several directions. His ambition to "write perfectly of beautiful happenings" has been achieved to the extent that he has mastered the art of writing. He has that "style" the lack of which Mr. Brownell lately pointed out as the thing most lacking in current American literature. "Beautiful happenings" is an idea so vague as to be hardly an idea at all, but the search for them has sent him ranging the ages, from mythical Manuel of Poictesme down to Manuel's latest Virginian descendant. The most beautiful of happenings is to fall in love, and hence the lovers of the ages are the main concern. He has built up during these twenty years not only a large imagined world, curiously symbolic, allusive, fantastic, with more folk lore and sorcery than history in its parti-colored composition—but also a philosophy of life and of literature, explicit in the volume called "Beyond Life." Wit, humorist, satirist, scholar, novelist, philosopher, critic, with creative abundance, a flexible style adequate to any call, and a taste for erotic implications—he is the nearest analogue to Anatole France in this part of the world.

* * *

That philosophy of life would be more devastating if it were less decorative, and that theory of literature more persuasive if it were less partisan. *Vanitas vanitatum* is the most musical of sighs, and distaste for things of the present and passing day is expression both of a temperament and an attitude. Hotspur's opinion of the gentleman who objected to unhandsome corpses borne "betwixt the wind and his nobility" was the opinion of an over-violent realist on a misplaced attitude. Mr. Brownell maintains that what we need for the cure of ignobility in life as well as in literature is style; Mr. Cabell that it is romance. I am half-way of the conviction that they are both right, and that Mr. Cabell has the most plausible theory and defense extant of romance. But this argument would be more effective if he seemed aware that there is a theory and defense of realism in life and literature, which is quite as plausible. Its advocates—who would benefit by an acquaintance with Mr. Cabell's theory of romance—used to complain that "common persons" only cared for the rubbish of romance; that the slavey and the shop girl wanted to read about haughty princesses and belted earls, the clerk about wild adventures in vast wild places. So complains Mr. Cabell that the "common person" likes best to read novels about lives like his own and people like himself. My own impression is that both complaints represent more chagrin than observation; that there is no "common person," no kind of taste or imagination that is everybody's or generally most people's, but that of a million novel readers more of them naturally like some kind of romance than naturally like any real realism.

First class art never reproduces its own background—This is undisputable—What mankind has generally agreed to accept as first class art has never been a truthful reproduction of the artist's era.

If "Madame Bovary," "Fathers and Sons," "Brothers Karamosov," are not first class art, what is? If the Iliad and the Divine Comedy do not truthfully reproduce the artists' era, then what is truth? If Mr. Cabell prefers "Henry Esmond" to "Vanity Fair," there are critics on both sides of that "indisputable" question. To me, and probably to most people, "Madame Bovary" seems more like first class art than "Salammbô," and on the other side, the "Scarlet Letter" more like it than the contemporaneous "Blithedale Romance." It seems to depend not on principles but on peculiarities of talent and temperament. Charles Reade wrote many novels realistic and *tendenz*, but only one great one, which was historical. "Don Quixote" reproduces realistically its background, and is both the satire of chivalry and its requiem.

* * *

If one defines realism as the portrayal of things only as they are, and romance their portrayal as they ought to be, it is not difficult to conclude that realism is stagnation and all uplift romance. Man rises from the beast by reaching after ideals. He "plays the ape of his dreams." The capacity for seeing things other and better than they are is his whole secret, and that is romance. Romance is the divine in him, and realism the energy that keeps him down. Romance seems to be a kind of heavenward fluttering leafage, and realism the sordid stationary

roots. If the tree would only discard its roots and live on its leaves, it would be the ideal tree, uplifted, reaching after the divine.

But all this is far from the "Battle of the Books." It is not the meaning of romance, nor the meaning which Mr. Cabell's romances exemplify. There is something of the demiurge in all creative art, in every powerful novel, realistic, or romantic, or happily unclassified. To "rationally accept his limitations" is the doctrine, not of realism, but of classicism, which would reply to Mr. Cabell's doctrine: "Yes, and no one can write perfectly of beautiful happenings who does not rationally accept his limitations." The difference between the romantic and classic, said Goethe, is the difference between sickness and health. But it does not seem to me that any of these dicta are indisputable.

"It may happen, indeed, that the day will never dawn wherein honest persons may, without incurring the suspicion of illiterary or posturing, admit the long winded drivel of the 'Life and Strange Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner' to be commensurate with the title; and point out that the erotic adventures of Tom Jones are, after all, too few and too inadequately detailed to prevent his biography from being tiresome." *En revanche* one might substitute the two dramatists, over whom Mr. Cabell wakes from the habit of distaste into eloquence of praise, thus: "It may be the day will never dawn when honest persons may without such suspicion admit the windy bellowings of Marlowe to be commensurate with that epithet; and point out that the wit of Wycherley is not, after all, enough to save his eternal rakishness from tedium, or transmute into gallantry its cold, withered and intolerable entrails." And the two commentaries would seem to be perhaps about equally silly.

I agree with Mr. Van Doren—whose excellent little book is however not as penetrative as he could, I think, if he had chosen, have made it—that the Poictesme novels ("Figures of Earth," "Domnei," "Jurgen," "The High Place") are the really fine things; and the latter day "Virginian" ("The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck," "The Cream of the Jest") rather trivial. It is in the volumes of discussion and criticism ("Beyond Life," "Straws and Prayer Books") that one has most leisure, perhaps, from other interest to notice the grace and finish of Mr. Cabell's style. Mr. Van Doren ought to succeed in drawing the attention of lovers of choice things to a writer of unquestionable distinction.

Joseph Conrad—the late novelist and seaman—is to be the inspiration for the great library and reading room in the Annex to the Seamen's Church Institute at 25 South Street, which will be built as a memorial to him according to an announcement made by Sir T. Ashley Sparks, Chairman of the Joseph Conrad Memorial Committee of the Institute.

The memorial room, which has been designed by Warren & Wetmore, architects, will be approximately 162 feet in length by 60 feet in width and will occupy the entire second floor of the Annex. It will cost approximately \$100,000, of which half will be used for building and half for endowment.

It is planned to make it a shrine for all Conrad lovers. Already the Committee has received valuable letters from Mrs. Conrad and from notable admirers and friends of the late author that are of historical value. It is the desire of the Committee to receive other material relating to Conrad that may eventually form a part of the Conrad souvenirs that will comprise part of the memorial. Mr. F. N. Doubleday has promised a special memorial edition of Mr. Conrad's work for the room.

The monthly summary for July of first editions of American and English authors most in demand as shown by the advertisements in the department, "Books Wanted," of *The Publishers' Weekly* gives the following ten as at the head of the list: J. B. Cabell, Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, William McFee, Joseph Hergesheimer, Archibald Marshall, Theodore Dreiser, and Woodrow Wilson. Commenting upon the general American demand for first editions, it is noted that political leaders like Roosevelt and Wilson never lack collectors, and the nineteenth century authors, Thoreau, Hawthorne, James and Poe, are always active.

The BOWLING GREEN

In August

WHAT is it that happens to the mind in August? It astitates. In this imperial and drowsy month it retires into a warm beaming inefficiency. It secludes in the secret splendor of its loneliness. With gently ironic amusement it watches the lively body which now pleasures in swimming, in digging, in all glistening amusement under the heavy sun. Burdened with dreams, the mind has no word. Something in it is dead, and visited only by the buzz-flies of fancy, with their green and purple wings.

The sultry ripeners of the earth is too plain a parable. Noon brims over with golden insult, a foam of sunny anger washes the garden beds. Seeds of anger sprinkle in the fertile speechless heart, seeds for winter flowers. The August mind is too stupid (or, if you will, too wise), to think in words. It receives only feelings. In the thick emptiness of night, dry insects chatter some monstrous creed. Dogs, the only determined custodians of human morals, yell sudden indignation through the woods. Dogs are born journalists; their voices are like extras of dismay.

Be patient with the slack mind of August: it is a noble time. Under the powdered ash and rubbish the spark still bites the knot. Deep in the parallel forest, fancy, the sunburnt *carbonaro*, tends his sullen fire.

To medicine the grossness of August one turns to the savagery of physical effort. Cutting down trees, spading up roots, cleaning and burning brush in the little tangled lot behind the garage, is rhubarb and soda to the spirit. Having spaded and raked and smoothed, let in the fierce caribolic sun and laid out a small gravel path as *Philosophenweg* (to straighten and restrict the ambling pace of fancy), it struck the laborer that one thing was lacking. The Buddhist, when strangeness is abroad, pastes up his shrine with clean paper to keep the ghosts of his ancestry from offense. But some others (wiser, I think), believe that the only way to placate weird spirits is to invite them in and make them at home. Seeing the little emptiness under the tent of grapevine, the gardener knew then what was needed. A bust of Pan.

A dozen years ago, outside that old stone yard on 32nd Street (the Pennsylvania Hotel was built over it afterward), there was a stone head of Pan on a tall pedestal. It stood in the doorway, grinning with queer mischief and frustration. Many commuters, who used to hasten by, must remember the gay and satiric face, the wreath of grape leaves, the small sprouting horns. When the hotel was built, Pan disappeared. There is one something like him in front of a chophouse on 44th Street. Some day, perhaps, I shall find him myself. Then we shall dedicate his grape arbor to him—perhaps by reading one of Tom Dekker's prayers in "Four Birds of Noah's Arke," which Appleton has just republished. "That a dramatist of the Elizabethan age," says the Appleton announcement, "not noted himself either for piety or virtue, should succeed in writing prayers so moving and genuine is an interesting problem of genius." Oh blessed naïveté of blurb-writers! When were any genuine prayers ever written save by men with some seed of anguish in their hearts?

But there are shrines greater than mine still waiting for a god. The other day, while I was reading E. Barrington's "Glorious Apollo," that delightfully feminine book, and amusing myself by wondering how many letters "E. Barrington" must be getting from fermenting ladies under the notion that she is a man, the telephone rang; and in consequence I found myself, soon afterward, in an enchanted place. In the gardens of a François Premier chateau, on a Long Island hilltop, there is a little open air theatre. Approaching it down long alleys of formal foliage, past rosaries and sundials and an acre of fountain pools, with a gradually increasing sense of something important to be seen, you reach the low grassy terraces, empty in the dusk. At the end of the space is a little French *temple d'amour*, graceful stone pillars surmounted

by an open dome of dainty iron filigree. Retrieved entire from some misfortuned French pleasance, there it stands; but the little Venus or Cupid that should laugh within is absent. What a strange feeling of lack that absence gave. Stretching outward on either hand were the fragrant cedar-aisles that the imagination thronged with bright nymphs and twilight music to do honor to the god. It was a whiff of eighteenth century France, miraculously captivated leagues and lifetimes from home; and if the necessary image were there—one cry of passion among the ceremonies green—old French deities would not hesitate to send their ambassadors. And what a pretty fancy, in the design of those little absurd temples: the open roof, so that even the naked goddess of fable must abide the fortunes of the weather. Perhaps there was also a savory pellet of wisdom for the mind to chew: after all these lovely artifices of landscape, these parterres and hedges and perfections of floral art—the little shrine was bare. An analogy, was it, intended by the wise seigneur? Does he mean that Beauty will never wholly reveal herself of her own accord, that what we imagine on the altar is more compelling than anything the sculptor could put?

Some time ago I wrote here about a little Café-Bar on the Boule' Miche in Paris, and of the friendly man there from whom I used to get my morning coffee. Certainly the last thing I expected was that the article would come to his notice; but the following letter arrives, so characteristic of the spirit of the Sorbonne neighborhood, that I ask no apology for reprinting it:

MONSIEUR: A la lecture de votre article, racontant vos impressions sur le bar da la Sorbonne, Boul' St. Michel a Paris, j'ai pris tout particulièrement connaissance des impressions que vous avez causées l'homme de derrière le bar, aux yeux proéminents, aimables, et endurants.

Un de vos abonnés, de passage a Paris, m'a reconnu a la lecture seule de votre article.

Je tiens a vous remercier personnellement de l'attention que vous avez eu pour moi, en me signalant a vos compatriotes d'Amérique et amis de notre chère France.

Je pourrais ajouter a votre article ceci: c'est homme qui travaille dans un bar, mais malgré sa pauvreté désire et a décidé de faire et de poursuivre ses études en droit pour se monter un jour plus utile a son pays la France et si cela est possible a son Allié les Etats-Unis.

Recevez Monsieur mes remerciements les plus chaleureuses et mes sentiments les plus respectueux.

L. B.

(Employé depuis deux ans au bar de la Sorbonne, a fait la guerre et a gagné au front la Croix des braves.)

The pleasantest story I have heard this summer is of an American man of letters who was honored, in London, by a temporary guest-membership in the Athenæum Club. One very warm afternoon he stunned his waiter by asking for iced tea. After a good deal of dismay, consultation with the upper servants, and repeated courteous inquiry as to whether he had been correctly understood, iced tea was prepared.

"I fancy, sir," said the head-waiter, as the guest-member departed, "I fancy, sir, this will constitute a precedent."

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Books and the Beau Monde

(Continued from page 57).

free wit and graceful irony which have made life worth living for the sensitive in the midst of so many stupid congregations of the unlicked, may turn sour as often before on the lips of the writer inbred among his own kind, to be extinguished for lack of proper hearers.

France and England still retain the tradition of a civilization in which literature makes a social entrée if not always a social position. The superior finish of even second-rate French and English books is perhaps a response, and the greater amenity of French and English society certainly a result. The American love of classifying, which sends all the dentists to Atlantic City, all the shoe salesmen to New York, and all the doctors to Lake Placid, and which would make one social group of merchants, another of college professors, a third of the movie folk, and society exclusively from millionaires with Grade A country houses, means that we are in danger of depriving the writer of his age-long function as lubricant for the mass and stimulant for the best. Quality in literature, which gets too little encouragement, will have least appreciation where it most expects it, and quality in living will be deprived of the elements which make it more than an assurance of good sport, good food, good clothes, and good drink.