

nate experience to be quizzed on South American conditions for several hours by one of our most distinguished Secretaries of State, and some months later under entirely different surroundings by Ambassador Bryce, just prior to his visit to South America. Both were able lawyers; but the Secretary of State carried on his cross-examination in such a manner as to produce a minimum of information. I came out of his office somewhat in doubt as to whether I had ever been in South America! At least, I was quite convinced that such information as I had accumulated was hopelessly inaccurate and that most of my statements were probably false!

On the other hand, the quiz by Ambassador Bryce, which lasted for nearly eight hours one evening and four or five hours more the next morning, at the home of a mutual friend, produced the maximum of information which it had been my business to procure during a period of nearly ten years as a student of South American affairs and a traveler in various South American countries. He even brought to mind matters I had long since forgotten. By such uncanny methods, it was possible for him to produce "The American Commonwealth," largely as a result of conversations and interrogatories.

On other occasions, I had a chance to observe Bryce's remarkable power to stimulate thought in the young men who were so fortunate as to know him. I believe that Bryce more closely resembled Socrates than has any other modern. In the first place he was a profound thinker and philosopher, interested in all aspects of the human problem. In the second place, he had the same affectionate regard as Socrates for young men who, like himself, were engaged in seeking for the truth. In the third place he was fond of asking his young disciples scores of the most difficult questions regarding the future of races and nations and governments, questions which neither he nor they could possibly answer with assurance, but which stimulated their minds into exploring new realms of speculation. Finally he was, as Mr. Fisher says, "a man of the widest horizons. He had a planetary mind."

Of course he had one great advantage over Socrates; he had travelled in nearly every part of the globe. "It would perhaps be no exaggeration to surmise that in his knowledge of this planet and its inhabitants, he stands first, so far, among the descendants of Adam."

Mr. Fisher himself feels that he has laid "the main stress of the biography" upon Bryce's connections with the United States. Nevertheless, Bryce's American friends will be far from satisfied with the very meager accounts of those American journeys which gave him the material which he used in writing "The American Commonwealth." It is true that a majority of the letters selected for publication in these volumes are chosen from his correspondence with President Eliot, President Lowell, James Ford Rhodes, and Theodore Roosevelt.

They give one a longing for more. Few if any men of modern times have had a long continued correspondence with a more distinguished group of the leaders of thought in America. To those just mentioned could be added the names of Elihu Root, Nicholas Murray Butler, President Hadley, Moorfield Storey, Seth Low, Bayard Henry, Henry Holt, and many others. It goes without saying that with letters to these correspondents and to his English and Irish friends who similarly included many of the leaders of political and educational thought during more than half a century, a wealth of material still awaits publication.

It was no easy task which the author faced. Here was a superman who had lived through three marvelous generations and who was a vital part of each. "Though he lived to be an octogenarian he never gave the impression of old age. His eye was clear and flashing, his tread light, his bearing remarkably active." The eagerness and rushing activity of youth were with Bryce to the end of his extraordinarily versatile life. He was no mean geologist; no ordinary botanist; a renowned historian; a first class lawyer; a professional politician, in the best sense of the word, for nearly a generation; a member of Parliament for a similar period; a professor in the University of Oxford; an expert mountain climber; an inveterate traveler; and a skilful diplomat. The complexity of the problem can be the better appreciated when one remembers that Bryce "had probably in the course of his long and strenuous life seen more places, known more knowledgeable people, studied more sciences and read more instructive printed matter than anybody in the modern world."

It can readily be understood that in the brief space of two small volumes it would be impossible for any author to do more than touch lightly upon many of the more interesting episodes in such an extraordinary career as Bryce's. Fortunately, they are, at least, adequately catalogued in the excellent "Chronological Table" at the end of Volume II.

The Warden of New College, noted historian as he is, has prepared his text with careful accuracy and illuminated it with his broad knowledge of the times. The style is clear and direct. The treatment is more formal than one might have wished. It is more the method of the historian than of the biographer. It leaves something to be desired. There is still an opportunity for a great biographer, like the late lamented William Roscoe Thayer, to give us an adequate picture of one of the most extraordinarily versatile and learned men of modern times. It needs someone like Gamaliel Bradford, who is accustomed to grasping that illusive thing, the "soul" of his hero, and able to give it the flesh and blood of vivid biography, that the departed hero may live again for our delight and edification.

No lover of Bryce can be satisfied with these two volumes. There is need for two more, of Bryce's intimate letters, put together as Burton Hendrick did those of Walter Page. Mr. Fisher has tried to give us "a portrait of the man rather than a full catalogue of the events and transactions with which he was concerned," but as a conservative and critical historian, he has been too restrained, too fearful of revealing the human side, too mindful of British prejudices regarding the seclusion of a private life.

The form is the form of biography, but the voice is the voice of history. It is natural that it should be so. The author's chief interest is in modern English history. The American biographical method of giving those little intimate glimpses of home life, those characteristic stories of purely personal events, which do more than anything else to bring the reader close to a full and affectionate appreciation of the subject of a biography, is not Mr. Fisher's method. Possibly it is distasteful to him. Perhaps it would be to many of his countrymen who are unable to understand how we, in America, can be content to live in houses whose lawns are open to all the world instead of being shut in behind high walls and thick hedges. At all events, it is most sincerely to be hoped that Lady Bryce can be persuaded some day to write her own reminiscences. In those pages her distinguished husband would live again. Some of the most attractive passages in the volumes now before us are from her pen.

Russia's Responsibility

BRITISH DOCUMENTS ON THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR. Edited by G. P. GOOCH and HAROLD TEMPERLEY. New York: British Library of Information. 1927.

Reviewed by MICHAEL FLORINSKY
Columbia University

THE publication of the eagerly awaited "British Documents on the Origins of the War" will prove, we fear, somewhat of a disappointment to those who still cherish the theory of sinister diplomatic plots and villainous conspiracies on the part of allied statesmen and foreign offices. The explanation of the lack of striking revelations is exceedingly simple. It is lucidly formulated by Mr. Headlam-Morley in his introduction:

The view held by Sir Edward Grey and those who were working with him in the Foreign Office was that through the critical days of the end of July and the beginning of August they had done everything in their power to avert the outbreak of the War; they believed that this had also been the desire of their Allies—France and Russia; there was, therefore, nothing to hide.

This is why all the most important British papers have already appeared in the Blue Book issued by the British Foreign Office in August, 1914. If, however, there is nothing sensational about the documents submitted now to the public, they are nevertheless of the greatest historical value in elucidating a number of most important points in the controversy which culminated in the outbreak of the European War.

With regard to Russia's responsibility for the immediate causes of the War, the British Documents emphasize once more the straightforward and conciliatory attitude of Sazonov in his struggle to avert the outbreak of the War at any price compatible with the sovereignty of Serbia.

Nothing characterizes better the general spirit of Sazonov's foreign policy than the following letter written on July 9, 1914, by Sir G. Buchanan to Sir A. Nicolson:

Sazonov is always reproaching me with the inveterate suspicion with which Russia is regarded in India and in certain circles in England. He is apparently ready to do almost anything to allay it, and seems even to have suggested to the Emperor that Russia should guarantee India against attack.

Sazonov proposed that "a formula might be found under which we might mutually guarantee the inviolability of each other's Asiatic possessions."

He immediately acquiesced to Sir G. Buchanan's suggestion that Japan should be made a party to the agreement. "I do not know," adds Sir G. Buchanan, "whether he is seriously thinking of putting such a proposal officially." On July 19, however, Sir G. Buchanan telegraphed to Sir E. Grey as follows:

Minister of Foreign Affairs (Sazonov) said he spoke in all seriousness. While the two Governments had confidence in each other's good intentions, public opinion in England regards Russia with suspicion and he had made this suggestion with the object of allaying that suspicion once and for all. He would accept almost any formula that would in our opinion achieve this result.

The outbreak of the war did not allow this plan to materialize.

One already knows how little it was suspected in St. Petersburg that the Sarajevo murder would develop into a European conflict.

Now that the first feeling of horror evoked by the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and His Consort has passed away (wrote the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg to Sir A. Nicolson on July 9) the general impression would seem to be one of relief that so dangerous a personality should have been removed from the succession to the throne.

It was not until July 22 that the real intentions of Austria became known in St. Petersburg. Sazonov immediately instructed the Russian Ambassador in Vienna to consult with his French and British colleagues with the view of giving Austria friendly councils of moderation. Undoubtedly, by some oversight, "German" was substituted for "British" in Sir G. Buchanan's telegram to London. Sir E. Grey, who wanted to avoid any entanglement in the Balkan affairs, made the following minute of this telegram: "I fear 'German' must be a mistake for 'British,' but wait till tomorrow."

An interesting light on the conciliatory spirit of Sazonov is thrown by the disclosure of the fact that Count Benckendorff was opposed to the mediation of four Powers between Vienna and St. Petersburg proposed by Sir E. Grey. It is already well known that this suggestion was immediately accepted by the Russian Foreign Minister. Sir G. Buchanan, writing privately to Sir E. Grey on July 26, remarks that—

if European peace is being endangered it is not Russia, but Austria who is at fault. Russia has done her very best to induce Serbia to accept all Austria's demands which do not conflict with her status as an independent state or with her existing laws.

Among the most interesting features of the British Documents are the minutes made on the papers by the Secretary of State and the higher officials. As Mr. Headlam-Morley points out "they were written on the spur of the moment with full confidence that they would under no circumstances be published, at any rate until very many years had lapsed." Some of them deal with Russia and the Russian mobilization. It would be impossible to attempt here a survey of the interesting problem of Russian mobilization which may be presented to American readers in a not distant future. The British Documents contain no direct information on the matter, but they disclose the attitude of London towards this all-important problem. With remark-

The Saturday Review of Literature

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Published weekly by The Saturday Review Co., Inc., Henry S. Canby, President, Roy E. Larsen, Vice-President, Noble A. Cathcart, Secretary-Treasurer, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Subscription rates, per year, postpaid: in the U. S. and Mexico, \$3.50; in Canada, \$4; in Great Britain, 18 shillings; elsewhere, \$4.50. All business communications should be addressed to Noble A. Cathcart, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Entered as second-class matter, at the Post Office, at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 1, 1879. Vol. III. No. 39.

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able insight Sir Eyre Crowe made the following minute on Sir G. Buchanan's telegram of July 27:

I am afraid that the real difficulty to overcome will be found in the question of mobilization. Austria is already mobilizing. This, if the war does come, is a serious menace to Russia who cannot be expected to delay her own mobilization, which, as it is, can only become effective in something double the time required by Austria and Germany. If Russia mobilizes, we have been warned Germany will do the same; as German mobilization is directed almost entirely against France, the latter cannot possibly delay her own mobilization even for the fraction of a day. From Sir M. de Bunsen's telegram No. 109 just come in, it seems certain that Austria is going to war, because that was from the beginning her intention. If that view proves correct it would be neither possible nor just and wise to make any move to restrain Russia from mobilizing.

Sir A. Nicolson, commenting the same day of the German proposal that France should urge moderation in St. Petersburg, made the following minute:

The German attitude is, to my mind, an untenable one if Germany really as she so profusely professes, desires peace. She declines to take or evades taking any action in Vienna—and one would imagine that Russia was the aggressive and provocative party and was to be restrained while Austria dealt with Serbia.

Sazonov's policy, in the opinion of Downing Street, is not free from blame, but the criticism comes from a very different angle.

This is confusing (reads Sir A. Nicolson's minute on No. 179). In three consecutive days M. Sazonov has made one suggestion and two proposals all differing from each other. (1) The suggestion.—If Serbia were to appeal to the Powers, Russia would stand aside and leave the question in hands of England, France, Italy, and Germany (July 25). (2) July 26.—Proposal to Austrian Ambassador that England and Italy should collaborate with Austria with the view of putting an end to the tension. (3) July 27.—Proposal that Russia will converse directly with Vienna. One really does not know where one is with M. Sazonov and I told Count Benckendorff so this afternoon. How different from the attitude of Austria and Germany!

I quite understand Russia not being able to permit Austria to crush Serbia (wrote Sir A. Nicolson to Sir G. Buchanan on July 26). I think that the talk about localizing the war merely means that all powers are to hold the ring while Austria quietly strangles Serbia.

There have certainly been no indications that Germany has exercised any moderating influence in Vienna (remarks Sir A. Nicolson on July 29). It is going rather far in putting responsibility on Russia who has been willing to adopt any and every course likely to lead to peace. I suppose Germany wishes Russia to join the other powers in keeping the ring while Austria strangles Serbia.

Commenting on the Russian mobilization Sir A. Nicolson wrote on July 31:

Russia is taking very reasonable and sensible precautions, which should in no wise be interpreted as provocative. Germany, of course, who has been steadily preparing now wishes to throw the blame on Russia—a very thin pretext. However, comments are superfluous.

The excerpts given above which it would be easy to multiply seem to indicate that the policy of the Russian Government during the world crisis met with the approval and support of Downing Street long before Great Britain decided to intervene in the struggle. If the unfounded accusations brought against Sazonov by a section of the German press and a few American sympathizers need a new refutation, it will be found in the British Documents.

The volume is admirably edited and documents are provided with scholarly comments which are of the greatest value to the student. One may, perhaps, express regret that the editors did not make a more extensive use of the Diary of the Russian Foreign Office (published in English in 1925 by Messrs. Allen & Unwin, London, under the unfortunate title "How the War Began"). This most important publication does not appear in the list of books referred to on p. 14, and is only casually mentioned in a note on p. 193.

God, Adam and the past, present, and future of mankind were protagonists in a masterly drama by the Czech playwrights, Karel and Joseph Capek, which was recently presented in Prague.

Like "R. U. R.," by the Capek brothers some years ago, "Adam the Creator" is predicted to be a world success and is regarded as one of the most important contributions to the European theatre this year.

Adam, after annihilating the world through negation, is commanded by God to make a new world and builds one according to his own ideas. His world, however, turns Communist and repudiates him, its creator, who remains an individualist.

The powerful allegory kept the audience at a tension. Managers were there from numerous European theatres interested in obtaining the play for other countries.

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A Shirtsleeves History

IV. ENTER ARMAGEDDON

A SAN FRANCISCAN who had been taken to the New England of his forefathers at the age of ten, and, somewhat later had sandwiched being a millhand between several months at Dartmouth College and several years at Harvard University in 1912 left off unprofitable farming in Derry, New Hampshire, sold his acres, and departed with wife and four children for England. He lived there for three years.

It was there that his first volume of poems was published. The man was Robert Frost, the book was "A Boy's Will." Today it is a toss-up whether Frost or Edwin Arlington Robinson may be reckoned our greatest native American poet.

In 1914 Frost published "North of Boston," but his work was scarcely familiar to Americans as yet. "The Spoon River Anthology," another event in American poetry, did not come until 1915, though, prior to that I recall an incident at the Players' Club, when Vachel Lindsay and Witter Bynner discussed the astonishing productions of one "Webster Ford" then appearing in the St. Louis *Mirror* published by the late William Marion Reedy, burly and courageous friend of all that was young and vital in American letters. "Webster Ford" was, of course, Masters's pseudonym. The productions were the first of the Spoon River epitaphs, which appeared from week to week as Masters turned them in, encouraged by Reedy.



CARL SANDBURG

In the same year Robinson turned from poetry to a play, "Van Zorn." His "Captain Craig" had surprised the eclectic several years before. "Les Imagistes" appeared, sponsored by Amy Lowell, and Miss Lowell's own first remarkable book of poems, "Sword Blades and Poppy Seed." Louis Untermeyer's "Challenge" (which went into its fifth edition in 1920) was of note, and Arthur Davison Ficke's "Sonnets of a Portrait Painter." Carl Sandburg won the Helen Haire Levinson prize awarded by Harriet Monroe's *Poetry*, though his "Chicago Poems" were not put between covers until the following year. A young man named Conrad Aiken published the poetic narratives of "Earth Triumphant." Alfred Kreyenborg founded and edited *The Glebe* and was to follow this later with his "Mushrooms, a Book of Free Forms." Meanwhile he put forth a forgotten novel, "Erna Vitek," and *The Glebe* issued the first anthology of free verse. James Oppenheim, in "Songs of the New Age," broke other fresh ground in liberated rhythms. John Hall Wheelock had already three lyrical volumes behind him. Sara Teasdale had written her "Sonnets to Duse" and her "Helen of Troy." Lizette Woodworth Reese and Louise Imogen Guiney were two of our veteran women poets, and Josephine Preston Peabody and Anna Hempstead Branch notable.

As the shadow of Armageddon rose imperceptibly over Europe, the poetry of America, as I have recorded, experienced a new flowering. As to literature in general, Howells was still our dean of American letters, but his only contribution to the year was a fantasy of Stratford-on-Avon, to be followed by his reminiscences, "Years of My Youth,"

two years later. In the old guard may be mentioned among the men, Judge Robert Grant, whose "Unleavened Bread" was a success at the beginning of the century. Henry Van Dyke, James Lane Allen, Bacheller, Garland, Crothers the charming essayist, George W. Cable, Thomas Nelson Page (one of the two Pages that Wilson made ambassadors, the other being Walter Hines Page, late head of the large publishing firm—and naturally many references were made at the time to our "literary diplomacy," with the obvious puns), Brownell among the critics, Woodberry, Paul Elmer More of the *Nation*, Bliss Perry, and Santayana. Among the women the great grand-niece of Benjamin Franklin (namely, Gertrude Atherton), Kate Douglas Wiggin, Alice Brown, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Margaret Deland, Agnes Repplier, Frances Hodgson Burnett, and Edith Wharton were notable names, as well as Mary Johnston, Mary Austin, Mary S. Watts, and Anne Douglas Sedgwick. A first book of short stories by Katharine Fullerton Gerould, "Vain Oblations," and a first novel by the till-then-unknown Joseph Hergesheimer interested the astute.

Then there was a young man named Van Wyck Brooks who had already given us "The Wine of the Puritans" and "The Malady of the Ideal" and now diffidently tendered a biographical study of John Addington Symonds. He was yet to appraise "America's Coming of Age." Mencken had long been the Buddha of the *Smart Set*. He had published his "Nietzsche," "Men vs. the Man," and "The Artist" and had now collaborated with George Jean Nathan and Willard Huntington Wright in "Europe after 8:15." He was a force in criticism, an inspiring editor, but wielded nothing like the power he does today. James Huneker was a veteran. Santayana had left his Professorship at Harvard. William Lyon Phelps of Yale had been writing popularly of the Russian novelists. Carl Van Doren was an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Illinois, where Stuart P. Sherman was then Professor. Joseph Wood Krutch, one of our leading critics today, had not yet received his B. A. at the University of Tennessee.

Three firmly established reputations today, among our women writers are those of Willa Cather, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, and Zona Gale. The first-named had published "O Pioneers" in 1913, and her poems and stories in the old *McClure's*, of which she was Assistant Editor, had been gathered together in "April Twilights" and "The Troll Garden." But as yet her work may fairly be said to have been caviar to the general. Mrs. Fisher's "Hillsboro People" was to come in 1915. She had merely given us "The Squirrel Cage." Zona Gale's "Neighborhood Stories" were out, and I recall her rather sentimental "Loves of Pelleas and Ettarre." Toward the end of the War she was to display the real power that was in her pen with a fine novel "Birth" that never received the recognition it deserved; but it was not until 1920 that her "Miss Lulu Bett" captured the country.

O'Neill's one-act plays were published in 1914 but Susan Glaspell was to wait for her fame as a playwright for England's acclaim some twelve years later. She had published two novels and a volume of short stories and was to marry George Cram Cook who initiated the Provincetown Players in 1915. "Suppressed Desires," a skit by Miss Glaspell, inspired by the machinations of Sigmund Freud, was produced that year. It took off the current cult of psychoanalysis in a very amusing fashion.

Such an incomplete resumé seems necessary. For we approach a period when, from the first glaring headlines in that dramatic August, the attention of the country was to be turned more and more toward international disaster. Strangely enough 1914 was the year in which Robert Bridges, the new English laureate, enrolled Thomas Hardy (who had just married Miss Dugdale), the editors of the Oxford English Dictionary, and sundry Oxford professors in "A Society of Scholars for the Encouragement of the Use of Pure English." The incidents at Zabern, in direct contrast to such academic detachment, made America suddenly aware of a militarist Germany. The Reichstag, to be sure, polled an overwhelming vote of lack of confidence in the German government as a result,