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Foreign Literature

(Continued from page 224)

its own justification; how the higher officers, with few exceptions, had learned to use martial law for establishing a system of almost unlimited absolutism, while the ordinary soldiers grew desperate. It is from his regained European point of view that the author—a former German private—explains to his nation the inner meaning of 1918 and what followed after it.

The story as a whole is admirably told, though Zweig keeps frequently too little distance from his subject. He himself figures in the story, and uses no little space to glorify himself, while the book at other times becomes polemical or apologetic. The number of non-essential and, occasionally, unsavory details becomes at intervals a nuisance; the novel would gain in effect by being shortened. On the other hand we find an assemblage of excellently drawn characters, for Zweig has a rare gift for small incidents which bare the very souls and make live the innumerable types that come and go.

While Zweig avenges his soul on a hated mechanism by describing the fate of humble Grisha Paprotkin, Ehrenburg is concerned with the naked soul: institutions shrink under his eyes until they are mere obsessions of human beings. The adventures of Michail Lykow, son of an ordinary waiter in Kiev, distinguished only by his vanity, are structurally similar to those of millions of Russians who chanced to be young when Russia was ripe for the Revolution.

A childhood amidst mud; *coup-de-mains* and poetry, massacres, heroism, lies, fanatical devotion to Lenin's doctrine, illegal business in anything from soap to silk, the end in a prison yard; it takes the 560 pages of Ehrenburg's book to outline Michail Lykow's career. Not one word could be spared. The author forces nothing upon his readers; the events, and the psychological relief growing under his hands, appear inevitable. The book lives up to its subject. With admirable severity Ehrenburg avoids playing up to the gallery and appealing to our more primitive emotions by indulgence in pictures of blood and flesh. The motto of Artjom, Michail's counterpart, seems his: "Simpler, as simple as possible!" Thus scenes that outstrip the apocalyptic visions are recorded in the style of a medical report which subtle irony exalts into a satire on mankind.

In "Michail Lykow" Ehrenburg has abandoned the quaintness distinguishing his great satire, "Julio Jurenito," and the pathos of his "Stories of the Pipes." Only at the end, after one has gone through this book as through an ordeal, at the catafalque of Lenin (that "most pitiless lover of the world") the satirist uses pathos. Whether Soviet Russia will triumph depends on whether the victory in street fights will be maintained by a future generation's more difficult conquest of its instincts. Ehrenburg bares the prophetic ten of his book when contrasting the powers at work; his finale culminates in the question, "Shall we be victorious?"

The Epic Muse

LE PELERIN DU SOLEIL. By PIERRE GOEMAERE. Paris. 1927.

POETRY, men say, is dying out of literature, but the epic muse is chanting in "The Pilgrim of the Sun." Once opened, the book grips you as Krook the mighty gripped the great black bear. Such is its spell that the closing words: "And numberless ages opened before them," ring out as a prophecy of the destiny of this new vein in fiction. The scene is prehistoric, when mammoths roamed the earth, but the interest is intensely human. The story—for this is brilliant imagination and not archæology—tells of the indomitable will of Yram, the plainsman, who would lead his chosen people to the land of the eternal sun. From the opening scene, where he wins by battle the leadership of the river-dwellers, to the last, where he snatches his bride from the clutches of a gorilla, his contagious joy in effort never flags. He fears no enemy; has he not slain the lion and the bear, destroyed the vampires of the night, burned a trackless jungle which barred his march, brought the bisons of the plain to crush the bandy-legged forest hordes who would not accept his proffered peace, and kept alive his own faith in the hearts of his fellows? Yet he knows that mercy toward the conquered is more glorious than victory itself, and thus he wins at last the haughty Yul.

Take him as a forerunner of Moses, as a symbol of human intelligence, blasting its way through every barrier, as knight errant

of a never-ending quest, or merely as the hero of marvelous adventure told for its own sake, he will not let you go. Not the least charm of the book is its restraint. Unlike most writers of prehistoric fiction who glory in a language passing strange, M. Goemaere unrolls his splendid narrative with no violence to the Academy dictionary. A child can read him, while the literary epicure will delight in the *curiosa felicitas* of his style.

Drafting the Covenant

THE ORIGINS OF THE LEAGUE COVENANT: Documentary History of Its Drafting. By FLORENCE WILSON. London: Published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf, Hogarth Press. 1928.

Reviewed by JOHN PALMER GAVIT

NO other person, living or dead, is, or was, in so good a position to compile a history of the origins of the Constitution of the League of Nations, as this American, Miss Florence Wilson. Until recently and from its inception she was Librarian of the League of Nations Library at Geneva; she was in every real sense its creator. The selection and collection of that great library of nearly 100,000 volumes of international history, fact, and law were under her almost exclusive direction; under her hand was instituted and grew as nowhere else in Europe the American library system and practice; not only in classification, arrangement, and perfection of equipment, but in ideal facility of access for and cooperation with officials of the Secretariat, working students, and investigators from all parts of the world. About a year ago she surrendered her post, to join at Paris the staff of the European Centre of the Carnegie Endowment.

Her special fitness for the making of this book lies in the fact that Miss Wilson, after many years of distinguished experience in the Columbia University Library, specializing in international relations, was the technical expert chosen to have charge of the archives of the American Peace Commission, subsequently becoming the only woman full member of that Commission. Under her hand fell every document and record of the work of the Commission. At its inception she began the analysis from the original sources, of the Peace Treaty of which the League Covenant is an organic part—in the end, the only permanent part, all the rest subject to it. This book is essentially the portion of that analysis relating to the Covenant. From this outline of her connection with the business the peculiarly authoritative character of this comparatively small book may be taken for granted. It is and must continue to be unique as a source-book for all students of the League.

Here appear the League that is, and the League that might have been; the original proposal to make an organization of the Allies—the Belgian, M. Hymans, suggesting that the honor of founding it should be reserved for those who had won the war. Here stands forth the effort of France from the beginning to create something like a super-state, to control troops and armaments, to create an international police-force to enforce the obligations of the Covenant. Here is disclosed perhaps for the first time the proposal for international agreement to "make no law prohibiting or interfering with the free exercise of religion," which died when the Japanese suggested a pledge in favor of equal treatment of all aliens.

It is all very interesting and thought-provoking, showing how all such international agreements are the fruit of compromise among conflicting interests and psychologies. The remarkable thing exhibited is the astonishing degree in which a real idealism, a real international spirit, survived the debates. Probably it could not now attain so high a plane; the chastening and lessons of the war are not so vividly in mind. Read this Covenant afresh in the light of Miss Wilson's analysis, and then study the outcome of such a gathering as the Congress of Vienna!

Would the League that might have been have functioned better than the League that is? Here is abundant material and light for speculation. Among other things, let admirers and enemies of Woodrow Wilson read here for their enlightenment about the part he played; both will gain discernment. And all readers will visualize a group of great figures,—Wilson, Lloyd George, Lord Cecil, Bourgeois, Smuts, and others less conspicuous, doing a great job, and epochal job.

Important Scribner Books of the early Fall

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The Fall Books

By AMY LOVEMAN

WORDS, words, words! Thousands and thousands and thousands of words! Books, books, books! Dozens and dozens and dozens of books! With each recurrence of the floodtide of publications we feel rise within us the desire to drag out from Bartlett some appropriate quotation (no, no, we haven't the faintest intention of quoting that earliest and oft-repeated observation on making many books) to the effect that "books are a substantial world," or that "the true University of these days is a Collection of Books," and with that blanket indorsement to feel our whole duty done to the publishing grist of the season. But precedent is too much for us; precedent has ruled that publishing seasons produce editorial lists and panoramic surveys of the field of literature. Well, so be it.

But we have found heart of grace. We are mightily cheered. We had almost feared that much reading in many volumes had reduced all books to a conglomerate for us when suddenly we discovered that we could still make distinctions. We could still recognize arrant nonsense when we saw it, and refuse to believe it literature. We mean Gertrude Stein's effusions, of course. Yes, she's at it again—playing with words. We remember that on a day some time ago of which we hope he has repented by this time, Sherwood Anderson went on record to the effect that he had never realized the true beauty of words until he read Gertrude Stein, that reading her was like letting a handful of gems slip through the fingers and watching the play of color in them. Well, judge for yourselves. Here is a passage from her latest work, "Useful Knowledge" (Payson & Clarke):

At East, and ingredients, and East and ingredients, and East and ingredients and East and East and East and ingredients.

And East and ingredients.

Having never been having never been and explaining explaining having been once having been, having been having never been once explaining once having been having been never having been never having been there.

Is further comment necessary? The publishers are probably laughing in their sleeves, having decided that a little humor is an excellent ingredient (my goodness! we've caught the contagion) of any list. At any rate, they've offset it with one of the important biographical-historical records of the season, Prince Lichnowsky's "Heading for the Abyss" (Payson & Clarke), one of the books which, together with "Memories and Reflections" (Little, Brown), by the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, and the two new volumes of "The Intimate Papers of Colonel House" (Houghton Mifflin), edited by Charles Seymour, all students of the War will wish to read. Lord Asquith's two stout volumes contain much piquant material bearing upon his associates of the war years as well as illuminating comment on incidents of an earlier period, and Colonel House's present matter of large importance. Together with them may be grouped Eduard Benes's "My War Memories" (Houghton Mifflin), William Martin's "Statesmen of the War" (Minton, Balch), and Lord Beaverbrook's "Politicians and the War" (Doubleday, Doran), an outspoken chronicle which should spread confusion in certain quarters.

We've slid into the war long before we intended to—we meant to lead up to it through the pleasant byways of *belles-lettres* and fiction—but now that we are in the midst of its shadows, we'll continue, or retrogress, to its origins and ramifications. For those who are still intent on tracing its sources has just appeared what should be one of the authoritative books in its field, Sidney B. Fay's "The Origins of the War" (Macmillan), while much light on its antecedents should be found in Joseph Redlich's "Francis Joseph of Austria" (Macmillan). Mr. Redlich was for some years in the cabinet of the Hapsburg Emperor and speaks with the authority of an insider. One of the most sensational figures thrown into prominence by the conflict has been given the dignity of a biography in René Fülöp Miller's "Rasputin the Holy Devil" (Viking), while a personality which more and more is acquiring importance as time goes on is given vivid portrayal in Valerius Marcu's "Lenin: Thirty Years of Russia" (Macmillan). Mr. Marcu's book has caused a great sensation in Germany and is produced here with the accompaniment of some striking illustrations. And then there's Mus-

solini's "My Autobiography" (Scribners), a magnificently egotistical chronicle of the dictator's career and purposes with no mincing of words in regard to those he opposes and no mock modesty as to his own achievements. Devotees of the *Saturday Evening Post* will recognize some of its chapters as having appeared in the pages of that publication.

Well, the war seems to be behind us. Oh, we forgot to mention Halide Edib's book, "The Turkish Ordeal" (Century), which, to be sure, isn't strictly a war book but since it recounts Turkey's struggle for freedom impinges upon it even when not directly dealing with it. Having mentioned it, on the assumption that variety's the spice of life, we proceed to biographies of the followers of the gentle arts of peace. (We're not through with the soldiers and makers of history yet, but for the moment we'll account the pen mightier than the sword.) There's a new life of Tolstoy, who wrote of both peace and war, by Alexander I. Nazarov (Stokes), and a triptych of Stefan Zweig which pictures, under the title "Adepts in Self-Portraiture" (Viking), Casanova, Stendhal, and Tolstoy, bringing the three into conjunction on the basis of their common egocentricity. The book was published some months ago in Germany but is just now coming out in English translation.

France and her writers come in for attention in Matthew Josephson's "Zola and His Times" (Macaulay), "François Villon" (Coward-McCann-Edwin Valentine Mitchell), by D. B. Wyndham Lewis, who should not be confounded as we in our carelessness (not our ignorance for truly we knew better) allowed our own reviewer to confound him with that other Wyndham Lewis who is the author of "Time and the Western Man" and who has just produced one of the extraordinary works of the season in his "Childermass" (Covici, Friede), a novel, or philosophical treatise, or satire, or whatever you choose to call it; in Francis Gribble's "George Sand and Her Lovers" (Dutton), and in J. Lucas Dubreton's "The Fourth Musketeer" (Coward-McCann), a biography of one of the picturesque personalities of literature, Alexander Dumas. Germany gets her innings in a life of Goethe by Emil Ludwig, whose nimble pen passes from one field to another.

Some thirty years ago Professor Kittredge of Harvard identified a Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel and Winwick as the author of the "Morte d'Arthur," and now along comes Edward Hicks, and having made careful investigation in the Public Record Office of London publishes the first biography of him. The appeal of the book, of course, is primarily to the scholar, but Malory's life seems to have been so colorful a one that even the reader who is in search of picturesqueness rather than information should find it of interest. Another chronicle that combines historical with biographical interest is Dorothy Senior's study of "The Life and Times of Colley Cibber" (Henkle).

To come back from the eighteenth century to the near present. Readers who are on the shady side of forty, and those young enough to regard the late 'eighties and the 'nineties of last century as "quaint," will derive much delight from Booth Tarkington's "The World Does Move," which is shortly to be issued by Doubleday, Doran. Mr. Tarkington writes in mellow spirit and projects against his canvas the picture of an age that though our own has already in many respects passed. His book is one, moreover, that derives quality from being the product of a pen practiced in the art of fiction. Another volume of reminiscences by a contemporary literary figure is Irving Bacheller's "Coming Up the Road" (Bobbs-Merrill), recollections of a North Country boyhood. And finally into the category of books that may in a way be regarded as autobiographical falls Rudyard Kipling's "A Book of Words" (Doubleday, Doran), not ostensibly biographical, of course, but containing so much in the way of opinion and belief as to be in fact a portrayal of its author.

Of making many books on Napoleon (heavens! we've almost slipped into quoting unawares that statement from Ecclesiastes which we assured you in the beginning nothing would induce to repeat) there is no end. Dutton is bringing out in English translation Dmitri Merezhkovsky's "Napoleon the Man," a work likely to have much effective description. The other Napoleon is depicted indirectly in "The Tragic Em-

press" (Harpers), a volume which is in essence an autobiography of the Empress Eugénie, since it is a succession of interviews between her and Maurice Paléologue, who has woven them together into a connected narrative. Students of history should find here a quarry of valuable material while the general reader will discover many piquant details. Among other matter the book contains what Eugénie asserted on the authority of the Empress Elizabeth to have been the true story of the famous Mayerling incident. Another tragic figure of royalty, Marie-Antoinette (Dutton), is the subject of a study by the Marquis de Ségur, while Ludwig of Bavaria finds portrayal under the title, "The Mad King" (Holt) by Guy de Portalès, who not so long ago appeared before the American public as the author of a volume on Chopin.

Speaking of biographies of musical geniuses, there's a new one of Beethoven by Samuel Chotzinoff entitled "Eroica" (Simon & Schuster), and one on Schubert, by Oscar Bie, called "Schubert the Man" (Dodd, Mead). Then that very different type of musician of our own day, Harry Lauder, has written an autobiography that bears the name—well, what else could it be except "Roamin' in the Gloamin'" (Lippincott)? The arts are further represented by the life of the famous French tragedienne, Rachel, by James Agate (Viking), Art Young's "On My Way," a series of observations and comments, and Jules Janin's biography of Debureau, the famous pantomimist (McBride).

So much for the artists. We're back again at the makers and unmakers of history, the rulers, the fighters, the vivid personalities who if they did not in all cases make history at least are history. Behold the array. Elizabeth, as by right the most potent monarch of them all, starts the procession in Lytton Strachey's brilliant volume, "Elizabeth and Essex" (Harcourt, Brace), a work not as highly documented as his "Queen Victoria" but full of keen and searching analysis, pointed statement, and sound information. In her wake—*place aux dames*—follow James the Second, depicted by Hilaire Belloc (Lippincott), in a study sure to be interesting and equally sure to be conditioned by Mr. Belloc's Catholic slant on history, Bonnie Prince Charlie, portrayed by Donald Barr Chidsey (Day), comes next in line, and then the leaders of democracy come into view. Here is Lincoln, despite all that has gone before, envisaged in new garb by Albert J. Beveridge (Houghton Mifflin). Mr. Beveridge's biography, though left incomplete by his death must nevertheless henceforth rank as one of the most important studies of its subject, and as a work which no student of Lincoln or of his period can afford to do without. For the first time the records of Lincoln's career as a small town lawyer and a legislator have been completely combed with the result that the earlier stages of his career appear in a new light. Behind Lincoln come other Presidents, Theodore Roosevelt as the revelations of his "Diaries of Boyhood and Youth" (Scribners) reveal him, Martin Van Buren (Liveright) as Denis Tilden Lynch sees him, Jefferson (Putnam), as Meade Minnigerode has reconstructed him largely on the basis of letters from Citizen Genet, "That Man Adams" (Boni), most vividly and vivaciously presented by Samuel McCoy, John Quincy Adams as he materializes from his Diary (Longmans, Green) which Allan Nevins has edited, and the soldier President, Grant. We stop short here of characterization for honesty compels us to admit that we've seen nothing as yet of W. E. Woodward's "Meet General Grant" (Liveright) but the announcement that it is in preparation. But Mr. Woodward can be trusted to be interesting.

And so we arrive at the personalities who have had their part, if not generally a major part, in the annals of their country. Here, for instance, is that pirate of the land, Jim Fisk, whose manipulations of business and stock netted him a fortune and the country eventually a catastrophe,—here he is shortly to be presented as "Jubilee Jim" (Macmillan), by Robert H. Fuller. Here are biographies of that "roughneck of the Revolution," as the publishers describe him, "Simon Girty: The White Savage" (Minton, Balch), by Thomas Boyd, Frazier Hunt's "Custer" (Cosmopolitan), Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance's autobiography (Cosmopolitan), Henry W. Lawrence's "The Not Quite Puritans" (Continued on page 230)