

Foreign Literature

LIEBSTE MUTTER: Briefe Berühmter Deutscher an Ihre Mutter. Edited by PAUL ELBOGEN. Berlin: Ernst Rowohlt. 1930.

GELIEBTER SOHN. Elternbriefe an Berühmte Deutsche. Edited by PAUL ELBOGEN. The same.

Reviewed by A. W. G. RANDALL

IN these two anthologies Dr. Elbogen has had a new idea, and he is at least to be congratulated on his originality in a field where that quality must be hard to come by. Despite the popularity of the relations between parents and children as a theme for novels, for plays, and for psychological speculation, no one before him seems to have had the idea of gathering together the important evidence of those relations which exists in the correspondence of the famous. The task was comparatively simple in the first book; it meant little more than a search through the published correspondence of celebrated Germans and a selection of their most interesting communications to their mothers—the fathers, no doubt, are reserved for a separate volume. But the second volume, the letters from the fathers and mothers to their celebrated children, must have entailed a great deal of laborious research, for the obvious reason that the letters from the famous are more often preserved and more easily accessible than the letters sent to them. In both instances Herr Elbogen has done his work very well, and now a great part of German history and literature may be conveniently surveyed from the point of view of parental relations.

In the letters addressed to the "Liebste Mutter" Herr Elbogen has begun with Martin Luther—it is a typical sermon. The letters of Jean Paul, too, are very characteristic in their whimsicality and humor, but those of the poet, philosopher, and patriot, Ernst Moritz Arndt, reveal a soft and sentimental side to his nature which his ordinary writings would not have led us to suspect. Particularly affectionate were Heine and Friedrich Lasalle, the Socialist and hero of Meredith's "Tragic Comedian." The relations between Goethe and his mother, the "Frau Rat," are well known to all students of German literature, and both of Herr Elbogen's volumes enable us to follow them in detail. Bismarck seems to have had little sympathy with his mother, and neither of the Iron Chancellor's parents is represented in the second volume.

In the volume of letters to their children Herr Elbogen begins much earlier—with Pepin's letter to his son Charlemagne. The second letter in the collection is of great historical interest—it is the epistle of exhortation and advice sent to Philip II of Spain by the Emperor Charles V, when he decided to hand over his vast dominions to his son. Some of the other letters provide interesting studies in psychology, morbid or otherwise. August von Platen's antipathy to his mother, for example, is, so Herr Elbogen suggests, a subject for psycho-analysis; still more is the correspondence addressed to Schopenhauer by both his parents. It is a pity that the compiler was not permitted to give a selection of the letters to Nietzsche from his mother, but these, and the letters to Novalis, seem to be the only notable omissions. The second collection, like the first, ends with the late Dr. Rathenau, and in printing the affectionate letters from his mother, the editor also gives the noble letter which Frau Rathenau sent to the mother of her son's murderer.

In both volumes each selection is prefaced by a short and interesting biographical note, and there are a number of well-produced illustrations.

Ludwig's Self Revelation

GESCHENKE DES LEBENS. By EMIL LUDWIG. Berlin: Ernst Rowohlt. 1931.

HERR Emil Ludwig has celebrated his fiftieth birthday by giving his readers a substantial autobiography—nearly nine hundred pages. He calls it a "Rückblick," not a "Selbstbildnis"—a glance backward, and not a self-portrait, but whatever his intentions when setting out to write this book, it contains a great deal of information about his life, his parentage, his married life, his numerous writings—past and future—his journalistic career, his friendships. It is true that the tone of the book is never very deep; we will even call it superficial, and the light ironical style in which a good part of it is written undoubtedly makes for greater readability, for whatever may be the deficiencies of this book as of Ludwig's previous works, his harshest critic can hardly deny that he is nearly always eminently readable. We will, therefore, not look in this book for what it makes no pretence of giving; it is not a regular history of Ludwig's life and work, but a gossipy volume of anecdotes and re-

flections on his life and writings. Perhaps at the end we shall conclude that this method has revealed a considerable part of Ludwig's character and opinions, but that is incidental to the main scheme of the book.

Emil Ludwig's family name was Cohn; his father, Hermann Ludwig Cohn, who dropped the last name, was a celebrated eye-specialist of Breslau, and his son gives an altogether sympathetic and attractive portrait of him. Emil himself was intended for a legal career, but he was not a very promising student, so the office of a successful relation, engaged in a coal-business, was assigned to him. But this was hardly more congenial. Love and literary ambition stood in the way of a prosperous mercantile career. Ludwig gives an engaging account of both. Something of his love story has already been told in his novel "Diana," and an amusing picture of the lovers' retreat in the Ticino has been drawn in the poem, "Tom and Sylvester." But here there is much more; again and again Ludwig returns to his married life, to his home in Switzerland, with an engaging candor which reminds us at times of Axel Munthe's "Story of San Michele."

It was Richard Dehmel who encouraged the young Ludwig to persevere in his writing, and before the war he had already published seventeen books. These brought him no great reputation in Germany, and none at all abroad. Still, it is interesting to see him occupying himself with subjects and studies that were to prove more fruitful later. Thus, as early as 1906 he wrote a play about Napoleon, and in 1912 he wrote a "psychologischer Versuch" on Bismarck. He had begun that attention to physical and psychological details in the great which was to prove his secret of success. But between these earlier and neglected works and the later and celebrated books there was a considerable journalistic interval. Ludwig became the London correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt* before the war, and during the war he did a great deal of correspondence for the German press in various parts of Europe; he even published two books on his experiences in Turkey, and one of his most amusing pages is his account of the way he narrated his coming under British shell-fire at Gallipoli to General Sir Ian Hamilton. In 1917 he wrote "Diana," in 1920 his "Goethe," and in 1922 came his contest with the ex-Kaiser over the suppressed chapters of Bismarck's reminiscences. He was successful, and out of the affair came his play, "Die Entlassung," giving in dramatic form the first authentic account of Bismarck's dismissal by the young German Emperor. It is from this that we can reckon the beginning of Ludwig's rapid rise to world fame. His book on the Kaiser, published in 1925, fell in completely with the public taste in Europe and the United States. Personal sidelights on the great or notorious, the psychological or psycho-analytical interpretation of history—the fashion for these was in full swing, and Emil Ludwig's explanation of the Emperor in terms of his well-known deformity was an uncommonly interesting piece of work. It was a new presentation of a character regarding whom the world was getting ready to judge without passion. "Bismarck" came the following year, "Der Menschensohn," a life of Christ, two years later. But before this, which was with justice criticized less favorably, Emil Ludwig's international fame was assured. He outdistanced his fellow-exponents of psychological history, Lytton Strachey and André Maurois, not only in circulation—and an impressive table is given at the end of this volume of the editions reached by Ludwig's works in twenty-five languages (there has, *inter alia*, been a Catalan edition of "Napoleon" and an Arabic translation of "Goethe")—but in authority. He was consulted by leading newspapers on weighty questions of international policy; he delivered lectures on history. The academic world was inclined to sniff, but Ludwig who, by the way, does not number his interesting little essay, "Historie und Dichtung," among his works, although it is a brilliant defence of journalistic history writing, was on the side of the big battalions, the record editions. More works followed—Lincoln, Beethoven, Michelangelo were re-revealed to a wondering world, and there were mockers who said that Ludwig would finish by writing a biography either of God or of himself. He has, for the time being at any rate, chosen the latter (for "Der Menschensohn" can be ruled out in this connection). His naïve pleasure in the glamour of his success of which this book contains several examples will be scorned by his enemies, but found delightful by his hosts of friends.



Padlocked POETRY

HAVE NO FEAR, GENTLE READER. This is not a sequel to the Wickersham report. It is simply a brief pronouncement about a new book so irresistibly funny, so intriguing to persons in whom the sense of humor exceeds the sense of property that the first review copies were actually equipped with an iron chain and padlock.

It proved to be a wise precaution. For this book—none other than *Hard Lines* by Ogden Nash—became an immediate best-seller. The advance demand was impatient, the reviews hysterical, the first edition was inadequate and copies were at a premium.

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GOOD BOOKS

The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Books Briefly Described

DIRTY OF SYLVIA MCNEELY. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1931. \$1.

The journal of a nine year old girl, entertaining in its naïveté and in its unhampered reflections upon life and persons. Women, especially, will smile over it with reminiscent amusement.

MADemoiselle AGAINST THE WORLD. By TITAYNA. New York: Horace Liveright, 1931. \$3.

A chronicle of daring adventure by air-plane in the countries of Europe and other parts of the world. The author in the course of a varied career as aviatrix has met danger at close quarters and managed to extricate herself from circumstances sometimes menacing and frequently embarrassing with a readiness that left her zest unimpaired. The book contains considerable comment upon manners and customs as well as its record of experience.

IN SEARCH OF IRELAND. By H. V. MORTON. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1931. \$3.

A lively and informal portrayal of a tour through Ireland, with much specific information, and constant incident and interpretation to lend color to its narrative. Mr. Motron is the traveller whose mind, well-stored with history and anecdote, renders him receptive to the national implications as well as the physical aspects of the country he visits.

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA. By CLIVE HOL- LAND. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1931. \$2.50.

A guide book that in addition to its specific information as to routes, points of interest, and features of architectural and artistic importance, contains a historical outline and considerable general comment and interpretation.

THE ROAD TO THE GREY PAMIR. By ANNA LOUISE STRONG. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1931. \$3 net.

A newspaper correspondent's account of a trip from Russian Turkestan to the High Pamir, the elevated plateau of Central Asia known as "the Roof of the World." It is written with the practiced ease of the journalist, and with an ever present sense of dramatic values.

THE GENTEEL FEMALE. Edited by CLIFTON T. FURNES. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931.

A highly diverting anthology compiled from minor American literature of the first half of the nineteenth century showing the American woman in her fashions, her manners, and her attitudes of mind. Mr. Furnes has supplied the book with an interesting interpretative introduction and so arranged his material that there emerges from it a composite portrait of an extinct species of female.

THE WRONG SIDE OF THE TRACKS. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1931. \$2.50.

The anonymous autobiography of a social climber. The book carries its heroine from her childhood in the plebeian section of a mid-Western town through her marriage to a wealthy Californian, her widowhood in Europe, and her second marriage to a member of the British peerage. It is principally significant as an example of the heights to which a determination rigidly adhered to can carry an ambitious woman.

VANCOUVER, A LIFE, 1757 to 1798. By GEORGE GODWIN. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1931.

A very readable life of Vancouver supplemented with an elaborate and scholarly appendix containing many important letters and documents. The book is chiefly concerned with his voyage with Captain Cook and his great expedition to establish English sovereignty at Nootka on the Pacific north-west coast. His explorations in Alaska, his final destruction of the northwest passage myth, and other important contributions to geography are described in the narrative. It is interesting to note in the Hawaiian section of this book that the Sandwich Islands were formerly ceded to Great Britain, but that the cession was never confirmed by the British Cabinet, at the time deeply engaged elsewhere.

ALTERNATIVES OF WAR. By FLORENCE GUERTIN TUTTLE. New York: Harper & Bros. 1931. \$3.

A book of facts rather than opinion in which the author gives a historical survey

of the various alternatives to war proposed or carried into effect in the last decade. It is the opinion of the author that these alternatives constitute a practical means of avoiding war, but the book is for reference rather than for propaganda.

BREAKING THE SILENCE: England, Ireland, Wilson, and the War. By T. ST. JOHN GAFFNEY. New York: Horace Liveright, 1931.

This is an account of Mr. Gaffney's experiences as an advocate and worker for Irish independence throughout the war period. It is a partisan book and violently anti-English and anti-Wilson, but contains a great deal of valuable first-hand material which will be useful in writing the history of the war period as well as in discussions of Ireland's struggle for freedom.

RACE PSYCHOLOGY: A Study of Racial Mental Differences. By THOMAS RUSSELL GARTH. New York: The McGraw-Hill Co. 1931. \$2.50.

A carefully conducted discussion of the possibility of race psychology, which comes to the general conclusion that factors of nurture and environment are much more important in determining the general capacities of a race than anything inherent in the race itself. Well documented and a good reference book.

"... AND SUCH SMALL DEER." By E. V. LUCAS. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1931. \$1.25.

Brief and very charming essays, most of them about bears and animals, by this well known literary journalist. This is a selection from earlier books.

THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND THE NEW HUMANISM. By GEORGE SARTON. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1931. \$2.

The New Humanism of this book is an attempted correlation of the arts and sciences in a complete scheme of education, and not the New Humanism of Mr. Babbitt and Mr. More. The book is an interesting survey in brief form of the development of thought from the Greeks on, with special reference to a proper scheme of education for modern man.

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author of "The Realm of Matter," etc.

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