

## An Amazing Tyrant

IVAN THE TERRIBLE. By STEPHEN GRAHAM. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1933. \$3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN  
Author of "Soviet Russia"

**M**R. GRAHAM'S preoccupation with the strange mixture of the mystical and the horrible in Russian character and history finds abundant scope in this biographical sketch of the famous autocrat, most cruel sovereign of a cruel country and a cruel age, whose endless list of victims was ultimately and fittingly completed by his own son.

Ivan the Terrible is equally interesting to the student of Russian history and to the student of abnormal psychology. His reign coincided with a very substantial expansion of Russian territory to the East, as a result of the overthrow of the Tartar khans of Kazan and Astrakhan and the adventurous raid of the Cossack Yermak into Siberia. It witnessed a strenuous effort, ultimately unsuccessful, but renewed with more favorable results by Peter The Great, to obtain a window to the West in the shape of a foothold on the Baltic. Trade with England was opened up through the northern ports and Mr. Graham extracts from the English chroniclers of the time interesting descriptive details about the Czar, his court, and general conditions of Russian life.

The *oprichnina*, that curious special police of terrorists and assassins which Ivan called into being and invested with power of life and death over all his subjects, was more than the whim of a ruthless despot. It was an agency for breaking the power of the old hereditary boyars, or aristocrats, and for driving home the conception that the greatest noble in Russia was of no more account in the Czar's eyes than a serf. Ivan contributed as much as any individual to the building up of absolute despotism, unchecked by such West European influences as an independent Church, a powerful nobility, and growing free cities, as the law of Russian development; and this fact is of permanent great significance in Russian history.

Ivan the man is quite as interesting as Ivan the ruler. Seated on his Muscovite throne he seems to have contracted many of the psychological perversions and monstrous vices to which absolute rulers are prone, as anyone may recognize from the records of such Roman Emperors as Nero, Caligula, and Tiberius. Ivan was an orphan at an early age and came to fear the rough boyars who surrounded him, neglected him as a child, and might quite well have murdered him in the event of a court plot. Later he displayed qualities of morbid suspiciousness and self-pity; and a streak of cowardice in his character seems



IVAN THE TERRIBLE  
From an old woodcut in "Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia."

to have also played its part in driving him to such excesses of ferocity as the deliberate extermination of a large part of the population of Novgorod. Mr. Graham offers the following explanation of Ivan's homicidal psychology:

It seems possible that at times he held the view that a Czar can do no murder. He had even a crazy notion that death

by him was an honor or a sacrifice acceptable to God. He had a great contempt for those who fled from martyrdom. The Shakespearean conscience-stricken blood-guiltiness was not his. The ghosts of the victims could only have come back to thank him.

The author lays much stress on the death of Ivan's first wife, Anastasia, as a turning point in his character and career. Up to that time his reign had not been distinguished by special severity, and had been marked by such notable achievements as the capture of Kazan. After Anastasia's death he steadily degenerated into a crime- and sex-crazed monster; and Mr. Graham shows how toward the end of his life even his powers of vigorous leadership in war and cunning in diplomacy forsook him, so that he ingloriously lost his earlier grip on the turbulent Baltic coast which was a frequent battleground of Russians, Swedes, and Poles.

It was one of the paradoxes of Ivan's character that he was a man of considerable learning for his time, deeply versed in theology. Paroxysms of almost insane worship and repentance alternated with paroxysms of savagery and lust in this half-mad despot. A curious feature of the Czar's life was his correspondence with one of his subjects, Prince Andrew Kurbsky, who escaped from Russia and addressed reproachful letters to the Czar from the safe refuge of Poland. Surprisingly enough Ivan answered the letters regularly and addressed counter-reproaches of his own to the fugitive.

A lighter touch is added to the book by the flirtation in which Ivan endeavored to indulge with Queen Elizabeth of England. Mr. Graham has consulted all the available English sources on this episode and arrives at the conclusion that, while Ivan seriously desired an English bride, and was willing to compromise on a lady of rank if the Queen herself were inaccessible, Elizabeth's motives in carrying on the correspondence were strictly mercantile. Very characteristic of Elizabeth's prosaic attitude was her suggestion that, if the Czar had to leave his dominions at any time, he could find a refuge in England, provided that he pay his own expenses.

But lighter touches are rare in this narrative of a psychopathic figure whom destiny had placed in control of a vast empire. Mr. Graham omits no detail of the orgy of bloodshed and torture and vice that characterized the greater part of Ivan's reign. While he has not discovered any specifically new material about the subject of his biography he has employed a judicious mixture of the standard Russian authorities with the narratives of English travellers and envoys and produced an almost blindingly vivid portrait of this amazing tyrant and the age and society in which he lived.

According to the *London Journal* "arrangements have been made by the Soncino Press for a complete version in English of the great Jewish code of law and commentary known as the Babylonian Talmud.

"A more or less exact summary of its contents have in recent years appeared on both sides of the Atlantic, but up to now there has been no complete and unabridged translation, giving the Talmud in a form useful to scholars, comparing the translation with the original text, and readable to students unaccustomed to the somewhat difficult expression in Rabbinic thought.

"The English version of the Babylonian Talmud will occupy twenty-five volumes, which will appear in successive sets between the spring of 1934 and 1937. The sixty-three tractates of which the Talmud is composed will be translated by some twenty-five different Rabbinic scholars.

"Mr. J. Davidson, a director of the Soncino Press, which is publishing the work, said of the Talmud that it 'is not strictly speaking a book; it is a compilation or even a literature, the work of many generations.

"It was built up out of the sayings of the intellectual and spiritual leaders of the Jewish people in Palestine during the course of the first four or five centuries of the Christian era."

## A Story Teller Returns

DEATH IN THE WOODS. By SHERWOOD ANDERSON. New York: Liveright, Inc. 1933. \$2.

Reviewed by JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

**W**HEN Sherwood Anderson comes to New York he may go to a speakeasy. He tells anecdotes about people he has met in Virginia and elsewhere. Walking along a country road one day in the South, he met a man named Boone. "Any kin to Daniel?" asked Sherwood. "Why, my name's Dan'el," the old man said. All of Sherwood Anderson is in the telling of that anecdote: the simple relish of an old man's provincial dignity, the wonder at



SHERWOOD ANDERSON.  
Photograph by Doris Ulmann

any expression of individuality. The stories collected in "Death in the Woods" are all variations on this eternal theme of wonder. Mr. Anderson remains incapable of irony, of satire, of any studied view of the human comedy.

The trouble with wonder of Mr. Anderson's ingenuous variety is that it is unselective as a principle of literary composition. It gives rise to the shapelessness of his novels, in which the moments of intensified awareness seem no more important to the author than the routine passages. When one lacks a point of view in the novel one is apt to treat everything on an even plane of importance; and this offends readers who have their own ideas of the petty and the large. In the short story, however, wonder does better as a touchstone. Some of the stories in "Death in the Woods" are in the old Anderson tradition, excellent because the author has hit upon spurts of heightened consciousness that are universally experienced. Some achieve no more than a sort of maudering poetry. And some are downright bad, built out of human circumstances that do not call for any quality of wonder. In the poorer items, Mr. Anderson himself seems trying to be impressed against his own better judgment. This attempt gives rise to an oracular style, with everything unduly emphasized by paragraphing of the single sentence variety—for all the world as if Mr. Anderson were a Scripps-Howard editorial writer taking Blanche Colton Williams's course in the art of the short story.

"Death in the Woods," the best of the present collection, is lifted with but few changes from one of the earlier Anderson books, "Tar: A Midwest Childhood." It is a simple account of an old woman's death, propped up against a tree in winter, with her dogs running in circles about her, waiting for her to die before they attack the pack in which she has soupbones and liver. The importance of the story derives from the child's point of view from which it is told; like Elizabeth Roberts's "Death at Bearwallow," it emphasizes the mystery which surrounds one's first experience of any of the major emotional encounters. "The Return" might be considered the epilogue to an unwritten novel of which "Departure," the last story of "Winesburg, Ohio," is the prologue. It is fully as good as the earlier story. It presents Mr. Anderson standing in wonder before a visit to childhood scenes, a visit

in which nothing, of course, happens as planned in the imagination beforehand. Other stories, "The Fight," "Like a Queen," and "Another Wife," are all up to the old Anderson level. As for the rest of the lot, they range from lugubrious Steiniesque to mere padded observations. Yet, despite the mixture of poor stuff with the first-rate, it is good to have Mr. Anderson telling stories again.

## Good Melodrama

HELENE. By VICKI BAUM. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1933. \$2.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

**T**HERE was a time when, on the evidence of certain fugitive passages in "Grand Hotel," one could have sworn that there was a great novelist imprisoned somewhere in Vicki Baum. That opinion has gone the way of most opinions, and the lady is now established as a popular writer for whom one has a sincere respect, and whose work one does not trouble with too nice a sense of values. As for "Helene," it is the most strictly patterned, the most ambitious, and the least original of her stories. While it affects an outward show of austerity, its impulse is romantic: you might compare it to somebody going to a masquerade ball dressed up as a monk.

Helene is a student of chemistry at one of the more ancient German universities. She has fifteen hundred marks upon which to live until she obtains her doctorate; she is an orphan. More out of tenderness than passion she takes a fellow student for her lover, and discovers that she is with child. Life has so arranged things that marriage is both unlikely and undesirable; attempts at abortion do not succeed; a suicide pact ends only with prison for Helene, who, on her release, grimly enrolls at another university, where she becomes a mother and a Doctor. Her money all spent, she is reduced to the most wretched shifts in order to support her child—she, whose one ambition is to go back to chemical research, and whose one love, next to the love she has for her child, is a tragic professor at her old university. In the end she obtains both her ambition and her professor.

The story is a very old one—we have met it hundreds of times before, and will meet it again: but it wears its modern German disguise with a good deal of taste. It is melodrama, of course. All the minor characters have the appearance of being excellently coached—they play their parts with accuracy, and not death itself can rob them of the appropriate gesture. They are to supply this story of courage with the necessary pathos, eccentricity, tenderness, romance, and depravity; and it is not very captious of us if we say that they give it everything but reality. After all, Helene herself is a theatrical contrivance; one device after another is employed to keep her out of anything that would demand more of her creator than her creator is capable of producing.

But while bad melodrama is merely nauseating, there is always room for good melodrama, because it does present us with what we might call an affirmation—it tells us that life is neither dull nor unrewarding. This is bald and ingenuous; but one has yet to discover that what is ingenuous is necessarily untrue, or that what is bald is necessarily banal. And "Helene" is really good melodrama—well written, well constructed; more than that, its author has an intuition of right human behavior which gives even the most theatrical of her scenes an air of nature.

"At the end of this year," according to a Vienna correspondent of the *London Observer*, "the thirty years' period of copyright protection of Hugo Wolf's works will expire. The publishers, however, are to ask the Government to reconsider the question of introducing a term of fifty years' copyright, or at least to agree to a provisional prolongation. Austria has adopted the thirty years' period from Germany, but authors, composers, and artists consider it unfair that their copyright should expire thirty years after their deaths instead of fifty.



## Can Europe Pay?

THE A B C OF WAR DEBTS AND THE SEVEN POPULAR DELUSIONS ABOUT THEM. By FRANK H. SIMONDS. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1933. \$1. Reviewed by WILLIAM MACDONALD

**T**AKING as his text President Roosevelt's reported admission that his administration "will be made or marred by its handling of the debt issue," Mr. Simonds has tossed off this little book to show that the war debts are as dead as Fenian bonds or Confederate States' securities, and to suggest that the most the President can do is to stall for time by persuading Congress to consent to another moratorium in June in the hope that American public opinion, which Mr. Simonds thinks is all wrong, will in due time come to see the situation as it really is. It is a pity that Mr. Simonds, who has written so much that is worth while about international matters, should have been content to offer his wide public so unsatisfactory a presentation of the war debts case.

Mr. Simonds begins by quoting President Coolidge's remark that "they hired the money, didn't they?" and pictures the majority of the American people as still laboring under the delusion that the war debts represent cash advances by the United States, whereas in fact the European governments received credits which they used in purchasing supplies in this country. Of the existence of any such popular assumption, either at the time the credits were granted or at the present time, he offers no proof whatever, nor is it a fair inference from President Coolidge's remark. In connection with his hypothesis Mr. Simonds makes some curious allusions to Europe "hiring" American pigs, cattle, goods, and raw materials, and to the American government "hiring" the money from its own citizens. He does not, of course, deny that the credits constituted debts as valid as those which would have been created by cash advances, but he seems to see something quite unusual in an intergovernmental operation precisely similar in effect to transactions which go on every day in the business world.

Having conjured a state of general public ignorance about the nature of the debts, Mr. Simonds goes on to elucidate the familiar propositions that international debts can be paid only in goods, services, or gold, that the United States has obstructed payment in goods or services by raising its tariff and subsidizing shipping, that payment in gold would drain the debtor countries' gold supply, that Europe has in fact never paid anything because American loans have equalled the nominal payments, and that the hope of payment must, in consequence, be given up. To these are added the contentions that the debts are necessarily limited to reparations, that war debts are not like other debts because what was bought with the credits was shot away or used up, and hence that the loans produced nothing from which reimbursement can be made. The World War was a calamity, and it, of course, is not fair that American should have to pay the debts if Europe does not, "but whoever said it was fair? Was the San Francisco earthquake fair?"

If what Mr. Simonds means is only that debt payments will be more burdensome now that reparations have practically ceased, or that world economic conditions have so changed that complete fulfilment of the sixty-two-year debt agreements may not be possible, he has said nothing that is not either obvious or else fairly open to argument. He weakens his contentions, however, by both assumptions and omissions. He seems to assume, for example, that the debts can be paid only out of current national income. Why may they not be paid in part from national capital, as private debts have to be if the debtor has capital but not enough income? Why does Mr. Simonds pass over the fact that, with the exception of Great Britain, none of the debtor nations has as yet attempted to pay by taxing its own people, and that, again with the exception of Great Britain, the reparations receipts of the principle debtors, notably France, have vastly exceeded the amount of the

debt instalments? So of payments in gold; Mr. Simonds's proposition is sound if a country can in no way obtain a favorable export balance in its international trade. But is Mr. Simonds sure that so-called three-cornered international trade offers as little resource as his reference to it seems to imply; and can he show that the considerable debt payments that were made prior to June, 1931, when the Hoover moratorium went into effect, were really balanced by American loans as far as the paying countries are concerned? And would he maintain that the extraordinary accumulation by Great Britain of dollar exchange in New York, estimated at about \$150,000,000 in addition to ear-marked gold, within less than two months after the December debt payment of \$95,500,000 was made, has no bearing upon the ability of Great Britain to pay in gold without precipitating the calamity which Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer, predicted?

What Mr. Simonds's book amounts to is a plea for throwing the debt claims overboard and paying the remaining Liberty bonds ourselves, without waiting to see if part, at least, of the claims cannot be salvaged. One would never imagine, from reading the book, that political interest abroad had anything fundamental to do with the campaign for cancellation. The book is not an A B C of the war debts; it hardly gets beyond the letter A.

anywhere or in any capacity. In short, he was off to a flying start as an independent Democrat who said just what he thought.

For the next twenty years Bailey, like John Sharp Williams, held a special place in the list of Southern leaders. He was a shrewd, rugged, upstanding fighter, sometimes perverse, sometimes given to oratorical pyrotechnics, but on the whole an uncommonly healthy force in American politics. Nobody owned Bailey; he was ready to go into political exile rather than bow to the herd mind. He entered the Senate in 1901, and immediately made himself felt there. A big man, handsome, eloquent, proud almost to arrogance, he helped to make the Democratic minority in the upper chamber count at times beyond its numbers. He and Tillman, allied with the new Progressive Republican group, defeated Aldrich in 1906 on the momentous Hepburn rate bill.

Bailey scored heavily again in 1910 when he introduced an income tax amendment to the pending Payne-Aldrich Tariff Bill. A spectacular battle ensued, and once more Aldrich had to swallow a bitter dose—a corporation income tax and a constitutional amendment for a general income tax. "Alone and single-handed he did it," ran the tribute of the hostile New York Sun to Bailey, "with no other materials than a futile minority, a handful of majority malcontents, and an effrontery as sublime as Catiline's." But iron days

bludgeoned the Underwood Tariff. He believed that President Wilson should have recognized Huerta, and was indignant when troops were sent to Vera Cruz. Texas was wholeheartedly behind President Wilson as we went to war with Germany, but Bailey believed that the President's course was a cruel blunder. He was against the League of Nations. He was equally against the prohibition amendment and the woman suffrage amendment.

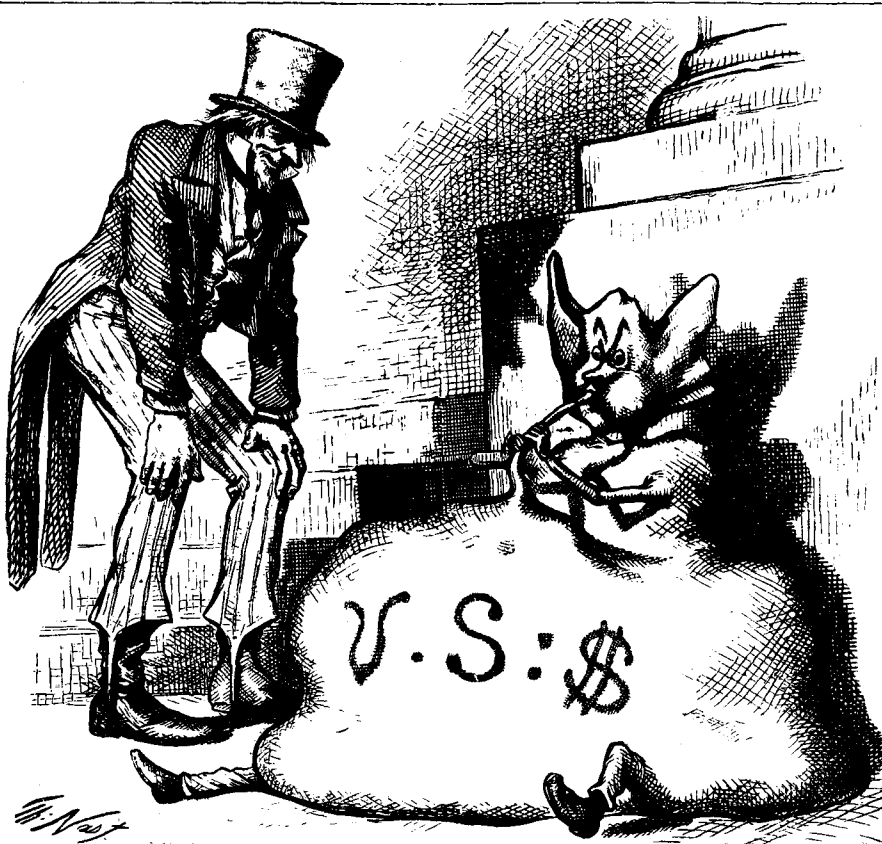
Mr. Acheson knew Bailey and his cyclonic personality at first hand; he knows Texas, the history of which in the last half-century has centred around three men, Hogg, Bailey, and Ferguson. He gives an excellent narrative of Bailey's career. It is lucid, expert, compact, and pungently phrased. At two points, in the legislative history of the Hepburn Act and that of the income tax amendment, it adds facts of importance to our knowledge of recent American history. Strangely, it is deficient in personal portraiture. There are few letters, few anecdotes, few glimpses of the man as he relaxed with friends. This is the more regrettable in that Bailey would have made an excellent subject for a little Boswellizing. But the book nevertheless enables us to understand just what a highly original person this old style State-Righter was.

## Towards Recovery

END THE CRISIS, A PLEA FOR ACTION. By FELIX SOMARY. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1933. \$1.

**I**RONICALLY enough, Mr. Somary's book comes from the presses at the very moment that the Roosevelt administration has abandoned the gold standard. But it need not be read as ancient history, even though it sets its face against such measures as are contemplated under the Thomas amendment to the Farm bill. Mr. Somary's prescription for recovery is simple. He wants the European debtor nations to bind themselves together "for the effective liberation of America from the crisis." This is not a Quixotic notion, as he explains it. For world recovery depends, first of all, on a recovery of prices of raw materials. The United States exports raw materials. Let the European debtor states guarantee to take from America at present world market rates, for a considerable period, "a number of staple products, in quantities corresponding broadly to the average of the American exports to these countries in . . . 1922-26." The plan should be "conditional on America's permanent renunciation" of her war debt claims. Moreover, the export sale of staple products at the fixed price by the United States should be optional; when the natural price level rises, the scheme should be abandoned. The European guarantee of buying would thus merely act as a cushion to prevent prices from falling below their present point.

Mr. Somary, it will be seen, is a man who sees eye to eye with Al Smith. "The menace of inflation, that nostrum of cowardice," he says, "is at hand." Well, inflation may not necessarily be cowardice, but, in justice to Mr. Somary, it is difficult to see just how inflation is going to inflate. As Mr. Somary reiterates, there is plenty of unemployed capital in the American banks waiting for the sign of a market to be turned into credit. Revaluation of the dollar at a lower ratio to gold will do no good unless, as Mr. Somary says, the demand comes from consumers, not from producers. It will be of no avail to change the basis of the dollar from 23 grains of pure gold to 15, say, unless, by some means or other, the government puts the newly created money into the hands of both the unemployed and languishing contractors through a public works program. Devaluation which is not coupled with spending will simply add to the stock of unemployed capital lying idle in the banks. The same is true of remonetization of silver, with this difference: that silver miners would get note equivalents to spend. But the relative number of silver miners is not very large. If our inflation fails to inflate, Mr. Somary's little book will be read with a sense that here was a minor prophet.



"BY INFLATION YOU WILL BURST"  
A Nast drawing from Harper's Weekly of December 20, 1873.

## State Righter, Old Style

JOE BAILEY: The Last Democrat. By SAM HANNA ACHESON. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1932. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

**J**OE BAILEY entered Congress in the same session with W. J. Bryan and Jerry Simpson; and he entered with a good Texas bang. To reporters who glibed at his dress of an ante-bellum Southern cunel he remarked that society has no right to regulate sartorial style; that ever since he could afford it he had dressed in the same way—black broadcloth suit, broad white shirt, roll collar, white tie, flopping black felt hat; that these clothes pleased him and pleased his wife; and that he would continue to wear them, winter and summer, Sundays and weekdays, at breakfasts, luncheons, teas, and formal dinners. He immediately made it clear on the floor of the House, in a ringing baritone voice, that he differed from Cleveland on the silver question; differed from Bryan on the tariff; and differed from most other Democrats on the rules of the House. In gaudy fashion he began refusing unanimous consent to special pensions and other private bills. To the wrath of Illinoisians, he announced that the appropriation of \$1,500,000 for the Chicago World's Fair was legislative burglary. He assailed Ambassador Bayard as unfit to represent the American people

lay just ahead. Bailey had the courage to oppose the unseating of Lorimer. He disliked Lorimer and hated bribery, but he had an honest conviction as to the validity of the election and the rights of a sovereign State. He assailed the Democratic tariff doctrine of free raw materials, espoused by Clevelandites and Bryanites alike. To his mind it was wicked to protect the manufacturer while exposing the farm-producer and mineral-producer to the sharpest competition. With passionate conviction, he also attacked the initiative, referendum, and recall. In his opinion they struck at the roots of representative government. When Arizona was admitted with these new-fangled features in her constitution, he indulged in the most dramatic act of his life. Like Conkling in 1881, he resigned his seat. His friends were aghast. Eleven Democratic Senators signed a statement that his proposed step was "a national calamity." The governor refused to accept his resignation; the legislature voted to urge him to recall it. Reluctantly, he did so. But he immediately announced that he would not run for reelection, and he did not. His official career was over.

Outside office he was as much an independent as in, and as interesting—almost—as ever. He took an instant dislike to Woodrow Wilson, and opposed his nomination from beginning to end; he even threatened to vote for Taft. He savagely