Literature Abroad

By ERNEST BOYD

THE only book by a German setting forth the gospel according to the Nazis which has received any widespread attention outside of Germany is the bowdlerized version of Hitler's "Mein Kampf." Whether in its truncated English form, or in the original, the book has no more value than any volume of the collected speeches of a rabble-rousing politician. The real doctrine, the "philosophy" of the Nazi movement is best studied, not in the hysterical tirades of Hitler, but in the reasoned exposition of that eminent, not quite one hundred per cent German, Alfred Rosenberg, whose Jewish name and Baltic provenance disturb the complacence of patriotic Germans no more than does the recent naturalization of Hitler himself as a German citizen. After all, when Germany decides to be "Germanic" such details do not count, as witness the fact that the high priest of pre-war Hohenzollern Teutonism was the English husband of Wagner's daughter, Houston Stewart Chamberlain.

"Die Grundlagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts" is now a forgotten book, and even during the war it was rarely mentioned as a source of the *furor teutonicus*. It so happens that I read it in Berlin during the year of the Agadir crisis, the year when *der Tag* became a patriotic toast. Very naturally, when Alfred Rosenberg published "Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts" I turned to it with curiosity, recognizing the voice of the Englishman's disciple in the title chosen by the Russo-German Alfred Rosenberg. Just as it was the *Volksausgabe* of Chamberlain's work which gave it widespread publicity, so the *Volksausgabe* of Herr Rosenberg's book arrived, three years after its original publication, "shortly after the beginning of the German revolution," to quote the introduction, in order to "add its share to the creation of the German renaissance." The current edition is a volume of more than seven hundred closely printed pages, which deserve the attention of those interested in the present phase of German politics, but which, I fancy, will not enjoy the honors of translation, for the reason that no publisher could afford to pay for the dreadful labor involved, and few non-Germans could stand the ordeal of wrestling with Herr Rosenberg's tortuous phrases and even more tortuous logic.

It has frequently and rightly been pointed out that the persecution of non-Aryan German citizens has been allowed to take precedence over all other manifestations of German intolerance. While Christendom revolts at the victimization of Jews, it is not, I think, aware of the more interesting fact that the Nazi leaders are not only anti-Semitic but also anti-Christian. Herr Rosenberg, in his wild mumbo-jumbo of bad Nietzscheanism and stale ethnology out of Chamberlain, out of Gobineau, out of Spengler, definitely propounds the theory that the world has been poisoned by those races which refuse to worship Thor and Odin. The crucifix is to him a gallows, a silly image which has come to be associated with the non-Germanic weakness known as pity. The Pope is simply the "medicine man" of Europe, whose voodoo practices interfere with the gentle art of making enemies for Germany. The *Hakenkreuz*, on the other hand, is the true Germanic cross, symbolizing the warrior virtues of the Goths and Huns. Mercy and charity are low-class Christian ideals which hardly deserve the attention of a Brownshirt, save in so far as he can exterminate them.

The Roman Catholic Church, in Herr Rosenberg's eyes, is a greater menace to Aryanism than even Judaism. The Jews, after all, are a minority and can be butchered or sterilized as the occasion demands, but His Holiness, strange to say, cannot be disposed of so easily. Realizing this sad fact, Herr Rosenberg consoles himself and points a moral to adorn his history by gently insinuating that the Saint Bartholomew massacre marked the end of France's career as a first-rate power. Most of us, I suppose, would hardly deny that Henri IV deprived France of many valuable citizens; the witticism, *Paris vaut bien une messe*, is quite amusing, but somehow one does not think of the slaughter of the Huguenots as the brightest chapter in French history nor yet as the downfall of the French nation. Nations that are neither Nordic nor Protestant nor blond have, curiously, managed to function.

Herr Rosenberg, however, does not think so. If Dante is a great Italian poet and patriot, that is because he was a blond from the plains of Lombardy. Far be it from me to deny the thesis so biologically and logically sustained by Havelock Ellis, that gentlemen prefer blondes, but history is made of sterner stuff, so Herr Rosenberg proceeds to rewrite it. Those of us who have been taught to believe that the barbarian invasions destroyed Roman civilization are mistaken. Herr Rosenberg proves that what Europe needs is bigger and better barbarians. Whenever anything good happened along the Mediterranean littoral, he can always prove that the people responsible were not Latin or Catholic, and certainly not Jewish. He has a nice compound adjective, which may be roughly rendered as Etruscan-Syrio-Judæo-Asiatic, and with this implement he disposes of many things. "Humanity," "Freedom," "Liberalism," "Class," for example, are mere substitutes, invented by Jews, for Jehovah. A good lynching in America delights Herr Rosenberg's heart, because it is a proof that "here, finally, the idiotic principle of equality" is abandoned.

Next to Jews and Christians, the most contemptible spectacle that offends Herr Rosenberg's gaze is women. It is interesting to learn that the reason why America is not on the same high, cultural level as Nazi Germany is because women have too much freedom. Like Jews, women are always invoking their rights making claims to equality. This, according to Herr Rosenberg, will never do. Women must be "emancipated from female emancipation." They must also be prevented from looking into the windows of Jewish department stores where, apparently unlike Gentile stores, they discover lures which lead to "erotic anarchy." The fall of Babylon was due to the fact that Istar began as a virgin goddess of the chase, in Hamurabi's time she was depicted as a bearded youth, but she finally became Astarte, "the symbol of sexual anarchy." That disposes of Babylon.

It has constantly been pointed out that the Nazis argue simultaneously that all Jews are communists, yet they are all interested in the preservation of international finance-capitalism. This oblique reasoning is not reserved only for the Jews. Democracy is likewise accused of strange contradictory proceedings. It believes in pacifism—an unpardonable crime—but goes to war. It deprives men of all their manly virtues, yet these men die for principles. Instead of being fooled by Hitler, they are fooled by international Jewish bankers—such, presumably, as J. P. Morgan and Company. Like Hitler, Herr Rosenberg has never heard of munition makers, he knows nothing of international Gentile armament firms. In fact, I do not think the name of his leader's chief financial supporter, Herr Thyessen, occurs once in this voluminous work. His absence, I suggest, is the "myth of the twentieth century."

Henceforth on the first week of every month Ernest Boyd will survey Continental literature.

A Poet's Output

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WORKS OF ROBINSON JEFFERS. By S. S. Alberts. New York: Random House. 1933. $10.

Reviewed by BERTHA COOLIDGE SLADE

THE first impression of a bibliography on the reviewer is as important and subtle as the first greeting of a new acquaintance and Sidney S. Alberts's workable volume on Robinson Jeffers, 487 copies of which have been printed at the Walpole Press for Random House, has the qualifications of suitable size, good typography, and excellent paper which make it at once an agreeable book to handle and read.

Turning immediately to the preface instead of yielding to temptation and plunging headlong into the foremost page of the actual text, one finds that the author has forestalled the critic and answered the few questions which might shortly be raised. Mr. Alberts opens by relating the circumstances of his introduction to the poetry of Jeffers in 1927, his enthusiastic search for recognized authorities on the subject, and his discovery that none existed, which resulted in the origin of his present work. Recognizing the recent and in some cases well deserved criticism of bibliographies of living authors, he adds that an apology for these "is in order only if the subject is unworthy of perpetuation" and considers that a contemporary bibliographer "suffers a handicap and gains an advantage." The advantage, of course, lies in the fact that when doubtful problems arise he can turn to the original source for information. It is true that some authors have been known to raise insurmountable barriers between themselves and the outside world not excepting the enthusiastic collectors of their own works.

Robinson Jeffers is not one of these and his bibliographer has been fortunate in having his sympathetic assistance in many ways not the least of which is the delightful foreword written especially for this book and entitled "Remembered Verses." Following this charming contribution by the poet himself comes the main portion of the bibliography which opens with a chronological table of publications in concise form and continues with the bibliographical descriptions of works published separately but whose numbers correspond with those of the previous list. Title-pages are reproduced in many cases and here and there manuscript facsimiles are introduced. Lists of books and pamphlets containing original contributions then appear followed by those of poetry and prose printed in periodicals and newspapers, with an arrangement of cross reference numbers planned in such a highly specialized manner that to check and recheck them becomes a fascinating sport. We turn next to fragments of hitherto unpublished material found on the verses of certain sheets of an original manuscript which are followed in turn by prose and poetry not previously printed in book form. At the close come the lists of anthologies, books, and pamphlets pertaining to the subject and an index of first lines of Jeffers's works and a general index. It is indeed a bibliography *de luxe* and should prove most excellent reading for the layman as well as the collector. Technically it is a most interesting work. Mr. Alberts has chosen to transcribe the title-pages in the upper case with no variations of size. Whether this method is altogether clear is a question still under discussion among bibliographers, and as no conclusion has as yet been reached it becomes a matter of personal taste. The collations which follow the title-pages are clear and concise. The descriptions of bindings, paper, and printing are given in detail, and it is through the coöperation of the publishers and collectors as well as Robinson and Una Jeffers themselves that the notes which follow are so comprehensive and valuable in every way. They contain much bibliographical material which, without vast effort, would be impossible to acquire in connection with any but a contemporary subject and they make delightful reading as well. Mr. Alberts is to be greatly congratulated on his achievement and while the volume undoubtedly contains much that is outside the scope of the usual bibliography it is a model in form, subject matter, and arrangement.

The PHŒNIX NEST

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

ROUND ABOUT PARNASSUS

THERE are a good many volumes of poetry before me on the shelf and yet there do not seem to be many of extraordinary interest. The best two books are the fourth volume of "The Poems of *T. Sturge Moore:* Collected Edition" (Macmillan), and "The Collected Verse of *Robert Hillyer*" (Knopf). The former, the poet of Well Walk, is now sixty-three years old. He has an enviable record of work behind him, both as poet, wood engraver, and critic of art. He is an almost exact contemporary of *Laurence Binyon,* the distinguished English poet now lecturing at Harvard, who is keeper of prints and drawings at the British Museum and an authority on Oriental art. Both poets are distinctly in the classical tradition, and the sum total of Binyon's verse is also considerable. He is the better poet, because his is the greater clarity of expression, and statement more forcefully knit. Moore is idiosyncratic, sometimes pleasingly so but at other times turgid in his oratory, gnarled in his expression. As for the spirit of the man, it is the right English spirit—than which, when it is right, there is no finer. To illustrate I will quote a verse from Moore's poem, "The Lure of Medusa," written in 1915 when crowd sentiment in England was at fever heat and many wartime utterances should have stricken their speakers with shame. Moore said:

The danger is lest loathing wrath
Reflect the rage withstood,
Give scowl for scowl, and counterpart
Black deeds, till, with their mood
Infected, victor vanquished, you
In triumph's hour should be
High flattering monument to their hate,
Your foe's live effigy.

You can mark in this the gnarled expression of which I speak, but also you may not miss the wisdom and the truth ken in an appalling time. In the next r, in "Our Objective and our Behavior," ore speaks of English opinion consider- the mob's "loudest cries" as though "heaven watched through just such as their eyes," and adds this, concerning the conscientious objectors on trial:

Here, not the judge, but those condemned are brave!
Yes, freedom is a state he cannot know
Who does not feel that conscience should be free
As the clear-hearted winds and unfenced sea!

He spoke again, in 1920, even more forcefully against the Black and Tan reprisals. This is enough to show that despite his preoccupation with Psyche and Pan, Persephone, Herakles, and Omphale, in dramatic dialogue, he has been awake in the world. For pure poetry I prefer his "Metamorphoses" dedicated to William Butler Yeats "in affection and admiration," in this particular volume. And I should not disguise the fact that Moore's use of language often seems to me awkward. So was that of George Meredith in poetry, excessively so; but Moore has set up no such landmarks in English verse as were Meredith's "Love in the Valley," and "Modern Love."

ROBERT HILLYER

I find a peculiar kinship between such a poet as the elderly Sturge Moore in England and our own younger Robert Hillyer. In beginning "Thirty Pastorals" Hillyer says,

Ponder the tone; the broken theme
Sounds once for us, and not for long.
It is easy to forget a dream
However exquisite it seem,
It is easy to forget a song.

We must ponder the tone in both these poets, irrespective of whether or not their lines long remain in the mind, to extract all they have to give. Hillyer, unfortunately, has the same tendency toward banality in his less successful poems that afflicts Moore. I could never see, for instance, why Quiller Couch chose Moore's "A Duet" for the Oxford Book. But besides this, Hillyer has a surer phrasing than Moore's—a clearer music. His chief characteristic seems to me to be his aloofness. In his poem "XXth Century" he speaks of there being no time in this epoch

Not even for a kiss,
Not even for this,
Not even for this rhyme.

And yet he seems to me to take all the time there is in his meditations, to be little shaken by the vibrant stress of the day in which we live. I have no criticism for aloofness in a poet, provided the spirit of change in his own epoch is moving through him. In times of change it is extremely difficult for poets to write real poetry about what is going on in the world. It has been done. It is not impossible. *Milton* and *Wordsworth* did it. But even young *Shelley* in revolt had to lift the issues of his time into the realm of personifications and abstractions when he was writing poetry. There is somehow a gulf fixed between poetry and the newspaper. And Hillyer by temperament and disposition is the music-maker and the dreamer of dreams. That does not mean that he has not words for the world today. He will never probably attain the vogue and the emolument of the wittier poets of the day, of the topical satirists of their time; yet he can say this of "Repartee" in a far deeper sense and make an uncommonly good sonnet of it:

As one who bears beneath his neighbor's roof
Some thrust that staggers his unready wit,
And brooding through the night on such reproof
Too late conceives the apt reply to it;
So all our life is but an afterthought,
A puzzle solved long past the time of need,
And tardy wisdom that one failure bought
Finds no occasion to be used in deed.
Fate harries us; we answer not a word,
Or answering too late, we waste our breath;
Not even a belated quip is heard
From those who bore the final taunt of death;
And thus the Jester parries all retort:
His jest eternal, and our lives so short.

It is in his sonnets and in the long poem of four sections, "The Gates of the Compass" (that are Memory, Death, Ecstasy, and Love) that I find Mr. Hillyer's deepest and most moving meditations. His lyrics have variety and beauty of form, and often a fine acid touch, but they are not my first choice. Here, however, is assuredly poetry—minor poetry but accomplished and civilized. It does not give me the authentic spinal thrill. It is, perhaps, too civilized for that. But it is work fine in grain. Perhaps poets themselves will best appreciate it. It is of the traditional not the experimental kind. Its victories are in subleties of mood.

AND OTHER POETS

I shall pass rapidly over a few other books, and list the remainder. In "The Best Poems of 1933" (Harcourt), selected by Thomas Moult I found quite original *Robert P. Tristram Coffin's* poem on an airplane flight. Its observation seemed to me most exact. And there are other good poems in the book, as well as others of less merit. Many familiar names are in the roster: *Conrad Aiken, Robert Nathan, Frances Frost, Joseph Auslander, Witter Bynner, Carl Sandburg, Laurence Housman, Horace Gregory, Leonora Speyer, Roy Campbell, Walter de la Mare, Humbert Wolfe,* etc. *Don Blanding's* "Let Us Dream" (Dodd, Mead), profusely and rather garishly illustrated by the author, is mainly journalistic. He is an American living in Hawaii. "Silver Farthing" by *Leura Dorothy Bevis* is of no great account save that it is a most beautiful example of small bookmaking printed for Ernest Dawson of Los Angeles by the Grabhorn Press. Eight pamphlets of The Poetry Series of The Modern Editions Press at 725 Greenwich Street, this city, include single poems by *Horace Gregory, Lincoln Kirstein, Raymond Ellsworth Larsson,* and others. They are delightfully printed with illustrated covers Of books of some interest that I think do not merit more than listing, there are these: "Peddler's Pack," by *Mary Owen Lewis* (Philadelphia: David McKay), "The Awakening of Iseult," by *Edith Tatum* (Oglethorpe University Press), "Selected Lyrics," by *Russell Pope* (G. P. Putnam's Sons), "Threads and Shadows: An Anthology," compiled by *James Neill Northe* (Herald-Silhouettes Press, Ontario, California), "Wild Pasture Pine," by *W. W. Christman* (Albany, N. Y.: The Argus Company), "Agarita Berry," by *Siddie Joe Johnson* (Dallas: Southwest Press).