

# The Saturday Review

## of LITERATURE

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HINDENBURG, HITLER, AND GOERING AT THE TANNENBERG MEMORIAL  
*"Hindenburg's famous victory at Tannenberg was not his work at all..."*

### Myth into Man

HINDENBURG AND THE SAGA OF THE GERMAN REPUBLIC. By Emil Ludwig. Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1935. \$3.50.

Reviewed by BERNADOTTE E. SCHMITT

FOR exactly twenty years—1914 to 1934—Hindenburg was a name to conjure with, and innumerable laudatory biographies have appeared in German. Now that he is dead, the historic figure can be more easily subjected to criticism and analysis, and Emil Ludwig's book deserves a warm welcome as the first serious attempt. The author's aim has been

to show how an army officer was carried far beyond the limits of his potentialities, not by ambition, but by a "legend" which has accreted around his name; and how, in the most natural way, when he was a very old man, he returned to the principles which only in semblance he had for a brief time abandoned; how a Junker and field marshal and president was driven into dictatorship, first by his environment, and then by long-standing authoritarian instincts, until, most tragically at last, he surrendered power to a group of gangsters, to die profoundly embittered.

Since the approach is primarily psychological, it is the man that stands out rather than the great events of which he was a part, but the narrative is not forgotten, and the account of German history from Hindenburg's election to the presidency in 1925 is at once vivid and instructive. For the first sixty-six years of his life, the main source is his own autobiography, and one suspects that Herr Ludwig's interpretation of this period is sometimes rather subjective. For the war years, however, there is an abundance of official material, not to speak of countless memoirs, and all this is used with great skill and objectivity. When he comes to the last years, Herr Ludwig has to rely on current publications, his own observations, and "information, privately received, from Hindenburg's collaborators and adversaries." Perhaps this, the most interesting section of the book, will not ultimately stand the test of historical criticism, but "by the time all the sources have been unsealed,

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### The Adventures of Modern England

THE ADVENTURES OF MODERN ENGLAND. By Somervell. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1935. \$3.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

THERE are two things to be said at the outset about this book: first, that it is a chronicle without an end; second, that it attempts to review the manifold adventures of England—from 1910 onwards—with complete impartiality. As to the first, it can only be a matter of pleasure (to all but absolute sticklers for literary form) that the book should end, not with the death of George V, but with a eulogy of him: the world has seen so few good English kings, that it cannot afford to bury the best of them. As to the second, one may perhaps allow oneself a little doubt.

What is the value of impartiality? When dealing with the eighteenth century, even with the Victorian Age, impartiality is perhaps essential—these periods have fallen into perspective. Their villains are established, their heroes and heroines pedestaled, their motives illuminated: it is the pleasant task of their historian to give the scene some final lucidity, some extra touch of art, and he may congratulate himself upon the fact that, in this case, precision and impartiality go hand in hand. But the times we have lived in, and are still living through—can one be impartial about them? No man, and no issue, is really intelligible until he or it is no longer able to affect us personally: no historical landscape can be seen as a living whole until it is inhabited exclusively by very dead men. The history of our times is still in a state of exciting incoherence. Its innumerable tangles of conflicting threads have still to be sorted out; and this can only be done, I believe, by the interested endeavors of apologists, propagandists, theorists, scandal-mongers, ex-Cabinet Ministers, and literary men—in other words, of anyone with a brief to plead. Each will drag from the mass the threads he needs, and arrange them in the pattern which suits him best: and not until this has happened can future

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## What's In a Name?

A Publisher Discusses Three Instances of Plagiarism\*

BY GEORGE H. DORAN

MY experience has demonstrated to me that there is really no such thing as unconscious assimilation by one author of the work or thought of another author. By this I do not mean that a fugitive phrase or sentence may not unconsciously or thoughtlessly be appropriated by an author who honestly believes that phrase or sentence to be of his own conception. Of course, there are many, many instances of actual theft of magazine stories and articles, sometimes of whole books with just some slight changes of locale and personalities, but these usually are by hack writers—those poor devils void of any genius of their own who in the realm of crime would be pickpockets and petty larcen-ers rather than astute and accomplished thieves. The hack at best deceives only the small-fry editor or careless syndicate-manager. His recompense would be slight and he would be proof against legal action because of poverty, and having no reputation to jeopardize, any penalty would be negligible, for after all, it is such a simple matter for him to choose another *nom de guerre* and begin all over again, even reusing his earlier pilferings.

The real tragedies of plagiarism come when authors of note and distinction fall prone before the deadly parallel. As *prima facie* cases they are guilty as hell and yet there are explanations and mitigations. Let me cite three out of many actual occurrences in my own experience. One name I must use, for otherwise the situation would not be understandable. The other two I may not or shall not use, for both authors are living and stand high on the lists of distinguished and competent writers.

In the later eighties there came to Chicago from the mission fields of the Black Hills a brilliant young preacher who signed himself N. D. Hillis. He was unusually gifted and fluent in speech, zealous in his chosen calling; and had positive genius for the use of words. He was called to the pastorate of the wealthy and influential First Presbyterian Church of Evanston, Illinois—that smugly important suburb of Chicago. I sat at his feet and learned so much from him that I count myself for ever his debtor, for if I have the slightest flair for facility of speech—the rounding of a sentence or the turning of a phrase—I owe it to those informal meetings and richly earnest conversations. So naturally it came about that I first suggested and then strongly urged that he prepare a volume of his lectures and addresses for publication.

He finally consented and bit by bit I extracted from him the manuscript of chapters which ultimately went to the making of his first book, "A Man's Value to Society." The manuscript title-page bore as its author N. D. Hillis—much too prosaic and unattracting a cognomen for this book of brilliant, bristling, provocative essays. I asked for his christened name in full, and thereafter he was known as Newell Dwight Hillis. The book progressed slowly but finally was ready for the press, when I urged that his first

book should have both dedication and preface. The dedication was a simple matter but the preface gave him pause, for that meant time and thought. One day, yielding at last to my importunity, he brought to me a manilla-colored foolscap page on which was written in longhand the long-desired material for his preface. I recall that piece of paper as distinctly as when first it came into my hands and recognized not his own rather indecipherable calligraphy but the neat feminine hand of Mrs. Hillis. The book was published.

One Saturday afternoon I was on my way home and bought my copy of the *Chicago Evening Post*. On the first page was a double-column news-story which was nothing more nor less than a savage and violent attack upon my pet book, "A Man's Value to Society," and its distinguished author. To my amazement, the article quoted parallels between Dr. Hillis's book and David Swing, Henry Ward Beecher, and Joseph Cook that were too complete and incriminating to admit of any question even to the mind of a simple man. My copy was one of a very early edition of the *Post*. It could not have reached Dr. Hillis at his uptown home, so I started at once to see him, feeling that it would be better for me to deliver the blow than to have it come first from reporters and critics. I handed the paper to him; he read it with fast-paling cheeks and quivering hands. I know he believed honestly and thoroughly every word when he said, "Why, Doran! Doran! There is not one atom of truth in this." I counseled: "You cannot summarily dismiss the evidence of these parallels by mere sweeping denial. I do not think you guilty of deliberate plagiarism. You are too fertile and imaginative and creative ever to use the words, phrases, and sentences and conceptions of another, yet somehow, somehow, you have permitted yourself to appropriate these many phrases and sen-

## This Week

COLLECTED POEMS AND A HOPE FOR POETRY

By C. DAY LEWIS

Reviewed by John Gould Fletcher

AFTER THIS, SEA

By JOSEPHINE MILES

GERALD: A PORTRAIT

By DAPHNE DU MAURIER

Reviewed by Clayton Hamilton

PUZZLED AMERICA

By SHERWOOD ANDERSON

Reviewed by Louis Adamic

IN THEIR OWN IMAGE

By HAMILTON BASSO

Reviewed by Jonathan Daniels

IN MEMORIAM:

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

By Louis V. Ledoux

REASONS OF MY OWN

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

## Next Week or Later

A FEW FOOLISH ONES

By GLADYS HASTY CARROLL

Reviewed by Robert P. Tristram Coffin

\* The following article, in somewhat expanded form, will constitute a chapter in Mr. Doran's "Chronicles of Barabbas," reminiscences of his fifty years of publishing, shortly to be issued by Harcourt, Brace & Co.



tences from the books cited by this critic of yours and your book." I added that if he had in his library copies of the books from which these quotations were taken he never could convince anyone that he had not deliberately appropriated the work of others. He calmed. He admitted possession of these particular books. What should he do! It was too late to recall the issue of the *Post*—in fact, Kohlmaat, its owner, had to choose between permitting the issue to go on or risk the resignation of his editor Clover.

There followed in Sunday's *Times-Herald*, the morning paper owned by Kohlmaat, a statement by Hillis and one by the owner: the preacher affirmed he had not the slightest consciousness of plagiarism, and the publisher expressed his great distress that unwittingly he had become party to the alleged exposé. It was all in such good part that Central Church and that part of Chicago at all interested accepted the statements at face value and the incident was closed.

Some months later, perhaps a year or two, the pulpit of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, was vacated by the resignation of Dr. Lyman Abbott. When this high place was offered to Dr. Hillis, he accepted it with little hesitation, for to him Henry Ward Beecher's old church was the height of ambition for any American preacher. Then one fateful day came the real blow. The *Sun* printed the preface to "A Man's Value to Society" and parallel with it, a preface from a very early book by Professor David Swing. No mistaking the damning indictment. An afternoon at five o'clock just at closing time as I was about to leave my office Dr. Hillis came in a state of complete perturbation and distress and begged me to give him some time for an important discussion. It was a very grave situation and yet there was a perfectly straightforward and manly way of meeting it. I endeavored to show him that way. To me it was perfectly clear what had happened. When I had exacted the preface for "A Man's Value to Society," Dr. Hillis had said to his wife:

IN MY BOOK. THE RESULT WAS THAT I HAD A colored sheet of foolscap and the wonderful preface. He admitted the accuracy of my statement. After considerable discussion, he agreed with me that the only thing to do was to accept the criticism bravely, boldly to state the facts, and take such consequences as might ensue, for after all it was a mere incident in a great career and his only crime had been carelessness. The next day's papers carried an interview with Dr. Hillis which stated that much to his regret and chagrin he had discovered that a young man in his publisher's office, becoming unduly impatient for a preface, had used the Swing preface without Dr. Hillis's knowledge, and that it never had occurred to Dr. Hillis to review his own work after publication.

Dr. Hillis succeeded Henry Ward Beecher and Lyman Abbott, and I lost an author, for the pastor of Plymouth Church could not entrust his publishing to so careless a young man.

Now Newell Dwight Hillis was not a plagiarist per se. There was not the slightest necessity for him to borrow, much less to steal, the work of another. He conceived more original themes and ideas than it was possible for him to utilize, but that very pressure of mental and creative activity so crowded his time that he became careless and at the last moment would hurriedly prepare for a meeting or a lecture. I have known him to get up before a Bryn Mawr audience ready to deliver an address to young men only, to be confronted by the grace and beauty of a young woman's college. He would forget wedding and funeral appointments—he was a dreamer, but a divine dreamer. He had the most photographic mind I have ever encountered. I would hand him some pages from a forthcoming book to read. In a few seconds he would return them. "But you have not read them," I would protest. Then to prove that he had he would quote sentence after sentence verbatim. He was a maker of mosaics, and if once on a time he borrowed

a bit of color from here or there, the beauty and majesty of the finished design was his and his alone. Once he said to me: "I am criticized for my mythology or my ignorance of it. The fact is that I do not find a myth to illuminate my point. I create one of my own." And he did.

My second instance is that of a very prominent, popular, and highly successful woman novelist, traveller, and playwright. I had just published a new novel of hers and its success was not only spectacular, far exceeding any previous sales of her books, but it so reacted on her earlier books that these too had a renewed and greater popularity. In this latest novel she described a certain beauty spot in Wales—a really perfect bit of descriptive writing.

One day the president and chief owner of one of the important publishing houses in New York called to see me. From his pocket he took a bundle of galley proofs—an ominous portent. He placed them quietly before me and invited my reading and careful consideration. From a book of travel published by him my author had taken bodily her Welsh picture.

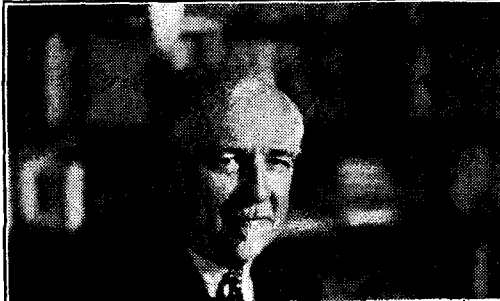
There had been offered to the editor of his monthly magazine an article showing the parallel between the two descriptions. Parallel is not quite the right word, for there were three book pages consisting of about twelve hundred words—the appropriation was shameless and complete. My visitor said: "When this was brought to my attention I instructed that its publication be withheld until I had seen you." We agreed it was not a matter for correspondence. My author lived in England. As I was planning to go abroad shortly I promised I would personally tell the author all the facts, par-

mind came more nearly to a meeting-point.

This woman never had the slightest necessity to beg, borrow, or steal from anyone anywhere. She could write rings around the man from whom she took those three pages of description, and yet for that one little temporary blind spot she hazarded the purity of her reputation. Her crime was not plagiarism but indolence, and a curious little sense of inferiority at a critical moment.

This third instance has always stood out in my mind as the most extraordinary incident in my contact with authors. A properly accredited literary agent in New York brought to me the work of a young author whose one or two books had been somewhat indifferently published by another firm. Here was the manuscript (most carefully and neatly prepared) of his next book, which had already been sold for a goodly figure to run serially in one of the most popular and widely circulated magazines in the country. As this magazine was noted for its care and discrimination in the selection of its fiction and had a large circulation monthly, there was definite reason why we should most favorably consider this author and his work. The report on the manuscript from my editor-in-chief was so favorable that a contract was drawn forthwith and in due time executed.

The magazine proposed to run the story in four monthly parts and we were permitted to publish in book form after the appearance of the third instalment, so it was incumbent on us to begin the work of type-setting and designing. This we did. The proofs were most carefully read and diligently compared with the magazine setting. The author read the proofs, but his changes were too



GEORGE H. DORAN

Photo by Blank & Stoller

able friend. On my arrival in London I immediately made contact with my author. Then I told her my story and presented my evidence. She read quietly for a short time, then she tightly clutched the papers; the color mounted high in her face, and with all the drama and emotion which have made for the popularity and success of her books, she said with great indignation:

Well, why not! Why should I not take a short cut to a scene which this other writer knows so much better than I? For years lines from my plays, paragraphs from my books, ideas from my plots—all these have been appropriated by others. Why should not I do a little compensating borrowing on my own account?

And so she went on with her specious defense until I began to feel that I was the culprit and that her wrath was being vented upon me as the person who had brought this shame needlessly upon her. I allowed her passionate resentment to work itself out, for it was clear she was distressed and merely sparring for time or some possibility of advantage. Then I said to her:

My dear, you must be flattered that so many have taken tidbits from your tables of bounty, but surely you do not contend that two wrongs make one right. Surely you are too rich in creative genius and ability to permit yourself to become sponsor for another's work, no matter how clever it may be. Then think of the generosity of my American rival—just suppose he had published this article; conceive of your mortification. Be practical for a moment and think of the real material damage to your reputation and your income if this exposé had put you forever under suspicion with editors and critics, and rather more than all else, the deadly effect of the whispering-gallery among your readers.

I held forth along this line until our

copies, and upon our representations booksellers subscribed advance orders sufficient to justify our thoughtful consideration of reprinting in advance of publication. Altogether a highly gratifying discovery!

The third instalment had appeared in the magazine, our publication date had been fixed, copies were packed ready to release for review, publicity had been scheduled, and all was set for a successful launching. Then one morning the magazine editor sent an SOS call to my editor and arranged an immediate meeting. From somewhere out in Colorado (Boulder, I think) came a letter from an Englishman, retired to the genial and invigorating climate of the Rockies. In this letter he told of having read some years ago this particular story of our young author. He gave chapter and verse for his statements. The title had been altered and the names of the principal characters changed, but otherwise he could detect no change from the original version, which he had enjoyed so much that his memory carried the complete thread of the story and, in addition, the title under which it first had been published. From this information we were able to trace the history of the book in America. It had been published in the year 1891. There was no American copyright but all American rights had been purchased for a lump sum. The first protective step was to acquire from the American publisher all his property rights in the book and its plates. This was easily arranged and, fortunately, they had preserved a file copy which accompanied the transfer to my company.

Next we sought the author, but he had died and we could find no trace of existing proprietary British rights in the book. A very careful comparison of the origi-

nal publication was made with the manuscript and with the corrected proofs submitted by our author. We found the Colorado correspondent to be absolutely correct in his statements, for the only changes were in the title, the names of characters, and slight alterations in phrasing, the better to conceal its British origin.

Armed with these facts, I sent for our young author and confronted him with the evidence. He attempted a little bluffing but yielded quickly to the irrefutable testimony of the original book. His defense was that he happened upon this old book, had been intrigued by its plot, and thought to utilize some of its features in the book he had planned next to write. Later, under pressure of financial necessity (this being 1929 and brokers were calling for margins) he boldly took over the old book lock, stock, and barrel, made the few changes indicated, carefully transcribed it on his own typewriter—three copies, one for the magazine, one for us, and one for himself. Properly cornered, he owned up to everything and penitently sought a way out of his predicament.

We were in a difficult position. I did not want to compound a felony and yet as we had acquired all rights the felony existed only against ourselves. The magazine proprietors were in a hopeless predicament. They could scarcely be expected blandly and needlessly to explain to their millions of readers that they had been duped, so they felt the compulsion of silence, the more so as the issue containing the fourth instalment was printed and bound and ready for distribution. To destroy those copies without hope of recompense was too great a penalty. Then, too, there was the time-element, for so large a reprinting could not be accomplished without fatal delay in distribution. A graceful and complete retirement was their only remaining course. This they did. As for ourselves, our position was entirely different. We asked for the restoration of *status quo ante*—that we be reimbursed for all cash advances made and for our costs of typesetting, plate-making, print-

brokerage house with Wall Street connections.

There remained the problem of the author as a man and as a writer. No doubt of his talent and less doubt of his cleverness. Why not make an effort to save him rather than to destroy him? He was penitent if for no other reason than the dread fear of literary execution and extinction, and who was I to deny him right and opportunity to reconstruct his life?

I made the proposal that we would hold him to our option on his next three books but that we would deal with each book on its merits. After that he would be released to make such other publishing arrangements as he might choose. So he was paroled and probationed. We published those three books; they were increasingly better in quality and were widely read. Today he has a quiet distinction all his own—not quite all his own, for he married a shrewd and intelligent newspaper woman who has taken into her hands the direction of his life and letters, and she does his typewriting.

Those three instances I submit as proof that assimilation or plagiarism is not unconscious but that vanity (which is another name for excessive modesty and an inferiority complex) and intellectual indolence are responsible for those, even those in high places, who yield to temptation even without being conscious of the tempting.

Proper efforts at restitution were made in all three cases. The offending preface disappeared from "A Man's Value to Society"; the offending paragraphs throughout the book were deleted and substitutions (really improvements) made by the author.

My woman author journeyed to Wales and rewrote the three pages of Welsh description—her present version a classic of scenic atmosphere in printed form.

My young friend has gone straight and the world and his children would have been losers had his literary soul been damned.