

dred years, until the rest of the world catches up with us in political morality and Woodrow Wilson's dream comes true. To Mr. Grattan the mere word "neutrality" has none of the magic our more innocent public men find in it. He thinks that our experience of two World Wars has given ample grounds for the belief that the United States as now constituted cannot long remain neutral in any major war. To expect a great trading nation under capitalism to respect absolute embargoes on foreign trade is like expecting a drunkard to respect the pledge.

Mr. Grattan's book has, however, a major thesis, sustained even in his digressions: that Euro-American society is being driven, chiefly by its economic structure, into another World War (which he wisely refuses to date); that though such a war will no doubt prove destructive, there is no reason to suppose that it will mean an end to civilization; that the close of this World War will witness revolutions in victorious and defeated nations alike, from which there will emerge something like the following order: U.S.S.R., communism; United States, "democratic" fascism; Great Britain, left "democratic" socialism; France, communism; Italy, a shaky military dictatorship; Germany, communism; Japan, communism.

This sort of thing, if done with an assumption of omniscience, can be very irritating. Mr. Grattan, however, is quite willing to put his prophecy forward in the spirit of an election bet. It is a bet that cannot be settled here, and no one knows enough about social prognosis to hold Mr. Grattan up very sharply. Most of his volume, moreover, is devoted to social diagnosis, based on an undogmatic and tentative Marxism—by no means the worst instrument now available for such a purpose. Even the most temperate Marxians tend to assume that John Jones will do certain common things—loving, hating, lusting, playing, praying and the like—quite differently under "capitalism" and under "communism." In the classless society they will not do some of these things at all—no hating, no lusting, and no praying. Mr. Grattan is not for such simplicities, but he does assume that "capitalistic organization" and "economic imperialism" somehow make actual war more likely than do human greed or stupidity. He gives ample evidence that he is aware of the complexities of modern international relations, that these relations can be expressed—and only very crudely—as composed of numerous mutually dependent variables. But he constantly weighs one set of variables—the "economic" ones—out of all proportion to the others, until he seems at times dangerously near to asserting that business men will be solely responsible for the next war. He knows better than that. We'll all be responsible for it.

Crane Brinton's "The Lives of Talleyrand" was reviewed here last week.

Man, Marshal, Myth

WOODEN TITAN—HINDENBURG IN TWENTY YEARS OF GERMAN HISTORY: 1914-1934. By John W. Wheeler-Bennett. New York: William Morrow & Company. 1936. \$5.

Reviewed by BORIS ERICH NELSON

IT was Walter Rathenau who said "A man must be strong enough to forge from the peculiarity of his imperfection the perfection of his peculiarity." No Hindenburg biography to date has been consummate enough fully to recognize and present the peculiarity of the hollow wooden image that was Hindenburg, that victim of legend and veneration with a "tendency to merge into the background," making it "essential to understand fully what that background was" in order to understand him.

Unlike Emil Ludwig's condemnations, unlike Ybarra's, Schultze-Pfäelzer's, and Wetterstetten-Watson's laudations, unlike Goldsmith-Voigt's ironic debunking, this volume is a brilliantly written, penetrating interpretation of twenty years of an obscure Prussian officer's public life. More than that, it is the German balance-sheet of two decades of a bemuddled, often naive-sincere Goethean striving to emerge from darkness into light.

Just who was this man who seemed the very personification of that psychic differentiation which the nationalistic German proudly calls *Kultur*? Man, marshal, myth, symbol, and façade, he spanned the history of a great people through a kingdom, empire, republic, and dictatorship. Hindenburg was a figure-head and symbol of an age and political experiment. In 1914 he was sent to East Prussia as symbol and foil, as solid rock upon which the edifice of higher command and service was built. In 1925 he again became a symbol and foil, by accepting the presidency of the German republic, in which he did not believe. He refused to be its puppet, yet he never became its leader. Again he was the rock, the unshakable pillar which held the structure of the Bismarckian Reich and with it a nation's unqualified respect, adoration, and confidence. But apart from this very important function, he had little or no part in the actual struggle at both times.

"*Ordnung muss sein!*" It blazed and often blinded this lonely figure who in his pedantic patriotism lived to serve. *Der Alte Herr* was a nobleman with an involuntary sense of race and blood; free from vanity and false ambitions, with no love for pomp, ceremony or reward; sworn to his motto *ora et labora*. Pray—work—serve! Once he had chosen the path of duty—and not always did he consider sufficiently where his duty lay,—he would "pursue that policy with obstinate



HINDENBURG ON AN ELK HUNT, 1915. From Ludwig's "Hindenburg" (Winston).

stolidity and little discrimination" (Emil Ludwig called it "mulish obstinacy").

What were the forces, who were the men who tampered with this "giant among men, but a dumb giant"? Here is a portrait second to none of a great figure pathetic in his smallness, of a great people pitiful and tragic in their tactless way of existence. In this panorama of events and men, the author pays due and dignified tribute to the many true, but now discarded German titans. Stresemann, Brüning, Papen, Schleicher, Goering, Roehm, Hitler, and numerous others receive the searching light of new and sensational disclosures. In curt, breath-taking language he follows the shifting influences about Hindenburg, rushes through the lives of human marionettes, painting with a bold brush, intriguing, succinct, and displaying his hero against the background of events, "often dwarfed by them, always playing the part of a façade," never a creator.

... Too late did he awake to realization of the true state of things which he had created, to find himself playing the role of hostage for which he had cast Hitler. . . . Above the cheering multitudes and the songs of [Hitler's] triumphs, Hindenburg slept, and in his sleep he dreamed that he was dead. In awe he came before the Great Examiner:

"Your name . . . and what have you done in life?"

"I think, Sir, that I have done my duty."

"But have you kept your Oath?"

And in effort to find an answer to this question Hindenburg, with relief, awoke.

They were still cheering . . .

In Emil Ludwig's words: Hindenburg had millions of faithful compatriots; he did not leave behind a single friend. This latest biography by Wheeler-Bennett offers further proof.

Fair Days in New York

Saturday Review News Pictures of the Month by Robert Disraeli



Mayor LaGuardia (above) opening The New York Times National Book Fair on November 4 at Rockefeller Center, where over a thousand guests came to the preview . . .



. . . Visitors to the Fair make a tour of the seventy-four publishers' exhibits, stopping in front of Morrow's roulette book-wheel (above), and the displays (left) of Little, Brown and the Oxford University Press. (See Trade Winds, page 37, for further news of the Book Fair.)



Pamela Travers (above), author of "Mary Poppins," entertains the guests at her publishers' party for children . . . (Left) John Gunther, author of "Inside Europe," answers mail at his New York hotel.



Constance Rourke (above) autographs copies of her "Audubon" at her publishers' office; E. P. O'Donnell (left), Houghton Mifflin fellowship winner for his recent novel, "Green Margins," surveys Longacre Square.