

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thomas Hardy Centenary

SIR:—In this centenary of the birth of Thomas Hardy, when enemies are again "girding at England's loins," why not repeat his prayer?

I walked in loamy Wessex lanes, afar
From rail-track and from highway,
and I heard
In field and farmstead many an ancient word
Of local lineage like "Thu bist," "Er war,"
"Ich woll," "Er sholl," and by-talk similar,
Nigh as they speak who in this month's moon gird
At England's very loins, thereunto spurred
By gangs whose glory threats and slaughter are.

Then seemed a Heart crying: "Who-soever they be
At root and bottom of this, who flung this flame
Between kin folk kin tongued even as are we,
Sinister, ugly, lurid, be their fame;
May their familiars grow to shun their name,
And their brood perish everlastingly."

F. C. PRESCOTT.

Ithaca, N. Y.

Culture at Large

SIR:—Signs of culture among the college bred:

From a student's essay in English 41B, composition course at the University of California:

"The elementary and secondary schools of America are still in the backwoods stage, weighed down by backwoods notions, parochial limitations, suburban rule. They have done those things which they ought not to have done and left undone those things which they ought to have done and there is no health in them."

Instructor's comment, on margin, concerning the last sentence: "This has the imposing sound of a Matthew Arnold generalization."

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON.
Berkeley, Calif.

The American Senator

SIR:—As a member of the Trollope Society, I was pleased to receive a few days ago a copy of "The American Senator," newly published in attractive format by Random House.

Mr. Henry S. Drinker, in his Introduction to the novel, states: "It has not been republished for more than fifty years. Many confirmed Trollopeans have never had a chance to read it."



"Here's a hot number, Dante's *Inferno*."

May I call Mr. Drinker's attention to the fact that "The American Senator" and some twenty other titles by Trollope are available in the handy little World Classics series, published by the Oxford University Press. In The World Classics "The American Senator" was first published in 1931. It has been in my library since then.

J. FRANKLIN BRADLEY.
Louisville, Ky.

Information, Please

SIR:—I am writing a biography (juvenile) of Simon Bolivar, the South American Liberator. I am especially anxious to trace any descendants of the Colombian Foreign Legion, numbering some 6000 Europeans and North Americans, who may now be living in the United States. If any reader can assist me with information on this point, or with any general material, I shall be deeply grateful.

NINA BROWN BAKER.
49 Garden Place, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dissent to Dissent

SIR:—Having read "The First to Awaken," by Granville Hicks, Fletcher Pratt's critique of the book in SRL, and now Mr. Hicks's "dissent," in this week's issue of the *Review*, I diffidently stick my neck out both to dissent from the dissenter Hicks and to friend Pratt's animadversions anent the book.

"Mr. Pratt," quoth Hicks, "has never liked utopian novels—perhaps because they usually abolish wars and there-

fore, by implication, military experts." Fie! Mr. Hicks, so to give a hint that Mr. Pratt is angered because he is a military expert, on the wholly erroneous guess that he is incompetent to judge utopian fiction. What Mr. Hicks evidently does not know is that, with the possible exception of Mr. A. Merritt, Mr. Pratt is quite probably the greatest present day American authority on fantastic and utopian romance.

A second statement wide of the mark attributed to Mr. Pratt is this: "I might leave out that bit about frequent recourse to psychiatric repairmen. It's a swell line, but there's nothing in the book to justify it." I do not recall such a thought in Fletcher's review, for he surely approved the chapter on "The Course of Justice." This chapter is one of the best in the book.

But, I dissent from Mr. Pratt in dismissing the book so superficially. While the utopia of Mr. Hicks undoubtedly leaves many doubts in one's mind, and is rather heavy reading for a book of this type, on the whole he has done a constructive bit of imaginative planning, and deserves to be read for its vision of an entirely possible kind of future world.

SAMUEL B. HOWE.
Cranberry Lake, New Jersey.

"Harlem Literati in the Twenties," which appeared in our issue of June 22, constituted a chapter from Langston Hughes's forthcoming biography which will be published by Alfred A. Knopf this summer. We regret the omission of this note.

Mr. Hitler's "New Sparta"

INTO THE DARKNESS. By Lothrop Stoddard. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc. 1940. 311 pp., with index. \$2.75.

Reviewed by SHEPARD STONE

BY an overwhelming majority we would undoubtedly all agree that the most vital problem before the United States today is Nazi Germany. The more we know, the more we can find out about that country and its leaders, the better off we shall be in the days to come.

Not that we have been kept in the dark thus far. The student of the future—if the future has Lebensraum for such quiet fellows—will probably wonder how it came to pass that the politicians and generals of Western Europe were completely unprepared to meet the mighty military machine which Adolf Hitler drove across Europe in 1940. For in the yellowed files of our newspapers, Volumes 1930-1939, they will find the facts: what Hitler was doing each day to weld 65,000,000-77,000,000 people into a ruthless military machine, and why he was doing it. The warning signals were in the headlines, but the politicians and generals preferred to be fools and allowed the foreign correspondents to be the philosopher.

Now, at an appropriate time, Lothrop Stoddard, who for a few months last winter represented the North American Newspaper Alliance in Germany, comes along to give us his description of Hitler's Reich or, as he puts it, the "New Sparta." What he has to say is not startling. For Americans the most pertinent part of his report is the statement he has written on the volume's jacket:

We should not fly to the panicky conclusion that the Germans are supermen. Most of them impressed me as quite ordinary persons whose achievements are due to sheer hard work and self-sacrifice under iron discipline for common ends. If we Americans will work as hard in united, disciplined endeavor, we can do as well or better. And we can do it without sacrificing our basic institutions and ideals.

Here, as any foreigner who has lived in Germany for years would probably be willing to say, is sound advice and a good antidote for the jitters. It is something for us all to keep in mind in the days and months to come.

Mr. Stoddard's book suffers from a number of limitations. First of all he rarely goes very far below the surface, and as he himself admits, conflicts exist in Germany which do not appear in the light of day. Only infrequently does he approach the penetrating analysis of the Nazi system which Otto Tolischus has been making in recent years in the *New York Times*.

"Into the Darkness" also is handicapped by the fact that its author spent only three months or so in the Reich, from October, 1939 until February or March, 1940. Consequently Mr. Stoddard was unable to do for Germany what James Bryce did for the United States. Unfortunately, too, the months he spent with the Nazis came during a lull in the war and what has happened since in Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France has made sections of his book somewhat irrelevant. Too frequently "Into the Darkness" gives the impression of a Baedeker written by a tourist who has been taken in hand by the proper authorities and shown

only the right places and people. Mr. Stoddard's idea of getting off to a good start in his investigation was to put himself in the hands of a member of the Nazi foreign office.

Mr. Stoddard is open to another criticism. In describing Nazi accomplishments he fails to show the importance of terror in the Hitler scheme of things. The Nazis have built roads, tanks, planes and stadia; but what have they done to some of the finer qualities of the German character, to human liberties, to decent relations among men? Mr. Stoddard falls down on us here.

Once this has been said, the worst has been said. In its calm presentation and for some of its factual information, "Into the Darkness" is worthy of study. Fundamentally, Mr. Stoddard says, it is important to keep in mind that the Nazi leaders and their movement were the normal by-products of an abnormal situation, of more than a quarter century of confusion in German life—war, defeat, and depression.

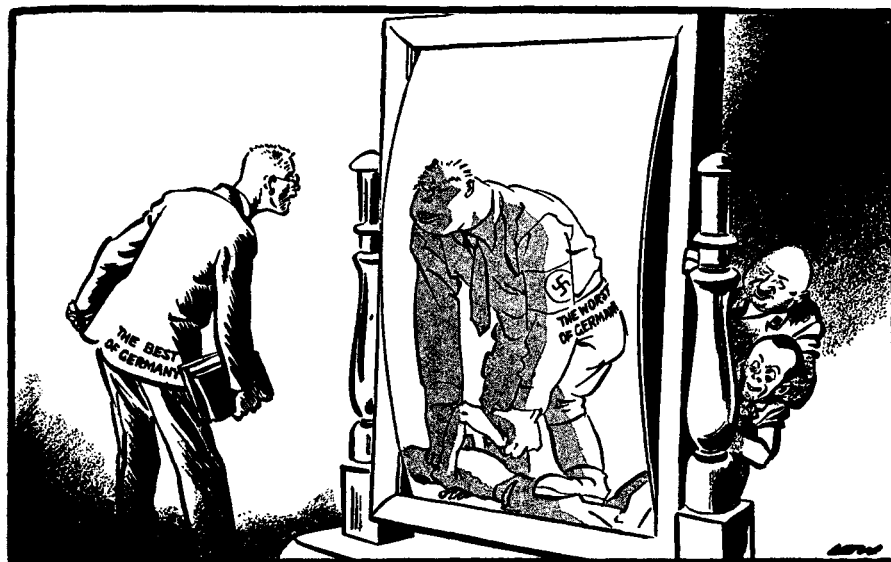
How did the Nazis do it? Mr. Stoddard's answer is simple: An absolute dictatorship directing and controlling every field of life and ruling over an industrious and resourceful people. The Nazi leaders are determined, they know what they want, and they do not shrink from any method to achieve their goal.

In the "New Sparta," Mr. Stoddard points out, the individual means little, the Nazi racial-State means all. He presents some valuable facts about Nazi accomplishments on the agricultural, labor, financial, social, youth, and propaganda fronts. He describes the rigid efficiency of the rationing system and the hardships it imposed. He shows how a determined regime carrying a club on its shoulder—though frequently he doesn't see the club—has been able to mobilize a nation behind it. And he indicates what is unquestionably true that the Nazis have won wide support as a result of some of their activities.

His portraits of many Nazi leaders, particularly of Hitler and Himmler, head of the Gestapo, both of whom he interviewed, make interesting reading.

Mr. Stoddard has little to say about the Nazi military machine. Neither does he quite see that everything the Nazis did between 1933 and 1940 was aimed at forging that machine into the mightiest weapon the world has ever seen. The many questions now facing us all are not answered in this book.

Shepard Stone, a member of the editorial staff of the *New York Times*, is the author of "Shadow over Europe," published by the Foreign Policy Association.



(From "A Cartoon History of Our Times" by Low)
"Himmel! Is that me?"