

phrase of so much indiscriminate criticism of Kipling's verse.

No critic has heretofore explained that Kipling is "completely ambidextrous, that is to say completely able to express himself in verse or prose" and while this fact cannot be said to be newly discovered evidence this heretofore unrecognized characteristic seems to have eluded other critics and commentators and constitutes a fresh tribute to Kipling's versatility.

Those who admire and enjoy Kipling—and their number is legion (despite the allegations of Edmund Wilson)—owe a further debt of gratitude to Eliot for his discernment in realizing that the lack of social justice to the discharged soldier has been the partial motive of numerous ballads with Tommy Atkins as the subject. Other critics in decrying earthiness, seeking flaws, and searching for imperialistic bias, have entirely overlooked this point of view. It is also noteworthy that Eliot realizes and appreciates the tolerance of Kipling, a fact which up to this time seems to have escaped critical attention. It may well be added that, to this reviewer's knowledge, no critic of Kipling has either properly grasped or attempted to express the fact that to Kipling the British Empire was not an idea but "it was something the reality of which he felt. And in his expression of his feeling he was not aiming at flattery of national, racial or imperial vanity or attempting to propagate a political program."

Eliot has dealt sparingly and fairly with the paucity and shortcomings of past and contemporary criticisms of Kipling but he has shown an awareness that the lazy critic is tempted to belittle through lack of effort and understanding. The thoroughness and erudition of this scholarly preface, in contradistinction to other writings on the same subject, will forever clear the essayist should any indiscriminate charge be made. For this reason it is difficult to understand his assertion that Kipling's poetry lacks form and pattern. This criticism does not coincide with either his knowledge or understanding, for it would seem apparent that the essayist's realization that Kipling's versatility, range of subject matter, and variety of form cannot conform to what Henry James called "the figure in the carpet" is one of many elements which constitute Kipling's greatness. Those who have an interest in and possess a knowledge of Kipling can hardly fail to disagree with Eliot's statement that Kipling was a hymn writer even though "Recessional" was thrust into that category when it was set to music. It seems obvious that this poem can hardly be bracketed with

the traditional hymn by any accepted standard.

It is generally understood that it is the duty of a review of this sort to assume a critical approach. To do so in the case of Eliot's preface is difficult because of its high attainment and its few and at the same time con-

troversial shortcomings. Whether or not we agree or disagree with certain opinions, it is evident that this essay will always be regarded as a work of outstanding importance in the field of Kiplingiana as long as Rudyard Kipling's prose and poetry are read and appreciated.

The Demigod of Evil

THE WAR FOR MAN'S SOUL. By Ernest Jackh. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1943. 295 pp. \$2.50.

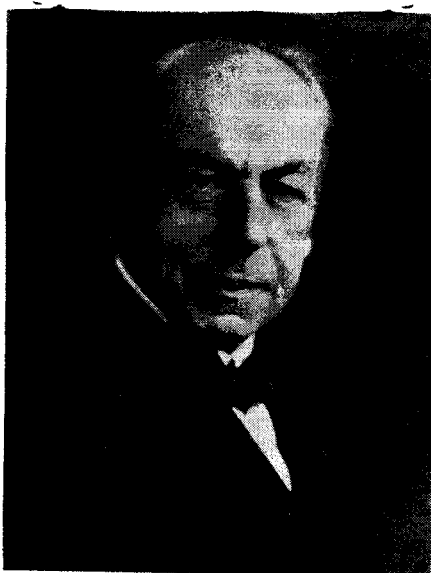
Reviewed by GEORGE N. SHUSTER

TO Dr. Jackh, Hitler is an agent of something even more sinister than military destruction. He is a demigod of evil, a "re-creator of the world" in the sense that he seeks to refashion the soul of man after his own likeness. The ultimate blasphemy is incarnate in him. These things have already been said by commentators on the Nazi movement, but the founder of the famed Berlin *Hochschule für Politik* has possibly spelled them out in terms Americans can understand. It still seems to us incredible that the issue can really be between good and evil. Perhaps one must have lived under the terror, as Jackh did, to realize what it means.

He wears a good part of his heart on his sleeve. After 1930, he was engaged in the final German struggle against Nazism. Three years later he was scheming to prevent an institution which was an act of allegiance to the democratic creed from being perverted into a sinister propaganda weapon. One long chapter describes his conversations with Hitler on the subject. But the best sections of the book set forth the efforts of German Democrats, in the narrower sense, to prevent what

happened. This group had not been accorded sufficient attention outside Germany. It consisted of intelligent idealists who tried to divine the trend of modern social development. They had ideas, plenty of them, but they lacked ways of finding mass support for those ideas. Possibly this weakness was not their fault. Nothing could be more difficult than to convey to people who are not thinking the product of deep thought. Jackh quotes examples which will seem strange to many of his readers, but are in fact plainly and simply true. Thus he shows that poor Moeller van der Bruck, whose "Third Reich" the Nazis expropriated, was by no means a Nazi but a man who realized that Europe could not live in the strait-jacket of pre-1914 political, economic, and cultural habit. He presents a Bethmann-Hollweg who foresaw, as did Viscount Grey, the things which were to come. But a Germany in which demonism was latent swept all these men and their successors aside to make room for the "insignificant person" from Braunau.

How shall one overcome Nazism? Jackh has an old-fashioned belief in Providence. President Roosevelt is the predestined antithesis to Hitler. Under the leadership of the American President there began to be obvious in the world of affairs a program, a policy, bearing a spiritual stamp radically different from Hitler's. It is now imperative that this program and this policy be carried through to the end. Jackh has ideas on the subject. Being both a political scientist and a religious idealist, he keeps one foot on terra firma while raising the other in the hope of alighting on some beneficent star. The position may be a little awkward. Thus he writes: "For the safety and continued existence of the world community two factors are indispensable—a fundamental respect for man's soul, and the potential control of the oceans." That may sound like joining fire and the date-palm, Bermuda and a ski-jump. But there is a good deal in it nevertheless. The South Germans whom Jackh represents see life that way. And so I think that this book may be termed an honest, heart-warming profession of faith, even as it is a commentary on the well-nigh mortal disease of our time.



Ernest Jackh

My Student Days in Germany

The Duel: Second of An Occasional Series

STRUTHERS BURT

BEFORE I went to a German university I was told that I would be challenged to a duel; several perhaps, one or two surely. And then I was told what to do.

The tradition of how to behave when challenged to a duel had been handed down from generation to generation of English and American students. You looked very fierce, even if you wanted to laugh at the insulting absurdity, then you began slowly to peel off your coat, and when you had peeled off your coat, you adopted the attitude of what was known as "the boxing." This, I was told, never failed to work, as the German student, so keen about the *schläger* and the sabre, had a horror of fists. He considered them ungentelemanly.

This, of course, was before the time of Max Schmeling, but I am informed that even the example of that concentration-camp sportsman did not altogether destroy the German dislike of close physical contact, and there were moments in Schmeling's own career when it looked as if he shared the prejudice. The German idea of man-to-man fighting, I discovered, was to sweep aside suddenly, and without warning, a smaller opponent, especially if he wasn't looking, by a straight-arm or a hay-maker, and then to walk away rapidly before the smaller opponent could get to his feet. I never saw this done between men of equal size.

But when it came to duelling, an American, or an Englishman, invariably, as the challenged party, had the advantage. His was the choice of weapons, and why decade after decade this blind-alley had never occurred to the German mind, I don't know. Anyway, decade after decade they had challenged, only to have to capitulate at the cost of considerable national and spiritual discomfort. Occasionally the discomfort was physical—that was when the Englishman or American was really angry. There was the famous story, for example, of the American varsity pitcher who chose baseballs—three, at thirty paces—to the initial amusement of his tormentors. The first ball whistled past his opponent's right ear, the second, past his left, the third, knocked him senseless. And there was the equally famous story of the young Englishman, a crack shot, who chose pistols, and then, in the week preceding the duel, appeared casually in neighboring forests, and whenever he saw

people approaching neatly clipped off a topmost pine cone, or something of the sort. On the day of the duel his opponent was ill in bed with a fever.

As most people know, there were, or rather, are, two kinds of German student duelling, forbidden under the recent republic, revived by Hitler who never fought a duel in his life. It is interesting to note that if the Fuehrer in his early days had challenged a student, or other civilian, the student or other civilian would have laughed at him, or if, in a moment of insanity he had challenged an officer, the officer, without ceremony, would have run him through. So far as that was the Fuehrer beneath the social plane of duelling.

Schläger duelling, the ordinary form of student duelling, was—is—a rite, a ritual, a code, and a perverted form of athletics. If you belonged to a fighting-verein, and practically all but the Catholic ones were fighting-vereins, you were supposed to fight at least three *schläger* duels before you were a member in good standing. Sabre duelling was different—also baseballs and pistols. Sabre duelling meant serious business and so was rare. If you were a foreigner, however, and a member of a fighting-verein, you were more or less excused. With unwonted broad-mindedness, it was admitted that young foreigners, for some strange and amusingly effeminate reason, did not like to go through life looking as if they had survived a good bout of unattended small-pox or a mild case of elephantiasis. As for yourself, the more scars you had, deliberately cultivated, indented welts, the more famous you were. It was like being an All-American with your varsity letter tattooed on your face. When you entered a restaurant, peering about with truculent ice-blue eyes above swollen cheeks, everybody looked at you, and there was a hush, and then everybody whispered. And it was said that German maidens, with feminine willingness to trade masculine beauty for masculine achievement, found such scars irresistible. Virtue fell like nine-pins before them.

I never understood the rationale of *schläger* duelling; it wasn't fun, and it wasn't sport, and it wasn't in the least hazardous, and it wasn't even very skilful. But then, I am a barbarian and a member of a decadent democracy. It was supposed to train young men to hardihood and the sight



—Philadelphia Bulletin.
Danse Macabre

of blood, but it seemed to me with considerable less loss of time, and with none of the punctilio, the same results could have been achieved by the misuse of a safety-razor, and then the students could have gone out-of-doors to indulge in some game requiring actual skill and courage. As to the blood theory, if it be true, then butchers are the bravest of men.

THE *schläger* is an immensely long, thin sword, not much wider than a razor and ground to a razor's sharpness. It is slightly curved, and has a blunt end and a basket hilt to protect your hand. When you fight, you stand close together, one arm behind you, your sword arm crooked and above your head, and all the action is with the wrist. The object is to flick pieces of flesh from the scalp and face of your opponent, and you mustn't give way an inch, or grimace, and, under no circumstances, omit an "ouch!", or its German equivalent. The bouts take place in a hall, or cockpit, designed for the purpose, and there are numerous spectators, most of them members of the vereins involved. There is always a young surgeon in attendance whose duty it is to stop the fight if there is too much loss of blood, or between rounds, to sew up long wounds and doctor small ones. He operates in as brutal a manner as possible in order to further indoctrinate the young men in courage, also in order that the scars may heal badly. This, naturally, is good for the young surgeon, too—it teaches him not to be sentimental in his future practice. If you achieve good wounds, you put salt in them and keep them open to make spectacular scars.

Schläger duelling is an unbelievably gory spectacle. Foreigners with weak stomachs have been known to vomit. And the tendency to turn green is not helped by the foul air, the pipe and cigarette smoke, and the smell of fresh or stale beer. But *schläger* duelling is