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Mann, Klaus

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ters on Cézanne and Lautrec alone. Moreover, the text is liberally sprinkled with typographical errors—one is amazed to learn that it was Louis XIV (*sic*) who was guillotined in what is now the Place de la Concorde—and the printer has been permitted to juggle light-heartedly with the French accents. The best sections of the book are the three introductory chapters which deal with the colorful Parisian background, and the thirty-two excellent reproductions of works by the rebel painters.

GERSTLE MACK

Berlin, Pre-Swastika

GOODBYE TO BERLIN. By Christopher Isherwood. Random House. \$2.50.

THE young English writer Christopher Isherwood—author of the novel "The Last of Mr. Norris" and collaborator in the plays of W. H. Auden—has published a collection of stories called "Goodbye to Berlin." These stories form a loosely connected sequence; they are fragments of a big novel which Isherwood once planned to write. There is nothing sensational about them. They are the product of a melancholy and witty irony which looks coolly and deeply into its material.

Why have they moved me so strongly? Because they describe the Berlin which I know; because they conjure up people, streets, and landscapes which once filled me with love or exasperation; because they picture the *real* Berlin—not the Berlin of the guidebooks, or the conducted tours, or the diplomatic memoirs; not "the wickedest city in Europe"; not the Berlin of splendor and parade which famous journalists have so brilliantly described.

Many faces appear, vanish, and reappear in these stories. They read like the pages of a swiftly written journal. Only two of them, the first and the last, are entitled "Berlin Diary," but the other four are also autobiographical and told in the first person singular. A young English writer and language teacher named Christopher Isherwood comes to feel, during the years 1930 to 1933, that he is almost a native of Berlin. By nature he seems rather passive, but observant, extremely intelligent, witty, and gifted with a fine understanding of all sorts of human beings. In these last, confused, nervous "pre-Hitler" years he sees a great deal, and he writes it down. The "real" Isherwood, author of this book and creator of his own shadow-self, refuses absolutely—so he tells us in his preface—to be confused or identified with his "false" double. And this proves that the "real" Isherwood underestimates the "false." For the "false" Isherwood, the eloquent but discreet hero and narrator, is an interesting figure. A man who can understand and so effectively present the predicaments of others cannot be without his own significant experiences. But the "false," or the "real," Isherwood is silent about the problems and complications of his own existence. What he has to tell us about those of others is, however, varied and fascinating enough.

They could scarcely be described as important, these characters of his; nor are they always sympathetic—but they are always touching, and if they seldom earn our admiration or respect, they at least arouse our pity. Take Fräulein Schröder, for example, the gossiping, smugly corrupt landlady of a

fourth-rate *pension*, apparently a minor character but really, perhaps, the spiritual center of the book; take the little gigolos, the mixer, Fräulein Mayr the Bavarian *Jodlerin*, and Fräulein Kost who "walks the line"; take the daughters of two good Jewish families, Hippi Bernstein and Natalia Landauer; take the boys from the dubious Alexander Casino; take Herr and Frau Nowak, the proletarian couple with their three children—no, there is nothing great about any of them, nothing extraordinary, nothing distinguished. But they are human beings: their actions and reactions, cares and quarrels, pleasures and lusts are spontaneous and often moving, by virtue of their very naivete.

In addition, and with the same mixture of sympathy, sarcasm, and mild astonishment which he brings to his observation of the Berliners, Isherwood has described some of his compatriots. There is the eccentric Sally Bowles, heroine of an excellent story, the would-be demi-mondaine, the sham *Dame aux Camélias*. Sally, who comes of a respectable British family, has nothing but bad luck with her men. For all her affected viciousness, she is touchingly ignorant of the ways of the world, and falls victim, at last, to the clumsy tricks of a sixteen-year-old swindler. Charming, silly little Sally certainly isn't a heroic character. Yet this foreign girl, astray from her class and her traditions, is shown, subtly and effectively, as representing the style and mood of a whole shattered society—a society which was also astray and heading for its total overthrow, into the Third Reich.

Isherwood is neither a reporter nor a preacher of morals; as a discreet and somewhat romantic realist he likes indirect methods. The people he presents to us—the petty bourgeoisie and unsuccessful bohemians, the well-to-do business men and the pleasure-seeking foreigners, the workers and the minor criminals—are entirely, or almost entirely, preoccupied by their private affairs. Their talk is of love, of money, of the weather, of their professional prospects and their little intrigues. Nevertheless, politics play a dominating part in the lives of these men and women, and in the development of this book which describes them. Its "intimate" character is only apparent; it is in reality eminently political. Isherwood aspires to portray the decay and rapid transformation of the German capital, in epic form. He tries to make clear *how it happened*. In many passages he most impressively succeeds.

The shadow of the swastika lies, already, upon his opening pages; and as these stories carry us forward, from 1930 to 1933, it becomes heavier, more solid, more threatening. Do not all the faces that we meet here—the human, touchingly comic faces—carry somewhere, secretly, the mark of the curse? Are they not all stumbling toward a precipice? That precipice is the Third Reich. And into it they fall.

A few will not notice what has happened to them. Fräulein Schröder, for example, will scarcely be aware of the change. But others, the more highly developed natures, will be destroyed. Bernhard Landauer—perhaps the most complex, most delicate character in the book—must die. He is the young head of a big department store, a skeptical philosopher and collector of antiques. The Nazis murder him. What will become of the Nowaks? One of the sons was a Nazi. Is he still believing in Hitler today? Or is he disillusioned?

There is nobody to answer these questions. The young English writer and language teacher who saw so much has

gone: Berlin became a nightmare for him at last. Darkness falls on the great, lovable, ugly city. The foreigner must abandon her to her fate. May it be merciful! The men and women to whom Isherwood has introduced us cannot all have turned suddenly into monsters. But they can make mistakes, and sin through ignorance; they can become guilty, and they can atone.

Auf Wiedersehen, Berlin!

KLAUS MANN

Made in U.S.A.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY WITH LETTERS. By William Lyon Phelps. Oxford University Press. \$3.75.

"EVEN as a little child," records Professor Phelps, "I responded gratefully—and usually with surprise—to any acts of kindness or to any courtesies from older people," and his autobiography relates his almost infinite gratitude for life's almost infinite courtesies. How could he not be gay? His heart had always thumped when he thought of Yale, the undergraduates walking like gods down the streets, and to teach there was very bliss. From his Yale children it was only a step to his Sunday children in Brooklyn, his Saturday children in Manhattan, his Philadelphia children. Culture and paternity advancing hand in hand, other cities, the entire continent, would soon succumb to their joyous union, and did. A little more cautious, the Yale faculty did not take so much longer really to capitulate to a charm which one is tempted to characterize as virulent, and they were the first of the more learned Friends of Billy Phelps—Santayana, Hardy, Riley, Galsworthy, Conrad, Chesterton—the accounts of whom form a valuable portion of Professor Phelps's volume.

Reading over the 1,000 pages of memories, anecdotes, homilies, apologies, appreciations, revelations, which describe Professor Phelps's life and friendships, it is impossible for us also not to feel admiration and amazement. Expounding T and B (Tennyson and Browning) to 500 undergraduates, playing golf with Glenna Collett, editing Chapman, writing to Galsworthy on the use of the double possessive, studying Schopenhauer, addressing a convention of school teachers in Charlotte, shooting quail in Atlanta—into each of these Professor Phelps pours his energies without conflict, and from each draws the inevitable happy returns. In our uneasy period he gives us the history of a colossal happiness. And if today we are inclined to regard such excessive joy with a certain suspicion, Professor Phelps, it is true, has had to make his concessions to achieve it. Occasionally we cannot help considering him a sort of Henry Ford of culture—the raw books flowing into his library at one end of a spiritual assembly line, and the finished verdicts flowing out at the other; only whereas the automobile manufacturer must have his shutdowns, Professor Phelps, controlling his supplies and his distribution with an efficiency any monopolist might envy, has continually and for over fifty years speeded up production.

If such an association seems incongruous for a scholar, it is simply because we do not realize that the essence of Professor Phelps lies in his fusion of our national temperament with learning. He is as indigenous as Coney Island and the McCormick reaper. Like the Mississippi he is an American

phenomenon, and like it also he is more a force of nature than a solitary individual. Although the pages of the "Autobiography" are studded with learned quotations in varied languages, their watermark is always U. S. A., and they reveal the immense energy of our society, our hero-worship, tolerance, pragmatic curiosity, sentimentality, and geniality. Professor Phelps showed thousands of citizens that reading novels is fun, that Hamlet is as exciting as a brass band, and that he could be equally passionate about Browning and baseball. His success comes from this, of course, and his virtue is that, however imperfectly and sometimes almost by sleight of hand, he transferred the American vision from material to spiritual objects. And if, bringing the classics to the provinces, Professor Phelps was sometimes forced to describe them as a Sears-Roebuck catalogue might classify a Botticelli, he was always working toward a better future. When the Dies committee investigates Billy Phelps, it will find that he is a propagandist for civilization.

MAXWELL GEISMAR

United States of the World

UNION NOW. By Clarence K. Streit. Harper and Brothers. \$3.

MR. STREIT'S book is remote from present-day realities—which does not mean that it is without value, for the fundamental idea that underlies it is right. I agree with Mr. Streit that we shall ultimately have to come to what he calls "union," that is to say, a United States of the civilized world, but "union now" is a different proposition and, I fear, quite an impracticable one. We all know that neither England nor France nor the United States, to say nothing of the other countries that Mr. Streit proposes to include, would even consent to discuss it. It is an ideal which may at last be reached after many years of propaganda in its favor.

Nor can I agree that, if Mr. Streit's proposal could come into operation immediately, it would be a remedy for the present international situation. Our immediate task is to stop a new barbarian invasion which threatens to overwhelm European civilization. It can be stopped only by a combination—that is, a defensive alliance—of all the countries, whether nominally democratic or not, prepared to join in it. It is much to be feared that the "Union" of Mr. Streit's fifteen democracies at the present moment might drive the other countries into the arms of Germany. I do not share Mr. Streit's confidence that Russia, for example, would be friendly to such a Union.

The European countries included in the fifteen are England, France, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Holland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland—Mr. Streit is doubtful with reason about Finland. Of these countries England and France alone have any military strength to speak of. If they were confronted by a combination of all the other European countries, the United States would have to bear the brunt of the inevitable war. Mr. Streit says: "No serious foreign trade problem would remain for the Union and no outside country could withstand the bargaining power of this rich market with its monopoly control of essential raw materials." The other countries would hardly be likely to regard this as a