

## **Verbundkatalog Kalliope**

### **"Reaching for the Stars"...**

**Mann, Klaus**

**New York, 1939-03-23**

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"Reaching for the Stars" has impressed me deeply. Miss Nora Waln certainly knows Germany much more intimately than most foreigners do, and she has the literary power to describe Germany's beauties in the most vivid style. With <sup>i</sup>satisfaction and profound emotion I have recognized in her plastic prose many details I am familiar with and ~~of~~ love.

Miss Waln, by nature as well as by education, is more inclined to admire than to hate. She prefers to praise charming objects rather than to utter her abhorrence ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> bad institutions and wicked men. Her mild and mellow spirit is influenced by the philosophy of the Quakers and by the ancient wisdom of China. It is just this comprehensive, <sup>e</sup>tolerant attitude which makes her observations and descriptions poetical and moving.

She is ready to understand many things - too many, perhaps. The "human side" of social ~~or private~~ affairs is the matter she is concerned with. She is interested in human beings - in their great sufferings and ~~and~~ little joys - rather than in principles or doctrines. <sup>e</sup>Obviously, she does not like the Nazis. All her instincts and convictions are opposed to Nazi barbarism. It is <sup>e</sup>of highest importance to have the testimony of this noble, thoroughly objective woman - a testimony which ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> speaking strikingly against ~~the~~ Nazi theory and ~~the~~ Nazi practice. Many critics of Nazism over-emphasized the Jewish angle. This is erroneous and even dangerous. Miss Waln, however, avoids this frequent mistake. She realizes that Antisemitism is only a symptom of the general Nazi attitude which is opposed to Christianity and to civilisation altogether.

There can't be any doubt that Miss Waln was shocked and disgusted by many things she had to witness in the Third Reich. She does not hide her just indignation. But she expresses it in a ~~careful~~ careful, reluctant way.

She is devoted to German culture and feels enthusiastically about

the fine qualities of German people. That is exactly the way I feel:  
I fight the Nazis because I am a German patriot - although not a Ger=  
man nationalist, by any means. German music is wonderful, German forests  
and rivers are lovely, and the old little cities are most picturesque.  
But it seems questionable if it is the right time and hour, just now,  
to enjoy and praise all those charms. ~~and beauties~~ Many good German  
patriots feel that the various beauties of their beloved homeland are  
spoiled and ruined by a government which is humiliating the nation  
and may lead it to the final catastrophe. The strong and merciless  
indictment against the tyrants - pronounced by foreigners who have  
watched the ~~truth~~ - would mean comfort as well as actual help for  
the German patriots ~~in~~ in their fight against the Hitler régime.

Miss Waln felt it was her main task to describe and praise a Ger=  
many which is imperishable. She does <sup>so</sup> ~~it~~ with ~~some~~ unforgettable  
words. Her voice becomes weaker when <sup>she</sup> ~~it~~ has to make statements about  
ugly things, abject crimes and abominable events. She does not try to  
justify horrors. But she interrupts her indictment by repeating: "How=  
ever, Germany is such a fine country..."

Germany may become a <sup>really</sup> fine country, once more. Nora Waln who was  
may be the right person to able to discover delightful things, even in the Third Reich, ~~will~~ sing,  
one future day, the song-of-the-songs of the First German Republic.

Klaus Mann,

New York, March 25, 1939.

Dear Sirs,

Nora Waln's book "Reaching for the Stars" has deeply impressed me, and, partly, has delighted me. Miss Waln certainly knows Germany, much more intimately than most foreigners do, and she has the literary and human power to describe in the most vivid style Germany's beauties, its richness and the charms of its landscapes, its music, its architecture. With satisfaction and profound emotion, I recognized in Miss Waln's plastic prose many details I am familiar with and I love.

Miss Waln, by nature as well as by education, is much more inclined to admire than to hate. She ~~hates~~ prefers to praise charming objects, rather than to utter her abhorrence to bad institutions or ~~even~~ wicked men. Her mild and mellow spirit is influenced by the ~~long~~ philosophy of the Quakers not only, but also by the wisdom of China. All this is speaking for her character as a human being, and it is just this comprehensive, tolerant attitude which ~~gives the human and~~ makes her observations and descriptions poetical and moving.

However, there is a certain touch I miss in Nora Waln's beautifully written story. ~~About life in new Germany~~ She is ready to understand - and to ~~be~~ justify - too many things. She is able to discover the "human side" even in certain events which, for my feeling, are nothing but hideous atrocities. Obviously, she doesn't like the Nazis whose intolerance and boundless aggressiveness <sup>ye are</sup> so very definitely ~~is~~ opposed to Quaker spirit or Chinese philosophy. All the sympathies of the noble and honest woman who has written "Reaching for the Stars" belong to the "Other Germany", to the better one which is suppressed now and keeps on fighting, in the dangerous darkness of the "underground movements", or else in the doubtful freedom of exile. Those brave Germans - many of them <sup>being</sup> real martyrs for their convictions - don't expect any help from other countries. But there is one thing they expect and want: that people ~~also~~ abroad who know about Nazi

atrocities should tell the truth about ~~to their fellow men~~ <sup>them</sup>, in their own countries. It may be an ugly truth, and very repulsive to sensitive ears and minds. Still, it has to be said. To make any concessions, to hide anything means almost as much as treachery to the better Germans, to the real Germany.

Miss Nora Waln is devoted to German culture and ~~he~~ <sup>she</sup> feels enthusiastically about the fine qualities of the German people. That is exactly the way I feel: Germany would not make me suffering, if I would like ~~it~~ <sup>her</sup> less than I do. German music is wonderful, German forests and rivers and picturesque old cities <sup>are</sup> are most lovely, and many people ~~in Germany~~ <sup>there</sup> have fine human qualities. The question is only whether or not it is the fit moment, just now, to praise and emphasize all those beauties. I rather feel it is the hour for the great indignation, for the most powerful indictment. It is the time for the great "J'accuse". Nora Waln - who would have the literary ability and the // knowledge to pronounce it - ~~did not do so~~, failed to do so, or didn't do so ~~quite~~ strongly enough.

It is only after Hitler's fall that the world, and the better Germans, will be in the position to enjoy Germany's fine qualities. Today, it is difficult to remain quite "objective". And even the most objective ~~person~~ person should not say more than this: "Germany is not bad altogether - in spite of Nazidom being intolerable." Whereas Miss Waln rather says: "Nazidom, unfortunately, is not very good. But Germany is such a grand country..."

As a matter of fact, Germany never really was a "grand country", since its people never understood what Freedom means. They will realize the actual value of Liberty, after having missed it for such a long period. Then - and only then - Germany will become a "grand country". I am looking forward to the book which Nora Waln may write, one day,

about the future German Republic. As she has got the ability to express her admiration and love in powerful, unforgettable words, that book will be a grand piece of work, about a really grand topic.

Klaus Mann,

New York, March 23 , 39.