

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Super-citizen cane.

Mann, Erika

Nutzungsbedingungen

Bei zahlreichen Dokumenten auf monacensia-digital.de sind die Urheberrechte bereits abgelaufen. Sie sind gemeinfrei und dürfen ohne weitere Rücksprache mit der Monacensia weiterverwendet werden.

Bei den Dokumenten, bei denen noch Urheberrechte bestehen, müssen für eine Weiterverwendung stets die Rechteinhaber*innen angefragt werden sowie eine Publikationsgenehmigung der Monacensia eingeholt werden. Das Zitatrecht bleibt hiervon unberührt.

Zur Erteilung einer Publikationserlaubnis wenden Sie sich bitte an:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus
Literaturarchiv
Adresse: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München
E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

Terms of use

The copyrights for numerous documents on monacensia-digital.de have already expired. They are in the public domain and may be reused without further consultation with Monacensia. In the case of documents for which copyrights still exist, the copyright holders must always be contacted for further use and publication permission must be obtained from the Monacensia. The right to quote under copyright law remains unaffected by this. To obtain permission for publication, please contact:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus:
Literaturarchiv
Address: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München
E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

SUPER-CITIZEN CANE .

When I went to see Britain's Minister of Supply, the Baron Beaverbrook of Beaverbrook, New Brunswick, and Cherkley, Surrey, I did not know his famous statement: "The British people enter the kingdom of Heaven; foreigners go down to Hell!" It's a good thing I did not. I might not have gone, otherwise, and might have robbed myself of the privilege of meeting an extremely impressive and disquieting personality.

As I did know of "The Beaver", "the old man", "the little man", was that he was a Canadian by birth, that he had been selling newspapers as a boy, had been making them as a man, had become a millionaire, a politician, and, in this ^{capacity} ~~substance~~, a), British arch-appeaser number one, b) British war-supplier number one; that he was as "magnetic" and "dynamic" as could be, a miracle in efficiency, a fellow who knew how to drag out of people ^{whatever} ~~whatever~~ they possessed - strength, brains, talents, or money, and put the stuff to work; a small man with a big smile, a broad forehead, ^{and} an inclination to dress like a clergyman, his vest buttoned up to the collar, of which but a narrow strip could be seen; an organizer of the first water, able, even to re-organize his own thoughts and forge them into their complete ^{opposite} ~~whenever~~.

All this in mind I went to see his Lordship.

PPMS

I wasn't kept waiting at all, but found myself in his office a minute after my arrival at the Ministry. Hardly ever had I seen a room as bare and empty as this. No pictures on the walls, hardly any books anywhere, not even any files or papers on the desk betrayed the place's being inhabited by a human being. A lot of ashes on the carpet must have been thrown there by a nervous visitor, "the old man" himself being a non-smoker. He suffers from Asthma and has given up any sort of fun which might endanger his health. Hymn-singing seems to be all he cares for in the way of vice.

I was given a few seconds to look around, but ~~HHH~~ could already hear the Minister talking on a little balcony adjoining his office.

Then, in rushed "The Beaver". He was still shorter than I had expected - also friendlier, more obliging, more charming, in an old-fashioned way. Somehow he reminded me of an illustrated edition of Dickens' I had treasured as a child; one could rather picture him sitting leisurely behind one of those high nineteenth-century-desks, his little legs dangling in the air, than ruling over hundreds of twentieth-century-factories, changing aluminium-pots into Spitfires, and turning out tanks, more tanks, better tanks. Needless to say that "old-fashioned-charm" - this first impression is all his. His real charm lies in his quickness, his tension, his nervous vigilance, and his never relaxing, furiously working intelligence. ^{Apart} ~~Apart~~ from his Asthma - I understand - he is afraid of one thing only: that somebody, or something might try and "disorganise his mind".

The Lord and Master over three newspapers - the Daily Express, the Sunday Express, and the Evening Standard - is not too fond of being interviewed. I must not quote him in the first person, he told me, and I must show him the piece before sending it off to the censor. He smiled obligingly while giving these orders.

I said that I was shortly going on a lecture-tour in the States, and that I wished he would help me answer a question which had already been put to me a hundred times and which was certain to reappear in every discussion. "How did Lord Beaverbrook's change of mind come to pass?", people would ask, "Is he serious about the war, or must he still be reckoned with as a potential appeaser?"

He laughed heartily, but his eyes did not like the question. Then he explained that, naturally, he had not wanted to fight in 1939.

Why, he was an extremely peace-loving man. Furthermore he had always been against any sort of entanglement on the continent. Never should Britain have got herself into an alliance with France. She should have armed, but not fought. Her relationship with America should have been even friendlier than it was. She should have lived in economic comradeship with the States. One could have done good business while Mr. Hitler had his way in the rest of the world, and, if need ~~wasn't~~ ^{arose}, one could have still won any war, later on. Even now he thought his 1939-conception to have been correct; ^{maybe it} ~~wasn't~~

~~wasn't~~ ^{wasn't} it; it had looked like good business, anyway. — —
Why, then, ^{had} ~~had~~ he ^{got} ~~himself~~ tied up with this war to so high a degree? why had he become Minister of Aircraft-Production, Minister of State, Minister of Supply, and member of the War-Cabinet?

This was easily explained. A simple image would do. Assuming he was a boxer who didn't care for the particular fight he had been challenged to accept, but who found himself in the ring just the same. Well, he certainly did not wish to be kicked about, but, once the kicking was on, preferred to kick ^{harder} ~~harder~~ and better than the other fellow.

We had been sitting on the davenport for ~~two~~ two minutes, or three, when Lord Beaverbrook became restive and took me out to his little balcony over the Thames. A bottle of mineral-water and a telephone stood on the table. He wouldn't leave the latter in peace for one moment, but rang for one secretary; then for another; then received an incoming call, then put it in one of his down; then drank a bit of water; then started phoning again. His mind, it seemed, worked on twelve different layers simultaneously, enabling him to concentrate on twelve different subjects at the time, one on each layer. Whenever I could, I threw in a question. My dull one-layer-mind was still occupied by the "appeaser"-problem. Would he advocate a peace with Germany, after Hitler's fall, I wanted to know. Was he in favor of entering into peace-negotiations with the German military? Lord Beaverbrook, listening with one ear to the telephone, with the other to my persistent voice, frowned slightly. Before replying, he asked me a question the answer to which he knew full well. Were the Germans my countrymen, he wondered. I said, yes, indeed, they used to be. His voice sounded soft, even affectionate, when he informed me that all he was in favor of was killing the whole lot of them. And, no doubt, he meant it.

What ^a strange man, I thought. But wasn't he a bit "oldfashioned", after

all? This sixth son of a poor scots-Canadian minister, this self-made-man, Maxwell Aitken, who owned one Million Pounds at the age of thirty; became a Lord at 39; British Minister of Information at 40; and at 61, in this second world-war ^{had} ~~he~~ experienced, Minister of Aircraft-Production; this human dynamo who was as good at tanks as at newspapers, and as good at war as at hymn-singing appeasement; this charming imperialist; this attractive cynic; this believer in efficiency, cleverness and hard-boiled opportunism; was he not a bit old-fashioned, ^{for} ~~with~~ all of his twentieth-century-tempo-and "modernism"? What he lacked was the really "modern", the ^{in disfiguring} ~~unpleasant~~ ^{timely} insight into the moral requirements of the hour. He did not believe in "ideals" but deemed them "unrealistic"; he sneered at any policy which was not entirely and admittedly dictated by selfishness. He helped ruin the League of Nations which, to his mind, was not ^a "selfish" enough ~~was~~ institution; he helped kill "collective security", helped Hitler into power, helped make this war inevitable, but did not know it. The ~~owner~~ owner of the largest selling daily on earth did not know, why, by September 1939, his own readers would ^{not} stand for "appeasement" any longer. He did not see, why people wanted to fight. He did not understand that, by not fighting, they would have lost every ounce of self-respect, every bit of prestige, every chance of survival. The humiliation of Munich had not hurt him, as it had hurt "the people". He did not grasp the fact ~~that~~ ~~that~~ that they were sick and tired of "peace at any price", ~~disgusted~~ disgusted with the foul sort of pseudo-peace for which too much had been paid already. And even today he failed to recognize, how hungry the world ^{was} ~~is~~ for a moral renaissance, ~~unhappy~~ ~~unhappy~~

700 000

Erasmus

for something better than business, greater than imperialism

then

R. H. H.

by asking Britain to win his war

the best of his enormous abilities - he was doing

bring about the victory of 1914 in which he did not believe

He might yet come to appreciate their value, their

very identity with true reason

"good business". He was only full of life, and

very capable

I rather liked him

He had emptied his glass of water and completed some more

television-conversations while I made up my mind about this

Back we rushed into the office, both of us, and on

he rushed straight towards the door. "Does this mean" I asked "that

you are throwing me out?"

I am not allowed to repeat anything he said

and incapable anyway to reproduce the charm of his last smile.

However, I venture to quote him on his last answer.

Lord Beaverbrook said:

"Yes".

.....