

Esther Gould's Book Corner

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WHY WARS? "THE POLYGLOTS"

By William Gerhardt
Duffield Co.

We have become used in some mild degree to the picture of individuals demoralized by the war and after-the-war psychology, but we can never become used, let us hope, to the picture of a world so utterly depraved as that given us by Mr. Gerhardt's exquisitely satirical pen, in his second novel "The Polyglots."

Mr. Gerhardt is no upholder of war and he has chosen an effective method of saving so. We can stand, by shedding a few wholesome tears, the thought of the flower of a nation's youth going forth to suffer and die for righteousness, but it is hard to stand the thought of a nation supporting a myriad of men who had not fought in the war, after that war is over in what Mr. Gerhardt calls "one of the really comic side-shows of after-armistice confabulation." "It was the poor old sentimental military mind confronted with the task of saving civilization forced to draw upon the intellect, and finding that in truth it had not such reserves to draw upon. The spectacle consisted of a number of departments whose heads amused themselves by passing buff slips one to another, the point of which lay in the art of relegating the solution of the question specified to the resources of another department. It was a kind of game of chess in which ability and wit counted for, quite a great deal. The department which could not pass on the buff slip to another and in the last resort was forced to take action itself was deemed to have lost the game."

In drawing his characters, those creatures who seem to have lost all pre-war ideas of morality, Mr. Gerhardt has a facility which amounts to genius. We can see silly selfish domineering Aunt Teresa, suffering a "crise de nerf" on every important occasion, empty headed pretty Sylvia, betraying and deserting her husband, Uncle Emmanuel offering platitudinous comfort since he has no human feelings to expend, Uncle Lucy hanging himself in the dark room in Aunt Teresa's knickers and camisole.

It is difficult to reconcile the deep sense of feeling that the author shows for the delicate child, Natasha, and his pain at her death with his extreme sense of the irony and futility of all things. Perhaps the explanation is in this ambiguous line: "In this lies the hilarity, futility, the insurmountable greatness of life. I felt jolly, having gained my balance with one coup. And suddenly I thought of Uncle Lucy's death; and I realized it was in line with the general hilarity of things!"

And perhaps that is explained by this statement of the author's persisting irony: "But if we can hate ourselves and laugh at ourselves—whence this sense of humor in us? What is that in us which laughs that will not stand solemnities, that will not be impressed by life? What portent is that safety-valve, that constant rise from certain fact into uncertain sublimation? Is that not the real God from which we cannot tire?"

CONCERNING THE JEWISH PROBLEM
"NOW AND FOREVER"
By Samuel Roth
with a Preface by Israel Zangwill
Robert M. McBride

At the end of his book, "Now and Forever," Mr. Roth states frankly that "Books like this are and can be of no possible use." If he had stated this at the beginning rather than at the end it is possible that we would not have followed him through the sometimes torturous windings of 155 pages. It is more probable that our curiosity being aroused and knowing that the author did not mean what he said we would have gone on and read it just the same.

It is possible, further, that had we been told at the beginning instead of the end that we were about to listen to a conversation which did not take place we would have stopped listening, on the other hand our curiosity would probably have led us to listen to see what would have been said if it had taken place.

For that is the situation in this book.

Mr. Roth and Mr. Israel Zangwill discourse at length on the problems of the Jews, both "now and forever," as Mr. Roth assures us, they would have talked, if they had talked.

It is impossible to state in a few words the various intricacies in point of view of these two widely differing exponents of the Jewish problem, for Mr. Zangwill is not only represented imaginarily but actually in a long and lucid preface, but it may simply be said that the discussion, sometimes rambling, sometimes brilliantly concise, is interesting and important as two points of view. There is no lack of discussion of the Jewish problem on the part of the Gentiles, Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc, Mr. Ford and his followers being only a few of those enjoying the pursuit, therefore if the problem is interesting to you it seems an excellent thing to hear two Jewish points of view, though they may at times seem more fanatical than possible.

BUY EGGS NOW FOR WINTER USE

Housewives Learn Economy of Preserving

Eggs bought now and preserved for winter use mean approximately a five dollar saving on this one item of food alone to every family in Cook county, according to the Blue Valley Creamery institute. This statement is based on figures showing that the price of eggs is generally twice as high from November to February as it is in June.

The practice of putting away eggs for winter not only bespeaks economy but should also induce a greater consumption of this almost ideal food, states the Institute in explaining the preservation process. Two four-gallon stone or earthenware crocks, capable of holding 20 dozen eggs, will be found

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sufficient for the average family. They should be first cleaned and scalded with boiling water. The eggs are then placed small end down and a cooled solution of water glass (sodium silicate), one quart to nine quarts of water that has been boiled and thoroughly cooled, is poured over the eggs to close up the pores in the shell to prevent the egg liquids from evaporating. The topmost layer of eggs should be kept covered with the solution to a depth of at least two inches at all times. The crocks are then placed in a cool dry place after being tightly covered with waxed paper to prevent the evaporation of the solution.

Eggs preserved in this fashion can be kept in perfect condition from six to 10 months and used for every purpose, according to the institute. They will appear more watery when broken out of the shell, but the flavor and nutritive qualities will be very satisfactory.

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