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SECOND SECTION.

American Ambassador With a Graphic Pen

In "The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page," the Greatest Book of the Year, There Are Innumerable Vivid Sketches of England in War Time—Intimate Side-lights on President Wilson—King George's Little Joke on the Americans.

By Prof. W. T. Allison.

Ever since Benjamin Franklin went on his mission to Paris, it has been the custom in the United States for the government to select distinguished literary men as ambassadors to foreign courts. Accordingly, when Woodrow Wilson became president, he asked an old school friend, Walter Hines Page, to represent the United States in Great Britain. Mr. Page had had a hand in securing Wilson's election as governor of New Jersey and had done much to persuade the Democratic party that he would make an ideal president. As a suitable reward for these political services, Wilson, when elected, was for making him a member of his cabinet, but ultimately decided that it was more advisable to send this old friend of his, who had been editor of the Forum, the Atlantic Monthly and the World's Work, who in addition to a splendid career as a writer and editor, had become one of the principals in a great publishing firm, as American ambassador to the court of St. James. Mr. Page held this high office from 1913 to 1918, during the most strenuous period that any ambassador ever had to face. It is the general opinion of unprejudiced Americans that Page was the greatest American ambassador to Great Britain since Charles Francis Adams, who represented the United States during the civil war. Every English and Canadian reader of the two-volume "Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page," by Burton J. Hendrick (St. Gundy, Toronto) will say amen to this opinion. It was a fortunate thing for the cause of the Allies that such a fair-minded American as Page represented this country in London and it was a still more fortunate thing for literature that this writer was the eye-witness of the stirring social and political life of England during his term of office. So onerous were his duties during the war that the strain of it killed him, but in spite of long hours and fatiguing diplomatic duties, the American ambassador recorded his daily observations in letters to President Wilson, Col. Edward M. House, and other friends in the United States. How he ever managed to write so many long and racy letters in those crowded years of service will remain a constant source of wonder to posterity. But by the exercise of heroic determination and triumph over physical weakness he was able to produce a long series of epistles, which for frankness of style, keenness of observation, nobility of sentiment, and political wisdom, will give them a permanent place in the literature of the great war. In 1915, President Wilson read extracts from one of Page's letters to members of his cabinet. "Some day," said Mr. Wilson, "I hope that Walter Page's letters will be published. They are the best letters I have ever read. They make you feel the atmosphere in England, understand the people, and see into the motives of the great actors. When published, they will give the finest picture obtainable anywhere of England during the war."

Page's Picture of the Royal Court. As if conscious of the necessity of economizing his space for Page's letters from England, his biographer has covered in the first three chapters of this work the boyhood of Walter Page, in North Carolina in reconstruction days following the civil war, his college career in his native state and at Johns Hopkins, his few years in journalism and his brilliant success as a magazine editor and publisher. Although these first hundred pages are packed with human inter-

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The sufferer from dyspepsia, indigestion or other stomach troubles who has to pick and choose his food is the most miserable of all mankind. Even the little that is eaten causes much torture, and is digested so imperfectly it does but little good. Before you can eat heartily and enjoy your food, you must put your stomach right so that it will manufacture its own digestive ferments. Mr. Wm. Kruschel, Morden, Man., writes:—"Some time ago I had quite a serious case of stomach trouble, indigestion. I could scarcely eat anything, outside of some light food, and even then I generally had pains after each meal. I tried many different medicines, but without any improvement, and had almost given up hope of ever being well. A neighbor recommended Burdock Blood Bitters, and after using it a short time I felt much better, so I continued to use it until I was completely relieved. I can honestly say that B. B. B. has done wonders for me after all other medicines failed."

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est, like Page's biographer, I hurry on to variegated pageant of London society as it unrolled itself before the keen eyes of the American ambassador-ambassador in the year before the great war. In his first letters home he gives his first impressions of English life. One of his most brilliant pieces of description retells his experience at court. In a letter dated Dec. 22nd, 1913, he writes to his brother, Robert N. Page, as follows: "The courts are a very fine sight. The diplomatic ladies sit on a row of seats on one side of the throne room, the duchesses on a row opposite. The king and queen sit on a raised platform with the royal family. The ambassadors come in first and bow, and the king shakes hands with them. Then come the forty or more ministers—no shake for them. In front of the king are a few officers in gaudy uniform, some Indians of high rank (from India), and the court officials are all round about, with pages to hold up the queen's train. Whenever the king back before them, two court officials a gold stick and the other a silver stick."

Ambassadors Stand Near the Throne. The presentation part of the ceremony must have been very tiresome, for as ladies came along to curtsy to the king and queen, the ambassadors had to stand patiently near the throne. "One night," writes Mr. Page, "after an hour or two of ladies coming along and curtsying and disappearing, I whispered to the Spanish ambassador, 'There must be five hundred of these ladies.' 'U—m,' said he, as he shifted his weight to the other foot, 'I am sure there are five thousand!' When they've all been presented, the king and queen go into a room where a stand-up supper is served. The royalty and the diplomatic folks go into that room too; and their majesties walk around and talk with whom they please. Into another and bigger room everybody else goes and gets supper. Then we all flock back to the throne room, and proceeded by the backing courtiers, their majesties come out into the floor and bow to the ambassadors, then to the duchesses, then to the general diplomatic group and they go out. The show is ended. We come downstairs and wait an hour for our car and come home about midnight. The uniforms on the men and the jewels on the ladies (by the way) makes a very brilliant spectacle. The American ambassador and his secretaries and the Swiss and the Portuguese are the only ones dressed in citizens' clothes. The women sparkle with diamonds, the men strut; the king is a fine man with a big bass voice, and he talks very well and is most agreeable; the queen is very gracious; the royal ladies (Queen Victoria's daughters, chiefly) are nice; you see all the big generals and all the big admirals and the great folk of every sort—fine show."

Happy in Their Heatless Houses. There are innumerable amusing passages in these letters descriptive of the domestic life of the English and especially of their ability in resisting conveniences. Between Christmas and New Year's, 1913, Ambassador Page secured a much-needed rest from strenuous social activities. "The streets of London," he says, "are as lonely and as quiet as the road to Oyster Bay while the Cystar is in South America. It's about as mild here as with you in October and as damp as Sheephead's Bay in an autumn storm. But such C-o-l-d—the C-o-l-d; and they run into their heatless houses and put on extra waistcoats and furs and throw shawls over their knees and curse Lloyd George and enjoy themselves. They are a great people—even without mint juleps in summer or egg-nog in winter; and I like them. The old doughty lords curse the Americans for the decline of drinking. And you can't live among them without laughing yourself to death, and admiring them, too. It's a fine race to be sprung from." In a simple letter he gives a whole heap of observations to illustrate the conservatism of the English. "In Defoe's time they put pots of herbs on the decks of every court in London to keep the plague off. The pots of herbs are yet put on every desk in every court room in London. . . . In every grate in the kingdom the coal fire is laid in precisely the same way. . . . Everywhere they say a second grace at dinner—no: at the end—but before the desert, because two hundred years ago they dared not wait longer lest the person be under the table: the grace is said to-day before dessert! I tried three months to persuade my 'Boots' to leave off blacking the soles of my shoes under the instep. He simply couldn't do it. Every 'Boots' in the kingdom does it. . . . My servants sit at table in a certain order, and Mrs. Page's maid wouldn't yield her

precedence to a mere housemaid for any mortal consideration—any more than a royal person of a certain rank would yield to one of a lower rank. A real democracy is as far off as doomsday."

The Grand Smash. Fascinating as they are, I must pass up the chapters which deal with the Mexican question, President Wilson's handling of the Panama canal tolls, and the efforts of Wilson, House and Page in the spring of 1914 to persuade Germany to adopt Bryan's arbitration plan. We come now to Page's hurried-but graphic pictures of the events which followed hard upon what he calls "The Grand Smash." He was kept in his office day and night for over a week, for the outbreak of the war caused a panic among the Americans in London. Page and his secretaries were bombarded. "Crazy men and weeping women," he writes to President Wilson, "swore imprecations and cursing and demanding—God knows it was Bedlam turned loose. I have been called a man of the greatest genius for an emergency by some, by others a damned fool, by others every epithet between these two extremes. Men shook English bank notes in my face and demanded United States money and swore our government and its agents ought all to be shot. Women expected me to hand them steamship tickets home. When some found out that they could not get tickets on the transports (which they assumed would sail the next day) they accused me of favoritism. These absurd experiences will give you a hint of the panic." The British government was, as far as the navy and regular army were concerned, prepared for war. "Tuesday night," writes Page to Wilson, "five minutes after the ultimatum had expired, the admiral telegraphed to the fleet 'Go.' In a few minutes the answer came back 'O.K.' Soldiers began to march through the city going to the railway stations. An indescribable crowd so blocked the streets about the admiralty, the War Office, and the foreign office that at one o'clock in the morning I had to drive in my car by other streets to get home. . . . Poor Mensdorff, the Austrian ambassador, does not know where he is. He is practically shut up in his guarded embassy, weeping and waiting the decree of fate. . . . I went to see the German ambassador at three o'clock in the afternoon. He came down in his pajamas, a crazy man. I feared he might literally go mad. He is of the anti-war party and he had done his best and utterly failed. This interview was one of the most pathetic experiences of my life. The poor man had not slept for several nights. . . . I shall never forget Sir Edward Grey's telling me of the ultimatum—while he wept; nor the poor German ambassador who has lost in his high game—almost a demented man; nor the king as he de-claimed at me for half an hour and threw up his hands and said, 'My God, Mr. Page, what else could we do?' Nor the Austrian ambassador's wringing his hands and weeping and crying out, 'My dear Colleague, my dear Colleague!'"

President Wilson's Notes. Although President Wilson wrote very genial letters to Ambassador Page during the first months of the war and kept on telling him how much he was enjoying his vivid letters from England, there came a time when the lord of the White House began to think that his representative in London was altogether too pro-British. From the first day of the war Page's sympathies were enlisted on the side of the Allies, but he did his best to be 'a neutral' in the technical sense. He said in a letter to his brother, however, that while a government could be neutral, no man could be. And as the war progressed he became more and more dissatisfied with Wilson's narrow definition of neutrality. Unlike Wilson, he declined to abrogate his conscience where his personal judgment of the rights or wrongs of the conflict were concerned. He became disgusted with Bryan and Lansing in their punctilious insistence on American shipping rights. If it had not been for the tact and good sense of Page and Grey (one of the most interesting features of these letters is the numerous reference to the warm friendship between these two men) there could have been serious trouble between the United States and England. But after the Lusitania outrage, when instead of declaring war against Germany Wilson did nothing but write notes, Page began to feel ashamed of his country. No ambassador ever dealt more faithfully with his government than Mr. Page. With almost brutal frankness he told Wilson just what the English people were saying about him and the nation that he was supposed to lead. From the cold reception which Wilson gave to his own letters, Page quickly came to the conclusion that the president was not a big enough man to hear the frank truth either from him or from the men about him in Washington. Although Page visited Washington in the summer of 1916, the president did not express a wish to see him to talk things over. Page had been officially summoned home, presumably to discuss the European situation, but to his immense surprise neither the president nor the state department apparently had the slightest interest in his visit. Page was not the kind

of a man, however, to be put off in this way. At last Wilson gave him an interview. The two old college friends spent a whole forenoon together and Page was treated with courtesy and listened to quietly. The ambassador talked long and eloquently regarding the whole European tragedy, but Wilson was utterly cold, utterly unresponsive. Interested only in ending the war, He displayed a tolerant attitude toward Germany and insisted that Great Britain's domination of "the earth" was one of the causes of the war. When Page showed him the "Lusitania" medal, that the Germans had struck in commemoration of their dastardly crime, Wilson did not seem to be specially impressed. At last Page rose to go. He put his hand upon the president's shoulder and at his kindly touch Wilson's eyes filled with tears. To Page he seemed to be the least man he had ever known. The old friends said good-bye and never met again.

Page and King George Have a Smoke Together.

At a recent meeting of the general executive committee of the Canadian Authors' Association held at the public library, Toronto, it was decided to discontinue the use of "The Canadian Bookman" as the official organ of the association and to adopt in its place official bulletins which will be confined more strictly to matters pertaining to the association. Members will continue to receive their membership copies of "The Canadian Bookman" until the expiry of the present contract with the owners of that publication. The first issue of the new bulletins is expected to be ready about January 1st, and will be mailed without charge to regular and associate members. The bulletins will be edited by the secretary, H. K. Sandwell, assisted by an editorial committee, consisting of Dr. George Locke, Madge Macbeth, and John Murray Gibson, with power to add to their number.

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After the dinner—there were no guests but Mrs. Page and me, the members of his household, of course, being present—he became even familiar in the smoking-room. He talked about himself and his position as king. "Knowing the difficulties of a limited monarch, I thank heaven I am spared being an absolute one." Space fails me and I feel that I have not begun to do justice to this great book, which interprets England to the United States better than any work I have ever read. When it goes into a cheap edition, as it is certain to do, I hope that this masterpiece of observation, political wisdom and appreciation of Great Britain's splendid part in the war will have an enormous circulation in the United States. Englishmen and Canadians will learn much inside history from Mr. Page's letters and will derive the liveliest satisfaction from his characteristic studies of English statesmen and his abundant references to the war.

Literary Notes.

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This has been a very successful year for Frederick William Wallace, Canada's writer of sea stories. His story, "The Viking Blood," has been purchased by a moving picture concern. His two books of short stories, "Salt Seas and Saltfornen" and "Shack Locker," now out in book form, have had a great run in various newspapers and magazines. Lastly, Mr. Wallace has been appointed editor of the famous old American fishing journal, "The Fishing Gazette." We regret that this sturdy Canadian has left Montreal for New York, but we know that his heart will be true to the north.

A book that deserves special encouragement from the Canadian pub-

lic is "The Trailmakers' Boys' Annual." This has been designed to take the place of publications which cater to the tastes of youthful readers but supply stories of school, sport and adventure in which the atmosphere is entirely English. "The Trailmakers' Boys' Annual," now appearing for the third season, is essentially Canadian. It includes contributions from such writers as Charles G. D. Roberts, Agnes Laut, Arthur Heming, H. A. Cody, R. G. Macbeth, Archie P. McKishnie, Robert Stead, Hopkins Moorhouse, Frederick William Wallace and Douglas Durkin.

Rudyard Kipling has been elected rector of St. Andrew's University, Scotland, in succession to Sir John Barrie. St. Andrew's has had a long line of literary rectors, but the high honor was declined by Sir Walter Scott, Lord Tennyson, and Robert Browning. The last-mentioned was probably too nervous to make a speech of acceptance. The wonder is how the shy and retiring Barrie ever summoned up resolution to face the students, graduates and faculty of the old university. Barrie's choice of "Courage" as the subject of his address indicated his own triumph over his usual painful timidity. Kipling is a veteran public speaker, but he will have to bestir himself if he hopes to make as fine a rectorial address as "Courage," which has been printed in book form and is to-day being read with admiration in every part of the English-speaking world.

Of the making of anthologies of modern English verse there seems to be no end. The latest is "The Golden Book of English Poetry," edited by Thomas Caldwell. It contains nearly three hundred pieces by poets whose work appeared between 1870 and 1920.

WHAT COUNTS.
+ 'Tis not the tale of years men live
+ That counts, but how they're spent;
+ Not what we get, but what we give,
+ Is our just measurement.
+ And what we give we never lose,
+ And what we lose we gain,
+ We live but once, and may not choose
+ To pass this way again.
—James A. Roy, in "Christ in the Strand."

New Method Of Reducing Fat

A news item from abroad informs us that the American method of producing a slim, trim figure is meeting with astonishing success. This system, which has made such a wonderful impression over there, must be the Marmola Prescription Tablet method of reducing fat. It is safe to say that we have nothing better for this purpose in this country. Anything that will reduce excess flesh steadily and easily without injury to the stomach, the causing of wrinkles, the help of exercising or dieting, or interference with one's meals is a mighty important and useful addition to civilization's necessities. Just such a catalogue of good results follow the use of these pleasant, harmless and economical little fat reducers. We say economical because Marmola Prescription Tablets (made in accordance with the famous Marmola Prescription Tablet method of reducing fat) can be obtained of any drug-gist the world over or from the Marmola Company, 4512 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Mich., for one dollar a case, which is a decidedly economical price, considering the number of tablets each case contains. They are harmless.

OLD CROW, A NOVEL.

By Alice Brown. 384 pages. Published by the Macmillan, Toronto, Price, \$3.00.
This author has already more than a dozen books to her credit, but in this one she has given her readers a strange medley of the confused thinking of her characters as a result of after-the-war conditions. The plot is laid in the New England hill country and moves between the city, the open life of the hills and the area of France destroyed by the ravages of war.

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- ### Suggestions for contributions from Clubs, Factories, Organizations, etc.
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 - \$350.00 will provide a Shelter Shack for Family.
 - \$200.00 will provide Food and Supplies for a Family to May 1st, 1923.
 - \$100.00 will provide a Wagon for Settler.
 - \$75.00 will provide a Set of Harness (double).
 - \$50.00 will provide a Set of Bobs or Sleigh for a Farmer.
 - \$25.00 will provide a Sewing Machine for a Home.
 - \$20.00 will provide Kitchen Furniture for a Family.
 - \$15.00 will provide Cooking Utensils for a Family.
 - \$9.00 will feed a Family for a week.
 - \$5.00 will provide Needles, Thread, Buttons, Scissors or Yarn and Knitting Needles, etc. to help outfit a Home and Family.
 - \$1.00 will feed and supply a child for a week.

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Now it is up to you—every public spirited citizen and charitable organization. Spare one dollar, five dollars, one hundred dollars or whatever you can. Spare something from your Christmas cheer. Make Christmas up there a little less than a grim tragedy. Remember, not comforts, but bare necessities in the grip of a northern winter, is all that they ask. Send today? Make cheques payable to—

The Northern Ontario Fire Relief Committee

Royal Bank Building, Toronto.