

# Contemporary History and Biography

**MY PAST AND THOUGHTS:** The Memoirs of Alexander Herzen. Translated from the Russian by Constance Garnett. 776 pp. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

New sidelights on the struggle for liberty in imperial Russia during the nineteenth century are contained in these opening volumes of the life of a foremost Russian revolutionist. After sketching with light, quick lines his aristocratic youth, Herzen passes on to his years of exile in London, from which city much of his propaganda was conducted. The work has a high intrinsic value as literature and is indispensable for a complete understanding of Russian history.

**THE LIFE OF WOODROW WILSON.** By Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, 1913-21. 381 pp. Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company. \$2.50.

Mr. Daniels draws a very sympathetic portrait of the War President; the detachment which makes for discernment is lacking, and the author is rather too much inclined to see only the best side of his subject. The biography has definite value, however, as an aid to historians; Mr. Daniels's long service in President Wilson's Cabinet lends authority to the facts he sets forth. The chapter entitled "Current History" throws much light on the Federal Reserve System, and Mr. Wilson's part in its development. Many important points are ignored by Mr. Daniels, who confines himself chiefly to a personal eulogy; scattered through the book, however, one finds intimate glimpses of Woodrow Wilson which aid the reader toward an understanding of this great American.

**THE TRUE STORY OF WOODROW WILSON.** By David Lawrence, 368 pp. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$2.50.

A very different Wilson is chronicled by Mr. Lawrence—a Wilson almost abjectly dependent upon feminine stimulation, a Wilson of mercurial moods, naturally obstinate, pedagogical and unforgiving. Mr. Lawrence, withal, writes as a warm admirer, and the portrait he sketches creates an impression of reality. Though replete with superficial gossip, the book is a definite contribution to Wilson literature. Mr. Lawrence tells of the President's wrath on hearing that France had invaded the Ruhr. Mr. Wilson, the author says, told Mr. James Kearney, an old friend, that he "should like to see Germany clean up France and should like to meet Jusserand and tell him to his face."

What Mr. Wilson meant \* \* \* was that the march into the Ruhr and the tactics of the French toward Germany had made him feel more sympathetic toward the vanquished Germans than toward a group in France which he had often characterized as militarists.

Mr. Lawrence offers this interesting explanation

of Wilson's refusal to modify his attitude on the League of Nations:

Had he retained his health, Woodrow Wilson, just as sure as day follows night, would have accepted the Lodge reservations to the Versailles Treaty and secured thereby for the United States a membership in the League of Nations. He was almost persuaded to do so on his sick bed, but his illness induced a consciousness of incertitude which with the exclusion of outside advice made him irritable and inflexible.

**ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS DURING THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR.** By Bertha Ann Reuter. 208 pp. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.75.

The steadily ripening friendship between Great Britain and the United States is one of the few rays of light in our discord-shadowed world. Miss Reuter discusses and interprets this sentiment through the medium of the Spanish-American War. Concentrating upon her theme, the author presents much important material in a condensed form. Exceeding the local significance of the conflict itself, her analysis bears specifically upon the present-day Anglo-American relationship.

**ETHICS AND SOME WORLD MODERN PROBLEMS.** By William McDougall, Professor of Psychology in Harvard University. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

**A SHORT HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL INTERCOURSE.** By C. Delisle Burns. 159 pp. New York: Oxford University Press. \$1.75.

These latest additions to the literature on international affairs offer the student two interesting contributions, though that of Professor McDougall is based upon a superficial and unsound generalization, which attempts to trace the world's conflicts to a clash between nationalism and universalism. A chronicle of the actual achievements along international lines is the task Mr. Burns has set himself. He sees the world as gradually tending toward unity, and his history of this international trend offers much to substantiate this view.

**AMERICA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD.** By Herbert Adams Gibbons. New York: The Century Company.

Refreshing candor and sharp criticism distinguish Mr. Gibbons's observations on America's relation to international affairs. Of especial interest is his comment on America's attitude toward struggling young republics; America, he writes, has always had personal ends in mind whenever she has extended recognition to a new nation:

Recognition has become and it has remained a matter of expediency. The United States has never since pretended to show its sympathy and throw its moral support into the balance, in any case of a people struggling against odds for independence or making its way from autocracy to democracy by internal revolution.