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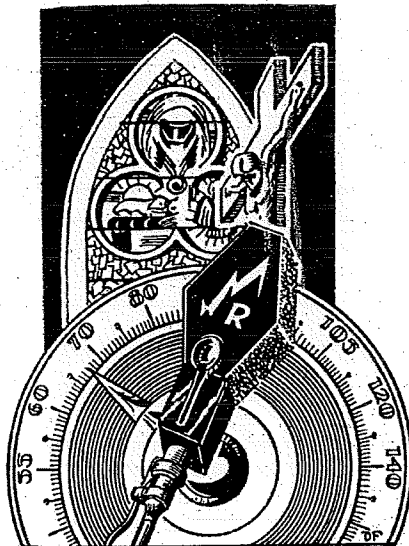
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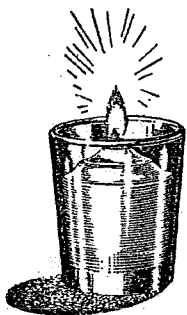
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National Catholic Weekly Review

Vol. CVI No. 24 Whole Number 2496

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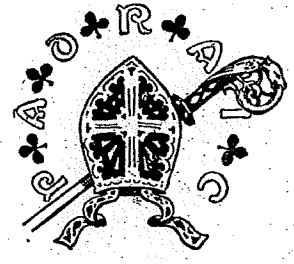
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16, 1957

bellion of Easter, 1916; the overwhelming British counterstroke; the firing squad for some, the jail for others; finis: a truly historic pattern, seemingly as stylized as a Greek tragedy.

Though none may have suspected it in those early weeks of 1917, the pattern had been changed; a corner had been turned in the history of Ireland. In a little more than four years, De Valera would be invited to 10 Downing Street by Lloyd George to discuss the termination of Anglo-Irish hostilities.

Up to the time of his imprisonment, De Valera had been just another, and



not the best-known, of the men who planned and carried out the Easter rebellion. As the story of Easter Week became known throughout Ireland, so did De Valera's capable defense of Bolland's Mills and Mount Street Bridge. He was now the senior surviving commander of the Easter rebellion, saved from the firing squad by his American birth. The stage was set for the role he was to play: leader of the Irish people in their fight for independence.

Miss Bromage, student of Irish history, medieval and modern, who has practiced journalism and been dean of women at the University of Michigan, tells De Valera's story with evident sympathy and not without objectivity. Perhaps it was inevitable that in the telling De Valera should seem too much to overshadow the men who, with him, made modern Ireland. Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, Robert Barton, Cathal Brugha, Erskine Childers—what might not these men and many like them have made of Ireland had they not been swept away in the tragic Civil War?

One statement in the book brought this reviewer up short. On p. 173 Miss Bromage says without qualification that Michael Collins arranged for the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson in London, in June, 1922. In view of the relation of the assassination to the outbreak of the Civil War, this is a charge of the utmost gravity, and calls for a documentation which Miss Bromage does not supply.

Dorothy Macardle in her authorita-

tive work *The Irish Republic* (Irish Press, Dublin, 1937, p. 737) says no more than that popular opinion attributed the shooting to Collins.

As a result of the death of Wilson, the British Government brought the heaviest pressure upon the new Provisional Government of Ireland, headed by Griffith and Collins, to take action against the armed Republican opposition, with whom the new Government was coexisting in an uneasy truce. On June 28 Government troops opened artillery fire on the Four Courts, the Republicans' Dublin stronghold. That act definitely committed Ireland to civil war. Where does that leave Michael Collins if he was responsible for the shooting of Sir Henry Wilson?

Miss Bromage tells a lively and interesting story. Since De Valera's name in Ireland is about as controversial as Franklin D. Roosevelt's here, she need not hope to please everybody. She offers a readable account of the events that have shaped modern Ireland; and the perceptive reader will see the roots of some of the troubles that still vex it.

CHARLES KEENAN

"New Freedom"—American

A CROSSROADS OF FREEDOM: THE 1912 CAMPAIGN SPEECHES OF WOODROW WILSON

Edited by John Wells Davidson with a Preface by Charles Seymour. Yale U. 526p. \$6

WILSON: THE NEW FREEDOM

By Arthur S. Link. Princeton U. 471p. \$7.50

WOODROW WILSON AND COLONEL HOUSE: A Personality Study.

By Alexander L. George and Juliette L. George. Day. 315p. \$6

It is a happy chance that permits these volumes to be reviewed together. The first volume is a reconstruction of the campaign speeches made by Wilson in 1912; the second is an account of Wilson's deeds as President during his first two years in office; and the third is a survey of his entire career. In Davidson there is the rhetoric of the political promise and in Link an account of political action, while the Georges undertake to explain in Freudian terms some

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

of the personalities in the heroic drama of Woodrow Wilson.

Wilson was one of the great orators of modern times, but his performance with the intractable materials of his own personality and those who worked with him raises the enduring question of why and how things happen in politics. Men seldom do what they say they will, and they are often surprised at the consequences of what they do.

Dr. Davidson has done a remarkable work of historical restoration. He used the stenographic notes of the speeches, the transcriptions made by others, newspaper accounts and the now superseded *The New Freedom* of 1913 to provide us with almost a word-by-word account of the campaign. The author has the satisfaction of a genuine adventure in scholarship. Even though the volume is obviously a labor of love, and the doubt is turned in Wilson's favor, we are, nevertheless, all indebted to Dr. Davidson for his patient and successful labors.

Arthur S. Link's volume covers a short but significant period, the period of the New Freedom, that is, Wilson's first two years in the White House. Both the weakness and the strength of the President appear in this volume, and those who are critics of Wilson will find materials for their case. In one aspect, this volume is a legislative history of the New Freedom. There is faithful description of the thrust of forces in the enactment of notable laws dealing with tariff reform, the Federal Reserve system and antitrust matters.

The Georges do two things. They offer a short political history of Woodrow Wilson, and they attempt to make this biography evidence for Freudian interpretations of the motivations of Wilson, Colonel House and Senator Lodge, with side glances at other *dramatis personae*. Either inquiry might stand without the other. "The basic hypothesis concerning the dynamics of Wilson's political behavior is that power was for him a compensatory value, a means of restoring the self-esteem damaged in childhood" (p. 320).

So the Georges state it, and they have taken it from Lasswell's works. Yet they say (p. 315) of Wilson: "In many respects his vision was true." It would be more valuable to see the authors prove this statement than to enlarge on psychological ideas which explain "Everyman," but not why Wilson was different in ability and philosophy from Colonel House and from Senator Lodge.

The psychological method either proves nothing or too much. If the new chemical theory is going to supersede the Freudian system, perhaps one

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should speculate on the chemical reaction in Wilson's response to the world about him. Moreover, recent studies of Puritan and Calvinist life make one skeptical of facile explanations based on the "stern Calvinist atmosphere" in which Wilson grew up (p. 114). The Calvinist tradition has been flailed repeatedly by the amateur psychologists who have studied Woodrow Wilson as a species of abnormal personality.

Link observes that Wilson was

... a person of limited interests and narrow reading. He had little command of foreign languages and almost no interests in political developments abroad before he entered the White House; he was indifferent to the great scientific developments that were transforming the philosophy and technology of his age; he knew virtually nothing about serious art and music. His reading in the field of literature, moreover, was desultory, spasmodic and erratic (p.62).

It is, perhaps, such deficiencies, plus the romantic quality of his mind, that explain much of his ineptitude in dealing with the Mexican revolution, and the incredibly bad choices of diplomatic agents sent to Mexico. It is Vera Cruz that Mexicans remember today with more bitterness than any other episode in their relations with the United States.

Both Seymour and Davidson wish to deny that Wilson was a believer in *laissez-faire* and they do so by defining this idea in a peculiar way. They seem to say that any regulation of the free market by the government is a denial of *laissez-faire*. Let them consult Adam Smith, the father of this idea—for us at least. Let them reflect upon the many functions of government in regulating the context of competition which Smith deemed necessary in an orderly society. In this and other works, Link has charted Wilson's progress from *laissez-faire* to the acceptance of the New Nationalism, involving social legislation and the active regulation of business.

FRANCIS G. WILSON

"Dreadful" German Comeback?

A WATCHER ON THE RHINE

By Brian Connell. Morrow. 308p. \$4

The British author of this curious volume first went to Germany as a student at the University of Berlin in the years preceding World War II. In the last stages of that conflict he returned there with an advance unit of the British

Army and gained many firsthand impressions of the German collapse and the conditions following the surrender of Hitler's armies. More recently Brian Connell went back again, taking lodgings in an inn outside Bonn.

The American reader will find this volume of some interest because it shows that many Europeans have a far more difficult time overcoming their wartime emotions with regard to Germany than Americans do. At the very beginning of the book, for instance, Germany is referred to as "that infuriating country."

One of the things that infuriated the author is the tremendous pace of work noticeable everywhere in Germany. In describing his comfortable life at the inn, beginning with breakfast in bed brought by a maid who works literally from morn to midnight, he remarks that this girl did more work in one day

than an "Anglo-Saxon" person would be willing to do in one week. While Mr. Connell apparently was quite ready to accept this room service, he feels that this energy displayed in all reconstruction activities in Germany is part of what makes Germany so disturbing, even after the collapse of Nazism.

The book is written almost like a script for a movie documentary. Many passages describe the people who frequent the inn, the hard-working owners of the restaurant and limn other "closeups." Often without transition these passages shade off to fairly accurate information gathered from official sources about the techniques used by the Bonn Government to promote economic reconstruction and modernization. Flashbacks to the period right after V-E Day emphasize the progress West Germany has been able to make in such a short period of time.

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