

**I**N the midst of political confusion and the general moral decay, there are always forces at work in this remarkable nation which serve ideal ends of reconstruction — cultural ends, educative, and ethical. Such an enterprise is to be the new Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft, which might be translated as the German Book Fellowship. This is an extension into vast dimensions of the idea of the Wegweiser Verlag, Verband der Bücherfreunde, which was described here not so long ago. The ideal which the Book Fellowship has set itself is the creation of a little home library for everyone. It plans to bring out books, beautifully bound, with leather backs, which are never to come on the market at all but will be available only for the members. As the intention is to fascinate the great masses in the interests of culture and spiritual education, the society has provided a most catholic and intriguing preliminary list of volumes which are to be available at once. The first volume is Goethe's "Faust", the second, "Niels Lyhne" by the famous

Danish author J. P. Jacobsen. "Madame Bovary", "Dorian Gray", and "Oliver Twist" are among the fiction of this first selection. The section of serious literature is most enticing — history, natural history, Schopenhauer, "Modern Methods of Healing", jostle one another. The section of children's literature includes Grimm and Andersen.

No membership fee is to be exacted, but the members must pledge themselves to take four, eight, or twelve books a year, according to what they can afford. The dress of the books will undoubtedly be original and delightful, for this is in the hands of the well known poster designer Julius Gipskens. The society is perfectly up to date, and intends to employ film and radio in its propaganda as well as a fortnightly magazine, to be called "Das Zeitungs-Buch" (the Newspaper Book). This magazine is to be delivered regularly free of charge to all members. Lectures are also to be given at regular intervals in connection with the scheme, which is ambitious and comprehensive enough, since it aims at nothing less than the elevation and spiritual deepening of the mass mind through the influence exercised upon its reading matter. It is quite likely to be effective.

Gustav Frenssen has conquered a new literary territory by writing a successful epic around the personality of Bismarck. An earlier version was finished in 1913, but Frenssen has now rounded, completed, and changed his epic, not least in consequence of the change of heart from stamping patriotism to quieter and deeply founded love of country inspired by the events of the ten years separating the two versions.

Laurence Housman's brilliant feat of creative memory, "Echo de Paris", is now to be published in Germany by the S. Fischer Verlag. The German title

is not yet fixed. Herman George Schefauer is to make the translation.

The black wave of pessimism which rolled up over the face of European culture, as seen in Germany with Spengler's "Decline of the Occident", is rapidly giving way before a new wave of courage, confidence, and hope. The world has not lost, nor is losing, its soul, say these pioneers of hope; there is change, there is action, there is development. One of these affirmers, for whom the term optimist is too empty and too facile, is Emil Utitz, whose "Kultur der Gegenwart" is published by Ferdinand Enke, Stuttgart. He not only asserts in its very title that the present has a culture, and one that is still in process of growth; he also proceeds to expatiate upon it with many examples — a sympathetic guide to the thought of today and the immediate yesterday.

An important book with an abstruse title is Maximilian Neustadt's "Der Selbstwille als dämonische Urkraft" (Diskus Verlag Emil Krug, Leipzig). This thick volume is a pæan to individuality — it says: "Be, and the world is yours." It contains, by the way, many intimate and inconvenient truths about the true inwardness of war, and denies the existence of courage as such. All courage, says the author, is the desire not to be hurt; the enemy is removed, not out of hate, "patriotism", or enthusiasm, but simply in order that he may not remove oneself; the greatest "heroism" (this has been said before) is shown by those who are most afraid. The author's extreme logic leads him to rather hopeless conclusions, as when in his final pages he denies all plan or end to the scheme of nature and claims that everything happens and has its shape and purpose only according to the dictates of necessity; but his insistence upon the possibilities of the will is

inspiring to the believer in personality.

In "Die Nordische Seele" by Dr. Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss (Verlag Max Niemeyer, Halle), a vast quantity of learned and learned sounding material is gathered which should be cheerful and exhilarating reading for the exponents of the theory of the "Nordic blond". Dr. Clauss goes so far as to call his "Nordic blonds" the *Rein-gearteten*, or pure blooded, pure of race, and to throw all other bloods together in one sack as *Mis-gearteten*, or impure blooded. He draws a rather unpleasant picture of his Nordics, incessantly engaging in quarrels which are always designated as "noble". His picture of the divided, mixed blood family, in which the little dark sister scolds like a virago and the large blond brother proudly endures, can be only comic to those who remember, for instance, the proud dignity of the Chinese or the furious temperamental outbreaks of the red haired. His picture of his heroes following their fate-determined course has intoxicated him to such an extent that he does not perceive that this bowing to a mysterious destiny is close akin to sheer eastern fatalism. Still, the whole, backed up by much citing of the saga of the Nibelungs, is a timely contribution to the great racial controversy.

More delineations of souls, but in quite another manner, without scholastic pedantry and indeed cloaked in popular phraseology, are the two books by Friedrich Lienhard, "Von Weibes Wonne und Wert" and "Von Mannes Wert und Willen", both published, delightfully bound and decorated, by Max Koch, Leipzig. Lienhard glorifies the masculine without depreciating the feminine, and paints an engaging picture of many sided womanhood. These are charming anthologies for youth, but not without inspiration for the full grown reader.

A new tendency toward mysticism, metaphysics, and philosophy is manifesting itself in the German literature of the moment. It is the natural tendency of a people whirling in chaos to seek some point of anchorage. At the same time there is — and such books as Herr Neustadt's are the signs of it — a desire to accentuate personal individuality as a protest against the leveling processes of democracy. For this reason Ford, hailed by some as a new evangel, is meeting with such bitter opposition from the individualists — as in the impassioned little book "Anti-Ford" by Peter Mennicken, published by Die Kuppel, Aachen. Against the Ford ideal of a perfectly regulated mechanical humanity, Mennicken sets up the ideal of human dignity, of the individuality which must not be pressed into a mold.

A striking and valuable study of one of Germany's ablest men of late years, Walther Rathenau, written by Kurt Sternberg, has been published by Verlag Dr. Walther Rothschild, Grunewald, Berlin. A curious fate seems to doom Germany to lose her ablest men in their prime — either by sickness or by the assassin's hand. The importance and significance of Rathenau as man, thinker, and statesman is well emphasized in this little volume.

A fascinating book for medical men and others, and a notable contribution to the literature of psychoanalysis and neighboring tracts of learning, is "Psychologie der Frau" by Wilhelm Liepmann (Urban und Schwarzenberg, Berlin). The clear, informative, and illuminating book consists of a series of lectures delivered by the famous specialist in Berlin. The startlingly frank "human documents" in the appendix are of deep psychological interest, medical-sexual-social confessions of the greatest poignancy.

One of those thorough and comprehensive publications which the Germans delight to undertake and carry through is now in process of appearing. This is the "Handbuch der Literatur-Wissenschaft" edited by Dr. Oskar Walzel, published in Neubabelsberg near Berlin by the Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion. This new Cyclopædia of Literature is guaranteed by a noble array of names of contributors. It is splendidly printed and illustrated, even with certain pictures in color. Judging by the "English Literature of the 19-20th Century", with which the first part opens, this work will satisfy the most exacting.

One of the most important figures in modern Austrian literature, Franz Kafka, has just died after a long illness. Although his production was small,

consisting only of a few stories, his stylistic qualities set him in the forefront. He belonged to the circle Max Brod-Franz Werfel-Leonhard Frank. He was only forty one, and should have had many a fruitful year before him.

Alois Riehl, a famous professor of philosophy in Berlin, who has passed his eightieth birthday, has completed his great life work, "Philosophischen Kritizismus" (Philosophical Criticism). The first volume of this portentous work has reached its third edition, a new revision of the second volume is announced, and the third volume, which has for some time been eagerly awaited by scholars, is to appear some time this year. It contains a chapter on Kant's mathematical reflections.

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