

FAITH, WAR, AND POLICY. By Gilbert Murray. Houghton Mifflin; \$1.25.

It would hardly be possible for Gilbert Murray to write a really illiberal book, but it has not been impossible for him to feel too constantly in this book the weight of his representative position. The result is not altogether satisfying. You feel that Professor Murray has been the victim of those exceptional circumstances which exact their heavy toll of the eminent. In acting as spokesman for England, he has had to strain his voice by pitching it in the popular key, and he has had to discuss subjects about which his opinions are far less valuable than they are about the Greek drama. What stands out most sharply and incongruously in the book is Professor Murray's complaisance in transferring the problems raised by the war to the shoulders of those very diplomats and statesmen whose inadequacy is sufficiently demonstrated by the present *débâcle*. He argues rather superficially against democratic control of foreign policy, on the ground that the

public cannot be expected to be as well informed on such subjects as the diplomats, and he is willing to assume that, so far as England is concerned, the diplomats may be trusted to pursue a disinterested and honest policy. In discussing the British Foreign Office, Professor Murray adopts a tone which is nothing less than smug; he is frankly the apologist, who can allow himself to write, "The fact seems to be that, if, some years ago, an angel had set himself to the task of saving Europe, he would not have begun by altering British policy. He would have begun by something else." This fatal complacency extends to everything British: "In peace we are the most liberal and the most merciful of all great empires; in war we have Napoleon's famous testimonial, calling us 'the most consistent, the most implacable, and the most generous of his enemies.' It is for us to keep up this tradition, and I believe that the men who rule us do keep it up." It is true that a watchful critic might be able to cite many instances of a less admirable sort, but Professor Murray is ready for such critics. He rules out cases that do not come under the definition as exhibiting traits that are essentially "un-English." There are fine things in the book, notably the picture Professor Murray gives of Arthur Heath, the brilliant young Oxonian who fell in the fighting at Loos. There is a constant sympathy with the idealism of the young men who gave themselves so unsparingly to save civilization, and it is in writing of their sacrifices that Professor Murray is at his best. But the book as a whole is disappointing, since it exhibits the author in a rôle which he is not fitted to fill with his usual distinction.