

A FAIR and unprejudiced estimate of the character of the present Emperor of Germany has not yet been written, and indeed cannot be written until time shall have softened the asperities of some writers and toned down the unblushing hero-worship of others. Mr. Harold Frederic's book is no exception to the rule. It is inevitable that princes, however young, should become the themes upon which a certain class of writers loves to dwell. Their goings-out, their comings-in, their moods, their dress, their bearing and their policies—all these provide for the lover of gossip an endless banquet. But in Wilhelm's case there is some excuse for an interest in all that appertains to him. Called by a series of calamities to a throne the most significant, politically, in Europe, with the possible exception of Russia, and placed in the full light of European criticism, it is no wonder that even his slightest action should seem of some import. While there seems no good reason why, as has lately been done, a life should be written of the baby King of Spain, or of the tender

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\* The Young Emperor. By Harold Frederic. \$1.25. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Queen of Holland, there are many good reasons why estimates of character in William's case are useful and perhaps needed. Nothing could more distinctly show the tenseness of the European situation than the anxiety which is displayed all over the Continent when the young Emperor utters one of his unconsidered or momentary opinions. War seems to hover over the nations when William speaks in patriotic tones to his new recruits, peace to be assured when he addresses the Socialists. Indeed, it may be said with truth that no hereditary European ruler has been, for many years, so much the source of hope and fear. Mr Frederic's book, however, is a very inadequate study of its subject. He minimizes some things and exaggerates others, and if the reviewer be not mistaken, he has expressed in later London letters to the *New York Times*, in which journal this biography first appeared, a quite different view of the Emperor from that contained in these pages. From the nature of his work one could hardly expect that it would have been successfully performed. The book, like newspapers themselves, presents a view which to-morrow may be—and most likely will be—replaced by one entirely opposite; but it is entertaining and contains much information that is useful and welcome.