

- BOOK REVIEW -

GENEVA VERSUS PEACE

By Comte de Saint-Aulaire. (Sheed and Ward)

(Reviewed by George Gillespie, M. A.)

The thesis of this violent little essay on international politics is that the League of Nations, created to prevent war, has done nothing but breed and foster it. It has not even respected its own Covenant. Only its abolition can prevent another world catastrophe.

At the present time, world opinion rather goes along with M. de Saint-Aulaire. Few people today expect anything but talk, and insincere talk at that, from Geneva. The world is once more trusting its safety to guns and to common sense—as it did before 1914.

But while most people already share the writer's conviction that Geneva is both futile and degraded, they will not be so ready to accept the supporting arguments in toto. He maintains that the League has been the creature at once of Germany, Russia, Free Masonry, the Jewish part of Wall Street and the Third International. Most people would doubt that one institution could simultaneously serve *all* these interests. The general belief is that the League failed because it was set up to preserve, not peace, but the status quo as laid down in the Treaty of Versailles. It failed, that is, because it existed to serve British and French imperialism. The armament interests, including France's "Two Hundred Families," of which M. de Saint-Aulaire seems so fond, also had something to do with the failure.

Though he denies having any peace plan himself, he more than hints that his own opinion is that a strong defensive alliance between France and England, attracting Italy and Central Europe, would make for European stability. Germany, which he thinks the only real menace, would be hemmed in, and Russia excluded.

To this it might be objected that Italy does not seem ready to stop at Ethiopia. The current British policy, moreover, seems to be to buy Hitler out of his present alliance with Rome, which menaces the British Empire, with the promise of a free hand in Central Europe.

This book is not easy to read. Perhaps the translation is to blame, but there seem to be too many labored metaphors (pages of them) and a great deal of repetition and overemphasis. In parts the book is almost shrill.

The author was French Ambassador at London from 1920 to 1924. His sympathies come out pretty clearly. He loathes republicanism, thinks English politicians are somehow more honest and more competent than French, likes Italian fascism and sides with the Japanese rather than with China.

HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

Dale Carnegie. (Simon & Shuster).

(Reviewed by John A. MacDonald, '38)

Several of the passengers on the S. S. *Britannic*, which recently returned to New York after a five-day cruise along the Atlantic seaboard, were extremely puzzled by the conduct of one vacationer who kept to himself, pacing the deck alone daily. Whenever he spoke, he was so abrupt that people soon hastened away. You've guessed the coincidence—the aloof person was none other than Dale Carnegie, author of this year's non-fictional best-seller of the above title. That the author does not practise what he preaches in private life does not enter into our appraisal. We do know, however, that he does cater to public taste in his writings.

Undoubtedly, a very important factor in making this book a best-seller is its title. Of late it has been bandied about considerably in cartoons and jokes. But does not all this, along with the high-pressure introduction "A Short-cut to Distinction" by Lowell Thomas, and the extensive advertising of the publishers, serve to keep the book in the public eye? And who does not desire "to win friends and influence people?"

Another reason why this volume is so widely read is because it is written in a language so simple that any one can read and understand it. Good order seems to be the one praiseworthy characteristic of the book, for the author sets forth his material under six attractive headings. With a few concise sentences at the end of each chapter the author sums up "in a nutshell" the chief points to be remembered.

After reading the book throughout, one easily notes that Part One, which comprises the first third of it, is by far the best part. Admitting that fundamentals are very important in any subject, there is little excuse for putting almost everything of value in the first part and leaving for the last two-thirds merely the repetition of a few thoughts and a great number of words. As one continues to read what follows the first part, the book becomes less interesting and less instructive till it flattens out entirely in the concluding chapter. The short stories, which were really interesting in the beginning, soon lose their sparkle through repetition or similarity.

The author knows a large number of quotations but uses them much too often. In some cases these quotations are aptly used in reference to some Christian virtue. But often the author spoils their effect by advising some subtle or vacillating method of obtaining influence over your fellowman. Instead of putting a premium on firmness of character, he connives at practices that would tend to make a "yes-man" of his pupil. The latter part of the book proposes nothing that any reasonable man or woman does not already know and practice.

It seems unfortunate that such a book should become a best-seller when there are many others more deserving. This work sustains the opinion of many critics that the best-seller is not always of a high grade.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

By Isidore O'Brien, O. F. M. (St. Anthony Guild Press).

(Reviewed by Ronald McNeill, '39)

This book, unlike many about the life of Christ, is so written that it may be perused by the casual reader or studied by the member of a study club. This was accomplished by combining narrative style with simple textbook form. The result is a book that is well written, and that embodies within its pages many references and maps which the student may use to his advantage. Even though the casual reader may disregard them he will still have a splendid picture of the Gospel scene.

Before beginning the story of the life of the Redeemer, the author gives us a short, condensed history of the political and religious state of the world up to the time of

Christ. The old pagan religions with their beliefs are listed and outlined. The greater part of this short history, however, is devoted to a study of Palestine.

This knowledge of Palestine and of the Jewish sects and customs is necessary for a perfect understanding of the life of our Lord. The author gives us sufficient information on Jewish rites and beliefs to enable us to comprehend just what conditions and factions Christianity had to contend with.

This short history completed, the actual life of Christ is begun. The author gives us the story of the Saviour in his own peculiar diction. It is a very complete work and is written with warmth, understanding and love.

The main characteristic of the author's style is the way in which numerous Biblical quotations are woven together. These quotations do not detract from the simplicity of the book but rather seem to simplify it. A page of "The Life of Christ" is similar in style and wording to a page of the Bible, and it can be read with the same ease.

The person who reads "The Life of Christ" is not given merely a story of the Redeemer's life on earth, but also the explanation of His teachings and the manner in which these are observed to-day. The questions at the end of each chapter, too, enable the student to emphasize the more important facts of our Lord's life and to make a comprehensive review in a short time.

"Father Isidore has been over the ground, and has absorbed the feel of the land and the spirit of the Gospels." His effort is the product of extensive knowledge and deep scholarship. It enables the reader to see in a new light the perfections of Him Who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."



Never wise head yet without warm heart.—*Carlyle*.

Man, poor man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.

—*Shakespeare*.