

BOOK REVIEWS

VOX CLAMANTIS IN DESERTA

"The Tragedy of Europe," by Francis Neilson. C. C. Nelson, Appleton, Wisc., 1940. 680 pp. Limited first edition, \$10.00.

From time immemorial, war has hung about the world like the dead albatross on the back of the Ancient Mariner, and in "The Tragedy of Europe," Francis Neilson has undertaken the superhuman task of dissecting its causes and placing the blame for the present conflict.

Few writers are as well equipped for the job at hand. From a ring-side seat in the House of Commons he witnessed the diplomatic maneuvers which ushered in World War No. 1. What he saw he published in a scathing indictment entitled, "How Diplomats Make War." Five large printings of this book have been made and foreign translations have carried it into Germany, France and Sweden. In the intervening years Mr. Neilson has continued his study of international politics, and the present volume is the fruit of that consecration. To it, and to the indomitable courage with which he has expressed his views, Robert M. Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago pays tribute in his introduction to this remarkable book.

In a day-by-day commentary on military, diplomatic and political events from September 1939 to the invasion of Greece in the following year, the author has traced the cataclysm of affairs in Europe and their effect in the United States.

Mr. Neilson recognizes that the object of war is territorial aggrandizement, but his purpose in this book is primarily that of finding out to whom the guilt of making war belongs. Quoting *The Times* (London) of 1912, he says:

"The answer is to be found in the chancelleries of Europe, among the men who have too long played with human lives as pawns in a game of chess, who have become so emeshed in formulas and the jargon of diplomacy that they have ceased to be conscious of the poignant realities with which they trifle. . ."

Long before Munich, Mr. Neilson recognized the superior strength of Germany. Nor was he ever deluded with the idea that once his bluff was called Hitler would collapse like a pricked balloon. He believes that the old system of the balance of power will have to go, and Great Britain and France must realize and express a willingness to become partners with the other states in a new European system.

It is not in Hitler, but in Stalin, that Mr. Neilson discerns the real world menace. He says, "The exhaustless energy of Stalin has been spent in raising an illiterate thief and cut-throat to an eminence Ivan the Terrible would have hesitated to occupy. . . It is because our interventionists have their binoculars fixed upon the wrong man that they are oblivious to the greatest menace of all; the one which is watching and waiting for the moment to leap—the menace that lies between the Dniester and the Urals."

Mr. Neilson does not believe the defeat of Britain would be followed by an invasion of this Continent within this generation. Further than that he has wisely refrained from making any prediction. His opinion is that a victorious Hitler would be far too occupied with the tasks of his success to be able to undertake an enterprise of such magnitude.

Like a voice crying in the wilderness, "The Tragedy of Europe" will not find easy acceptance. It advances an unpopular view of the war, and the radio and the daily press have successfully inoculated us against its practical iconoclasm. But the voice will not go unheard. As President Hutchins says in his excellent introduction, "Mr. Neilson is entitled to speak. . . and at this hour, when

the fate of all the world is at stake, opinions opposite to those of the majority deserve the most careful attention. Our country will shortly be faced by the decision for peace or war. In reaching that decision we must take into consideration the conclusions reached by the author of this book."

V. G. PETERSON

TWO NEW OFFERINGS OF JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

By recent mail have come two books from England by the Rt. Hon. Josiah C. Wedgwood, D.S.O., M.P.

The one, "Memoirs of a Fighting Life," is an autobiography—an enormously informative work, which gives an intimate backstage picture of British political affairs and shows its author in the role of Commander in the Navy, Colonel in the Army (doing active service in both), Commissioner to South Africa, India and Palestine—and for thirty-five years, a Member of Parliament.

Through the whole chronicle runs a hopeful theme—Col. Wedgwood's complete dedication to the philosophy of Henry George. It is written with a scholarly and brilliant pen, dipped more than occasionally into delicious humor. The book, unfortunately, is not yet for sale in the United States, but a demand for it should be started by Georgeists all over the country, not only because of its admirable contribution to modern history, but because of its propaganda value.

The second book by Col. Wedgwood (in collaboration with Allen Nevins, professor of history at Columbia University) is entitled "Forever Freedom." It is an anthology of great statements made down the centuries, on Liberty. Four pages are given to quotations from Henry George. And under the only picture in the book, a portrait of Col. Wedgwood, is his statement that "the main desire of his life is to get England to adopt the philosophy and taxation of Henry George." This admirable anthology (published by Penguin Books, price 25c) is something to be studied by young and old alike (particularly by benighted anti-Georgeists!). It is apropos of the moment, and yet timeless.

ANNA GEORGE DE MILLE

PAMPHLETS RECEIVED

Mr. Don L. Thompson has written and published a number of pamphlets on different phases of the economic problem. Among them are: "Legislating Prosperity for the Farmer, and the Back-to-the-Farm Panacea", "Our Deluded Over-Productionists—Not Over-Production but Under-Production", "The Problem of Unemployment", and "The Great Economic Delusion—an Answer to the Townsend Pension Plan." Mr. Thompson deals with fundamental economics, and many current fallacies are effectively answered in these pamphlets. Information pertaining to them may be had by writing to Mr. Don L. Thompson, E 2527 Illinois Avenue, Spokane, Wash.

A new and attractive edition of John Salmon's pamphlet, "American Taxation," has been published by the School of Democracy. In his preface, Mr. Salmon says: "Astonishing confusion of thought prevails on the subject of taxation. It's not so complicated as some writers make it. Our effort is made herewith to present it simply, hoping to have readers realize the need for a change more in conformity with American ideals." In the booklet, the Georgeist view on taxation is concisely presented.

Henry Ware Allen has compiled a conveniently collated questionnaire on the Single Tax. It is printed under the title, "What is the Single Tax?" This pamphlet, published by the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation, consists of thirty typical questions and answers concerning the philosophy of Henry George.