

Is the World Being Americanized?

BY HAROLD E. BLYTHE.
BELLING, Dec. 28.—(Special correspondence.)—"We are all becoming Americans."

"We?"

"I mean the whole world. The wonderful accomplishments and progress of America are making their influence felt everywhere."

Gerhart Hauptmann, the poet-dramatist, whom the world has just delighted to honor on his 50th birthday and to whom the Nobel prize of \$40,000 for literature was this year awarded, was the speaker. It has been rather difficult to find him. On my first call at the Hotel Adlon, where he makes his home while in Berlin, he was "resting" and could not be disturbed. Later the same day he was "sleeping." On my next call he was again "sleeping."

The case, of course, was then clear. The popular conception of the poet, particularly of the poet who deals often with mystic subjects, as Hauptmann has done in "The Sunken Bell," still pictures him as a physically weak man, almost, in truth, of a feminine type, unfitted for strenuous every-day life, to say nothing of a score of banquets, lectures and other honors forced upon him by an admiring people. Plainly Herr Hauptmann was of this delicate mold, and when word was sent that he would come down to the drawing-room, this was the type which, perhaps half consciously, I expected to see.

The elevator door opens. Can this be Hauptmann, this erect, almost rugged appearing man? The public prints of the last fortnight have made his face familiar, but the first impression is decidedly not what one looks for in a poet. Five feet ten or eleven inches tall, well built, well proportioned, straight—physically a man far above the average.

"You are Herr Doktor Hauptmann?"

I asked. (Oxford conferred the honorary doctorate upon him in 1905).

"My name is Hauptmann," he replied.

Obviously one has to deal with an unusual man, for the German with a title uses it when he introduces himself. There are exceptions, of course, but 99 times out of 100 the betitled German, placing his heels ceremoniously together, bows and says: "I am Doctor Schmidt" or "I am Professor Braun." It may be that Hauptmann feels that titles can add nothing to his stature, but as one talks with him one gets the impression that his omission to use the title is more fairly ascribable to honest modesty.

Set out to be a Farmer.

Hauptmann was born on a Silesian farm, and at first intended to become a farmer. It takes but a slight stretch of the imagination to picture him in overalls and leather boots, following a plow. Assuredly he has the physical strength and endurance, and it is very probable that he could "turn a furrow" as neatly as the farmers of his home town, but when one studies him closely the poet appears. His face is clean shaven and mobile, of the best Teutonic type. His bright blue eyes, a trifle small, are clear, piercing and expressive. A full, splendidly shaped forehead is constituted by a considerable recession of the hair. Baldness, it appears, is no more considerate of the genius than of the hodgepodge. A mass of criminally obvious intentions, rises back of the broad brow. From time to time Herr Hauptmann passes his left hand over his brow, a characteristic gesture and about the only one he employs in conversation.

His 50 years sit lightly upon him. The lines of his face are the expression of character, not of age. His step is as elastic as that of a youth, his shoulders could carry the King's coat.

But he is a poet, a poet. He might, it is true, plow his two acres a day, but it is more likely that he would stop, like Robert Burns, to apostrophize the "wee mists of evening" and "flower" which his coulter had bruised and his moldboard buried. Of good plowmen there are many, but there is only one Gerhart Hauptmann, and one rejoices that the Muse whispered to this man while he was but a boy.

It was not, however, the muse of

poetry that first led him from the farm. As a boy of 18, in 1880, he began to study sculpture, and devoted two years to it. His interest in sculpture is still intense, and he asked about Karl Bitter, Austrian by birth but now claimed by the United States. From Breslau, where he had studied sculpture, he went in 1882 to the University of Jena, where he studied history for a year. But the poet in him was too strong. In the following year his "Prometheus" appeared, the first of his writings.

Self Not Favorite Topic.

Herr Hauptmann was reluctant to talk of himself. He waved aside an inquiry as to when he first felt the impulse to write.

"But that is all in my books," he said. "Do you have regular hours for work, or do you take up the pen only when you feel in the mood for it?"

"Surely, that isn't of interest to anybody."

"Surely it is," I assured him.

"Well," he said, "I am a pretty regular worker. Ordinarily I devote the forenoons to work. I am not a night worker and never was."

"Do you write by hand or use a typewriter?"

The poet shrugged his shoulders, the most active gesture he made during the interview, and delighted the Zephyrs by alternately heeling them and playing to them on the oboe. He was the entire orchestra for their sills, at which the "ladies" were distinguished by handkerchiefs on their arms.

Finally, not one of them was more undisciplined than he. His lively and impetuous repartee was a joy to the whole company. When the top of the mountain moved forward, every man wanted to shake his hand in farewell.

"Au revoir, old pal! You are sharp, but keep your eyes open!" they cried to him.

And Carrette retorted, with more cheerfulness than he really felt: "Don't you worry. You'll find me here when you get back."

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At the moment when the lion was leaving his cave a dozen men as scouts followed by the cad and his nephew, the young son of the tribal sheik, were moving silently toward the little plain. Not knowing how many enemies they might encounter, they took great precautions, that they might surprise the infidels or retire safely. They approached stealthily, preceded by the young man, for even in the desert "noblesse oblige." The old cad was proud of the boy's courage and followed his movements with mingled joy and fear.

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Hauptmann, Germany's Greatest Writer Says it Is.

Americans, by Their Wonderful Achievements in the Cause of Progress, Are Making Influence Felt Everywhere—Oregonian Correspondent Has Remarkable Interview With Famous Poet and Dramatist.



Hauptmann with Son, at the Dramatist's Beautiful Villa in Silesia

talking about Hauptmann. The subject of America was brought up.

"You have visited America?" I asked. A slight shadow crossed his face for a moment, the reflection of an unpleasant recollection.

"Yes," he said, "I went over to prepare for the presentation of my play, 'Hannele's Himmelfahrt' (Hannele's Trip to Heaven). And the censor forbade it on the ground that it was blasphemous, and that it was a caricature of the poet."

The poet stopped a moment, then repeated: "He said it was blasphemous. Later the prohibition was withdrawn."

The incident did not, however, prejudice Hauptmann against America, although it plainly gave him an unfavorable view of the American attitude toward the higher forms of literature, especially naturalistic drama, and toward art.

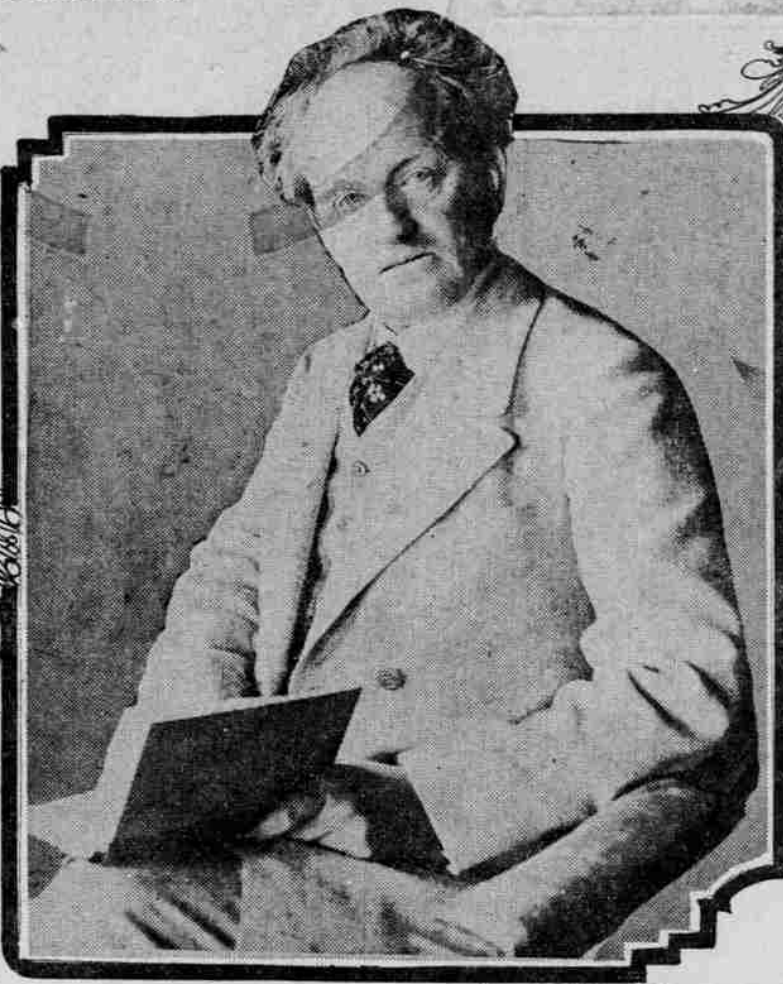
"You must admit," he said, "that poetry, whether because it is not profitable or for some other reason, is not greatly esteemed in America. Your Walt Whitman is more highly regarded here than he was at home. I understand, however, that there has been a great change in this respect since I was in America, that men of art, letters and science are acquiring a higher standing every day. I am glad to hear

it. When I was there the man of science, for example, did not stand high. "I was in America only three months, not long enough to acquire enthusiasm for the land, but I was, and have since been, greatly impressed by the country. It was then that he used the sentence with which this article begins.

"We are all becoming Americans," he said. "I mean that we are adopting from day to day the customs and using the inventions of the country. Do not understand me to say that we are becoming any less German or that the Italians are becoming less Italian because of this. In the last analysis, every nation will keep its peculiar attributes, and it is well that it should. The disappearance of racial characteristics would be unfortunate. But the great accomplishments and progress of America are making their influence felt everywhere."

Dollar Craze Dying Out.

"Do you believe that Germany, in this assimilation of American ideas, will ever come to the American view-



Gerhart Hauptmann, Famous German Dramatist, Who Declares World is Becoming Americanized

point which the Germans stigmatize as Puritanism?"

"Never," said Herr Hauptmann decidedly.

"You have in America the foundation for a great artistic development," he continued. "The idea that business—the dollar—is the all-important thing is, I believe, dying out. You are beginning to boast of your culture, of your art, of your literature, and that means that you have all these things and appreciate them. It seems to me that your great land, with its diverse but yet common interests, should give the writer or artist a broader outlook than we have here in Europe. As you suggest, America is young yet and you

have not, until recently, at least, had a leisure class that could devote its attention to these things. But I hear most encouraging reports of the change in the last 15 or 20 years."

Herr Hauptmann spoke with unfeigned admiration of Mark Twain, of "Tom Sawyer," he said:

"It discloses a wonderful insight into the soul of the boy. I read Twain with great enjoyment. He stands by himself. Remarkable man, to come from the printer's case to a leading position in letters."

Outside of Twain and Whitman, however, the poet appeared to know astonishingly little of many authors whom the Americans consider classic. He knew something of Emerson, but was not certain whether he was a poet or not. Lowell's name evoked no response and Longfellow was hardly more than a name.

Hauptmann became enthusiastic when the talk turned upon Italy. Since his youth he has spent most of his winters in that country, and there he does his best work. His expressive face brightened as he spoke of Italy and its people.

"An admirable, adorable, lovable folk," he said. "One must know the Italian in his home to know him well. I love the land and its people."

Hauptmann's 11-year-old son, a bright, clear-eyed lad who promised to look like his father, is named Benvenuto, a living witness of the writer's fondness for the Italians. Hauptmann, his wife and son, when not in Italy or Berlin, live in a beautiful villa, "Wiesenstein," in Agnetendorf, a village in the Riesengebirge of Silesia.

Man of Becoming Modest.

The poet did much of his early work in a suburb of Berlin, and he is well-known and greatly admired here. For that matter, he is greatly admired

throughout Europe. Rarely have greater honors been showered upon a man of letters than have fallen to his lot in the last weeks. From every country of the Old World admirers have journeyed to Berlin to take part in banquets and other celebrations in honor of the poet and dramatist, his plays have occupied the theaters and "Hauptmann days" have been celebrated in schools, clubs and societies.

Then came the Nobel Prize, the highest distinction possible for a man of letters. And in this connection it is of interest to note that he received in 1896 the Gritparzer Prize, the most important literary prize granted in Germany, for "Hannele's Himmelfahrt," the play which the New York police wanted to prohibit because it was "blasphemous."

Through all his successes he retains a modesty that does not always co-exist with greatness. An incident that occurred during a festival production of one of his plays during the recent Hauptmann celebrations in Berlin is characteristic. Hauptmann, who was guest of honor at the theater, met Anatole France, the famous Parisian man of letters, in the corridor. France stopped and heartily congratulated Hauptmann on receiving the Nobel Prize.

"You are very good," said Hauptmann, "but there is a man who had deserved it much more than I did. When you return to Paris give the author of 'Le Lys Rouge' my compliments and tell him that the Nobel Prize should have been his."

Anatole France is the author of "Le Lys Rouge."

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LER OPPHEUS

by Count Alfred de Vervins

WHEN Hussein Pasha, the dey of Algiers, happened to strike our

envoy in 1840 with his fly-bush, French honor immediately insisted that Algiers be conquered and some thousands of men killed on both sides, were it only to teach these barbarians good manners and make them pay tribute.

It was for this that we set out, 10,000 strong, from Constantine, infantry, cavalry and artillery. But scarcely had we passed the Oued-Tummel when the struggle commenced, and during a month our march was only a succession of skirmishes, of engagements with sharpshooters, of attacks at night and of ambushes set in all the narrow passes which furrow this mountainous country.

The general, who was, perhaps, uneasy as to the result of the expedition, was above all most assuredly in a bad humor. The principal cause of delay was a flock of 5000 sheep, and the general decided to abandon them. Last it he said that he had lost them, he resolved to leave them under care of a man from the Zephyrs.

He took a man from this body because he was convinced, as we all were, that the man would be killed and our sheep be carried away as soon as we were out of sight, and it pleased him to sacrifice a Zephyr rather than a grenadier or a zouave, but the Battalion of Africa, is formed exclusively of rascals.

It is not composed of robbers or murderers, but all the undisciplined, all the insubordinates of the army are sent to the Zephyrs. They are generally intelligent, and if it is true that a Zephyr is as brave as a lion, one might say that the Zephyr is as brave as two.

Thus the 125 men who defended Mazgran for three days against 3000 Arabs were Zephyrs commanded by Captain Lelievre.

Having passed the night in a little valley covered with thick grass, the general called the commandant of the Zephyrs and ordered him to select a man to guard and care for the sheep in this little valley until our return in three months.

"You will deliver to him," he added, "an ample supply of biscuits, rice and coffee and he can kill a sheep when he needs it. We will pick him up on our return."

The commandant could not repress an ironical smile, but he made no remarks, saluted and joined the battalion. He passed slowly before his men, looking at each as if asking himself which to choose, for he felt that it was about to condemn to death the one whom he should select.

Finally he stopped and called to the fusilier Carrette. A boy of 22 or 23,

with a fine physique, short nose, square chin, broad forehead and curly blonde hair, wide-open blue eyes and smiling lips, replied: "Present!" He left the ranks, stepped before the officer, presented arms, and looking him squarely in the eyes, waited.

When his comrades learned to what duty Carrette was detailed a murmur of insubordination ran through the ranks. For among these jokers Carrette was the joker par excellence. In his youth he had been one of a troupe of mountebanks and later had traveled with a charlatan of a doctor and had acquired a considerable repertoire of witticisms and puns which had been enormously successful in Africa.

He pretended to have some surgical knowledge and delighted the Zephyrs by alternately heeling them and playing to them on the oboe. He was the entire orchestra for their sills, at which the "ladies" were distinguished by handkerchiefs on their arms.

Finally, not one of them was more undisciplined than he. His lively and impetuous repartee was a joy to the whole company. When the top of the mountain moved forward, every man wanted to shake his hand in farewell.

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"THE LION STOOD STILL."

thing deeper in his eyes, was leaning on his gun. The drums beat, the musicians played their most joyful airs, and for an hour Carrette received a real ovation.

If he had not been a Zephyr he might have been decorated, but his reputation as a jester made this distinction impossible, thought the General, who gave him 100 francs instead. On their side, the Kabyles had prepared the lion's skin, as only the desert folk can, and when we had returned to Constantine, Carrette sold his lion's skin for 500 francs. Having all this wealth, he straightway took an illegal leave of absence, got immorally drunk and

landed in the guardhouse for some days!

Two years later, when I had left the army and was living in the country, I chanced to meet Carrette, who was traveling as a musician, dentist and prestidigitator, with his wife, his little girl and some absolutely indescribable baggage on the back of a little ass. He was making a fairly good living and was contented with his lot.

"But it is true," he added, with a sigh of relief, "I have never had and never shall have four months of such happiness as those I passed with the Kabyles!"

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