

We feel sorry that so many in Europe are not free; are all Americans free?

We used to trace lawlessness and riots in Central and Eastern Europe to arbitrary officialdom; to what must we trace lawless and riotous conduct in this country?

Shall we make use of methods which we condemn in others?

St. Paul itemized the sins of the Gentiles, but, lest the Jews be puffed up with vain glory, he asked: "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?"

## ANDREW D. WHITE—NEUTRAL.

BY ROLAND HUGINS.

THE duration of the world war coincided with the last years of Andrew Dickson White. He died on November 4, 1918. If he had lived three days more he would have come to his eighty-sixth birthday. If he had been granted seven days more he would have lived until the signing of the armistice with Germany. So the final span of this great American's life overlapped almost exactly the period during which was fought the greatest battle of history.

Naturally Dr. White was intensely interested in the great conflict. The attention of practically every one in the world was absorbed by it. But not only that: he had an especial reason for interest, because of the fact that he knew personally many of the diplomats and generals who were responsible for the breaking of the flood-gates, and understood the inside diplomatic history of Europe during the last generation. He had served as Minister to Germany and to Russia, and later again as Ambassador to Germany. After his retirement in his seventieth year, he came to live in his spacious residence on the Cornell Campus. There he kept open house for members of the faculty and undergraduates. Those who came into contact with Dr. White in this period knew how stimulating and elevating was his influence. He brought something of Olympus to Ithaca.

In the summer of 1915 a little book of mine appeared under the title *Germany Misjudged*, printed by the Open Court Publishing Company. It was scarcely more than a lengthy pamphlet. It contended that America should keep out of the world war. Although tinged with a mild pro-Germanism, it was really pacifist in tone and intent, and might just as well have been entitled "The Duty of

Neutrality." That would have proved, as events unfolded themselves, a more discreet choice of title. At any rate, the War Department placed this book on its prohibited list for Army camps last year,—an attention which I take as an undeserved compliment to my persuasiveness.

One afternoon after the book had appeared Professor George Lincoln Burr of the History Department, who has endeared himself to many successive generations of Cornellians, stopped at my house to deliver a message from Dr. White. He said that Dr. White had read *Germany Misjudged* and that when he had found it to be written by an instructor in the University, expressed a desire to have me pay him a call. Upon presenting myself the next evening, Dr. White greeted me with gracious courtesy. We had a long talk before his library fire.

Dr. White said that he thought that I had made a number of good points in the book but there were numerous things with which he could not agree. He had marked passages from which he dissented. He said that he took particular exception to two statements. In the first place he said I had made a mistake in attempting to gloss over, even faintly, the German invasion of Belgium. That was not only in his mind a crime against international law and a small nation, but it was a military and political blunder. He thought that the Germans in their campaign with France should have advanced along the old routes used in 1870. He contended that, despite the fact that the frontier between France and Germany was much more strongly fortified than in previous days, the Germans would have ultimately strengthened their position, military and moral, at the expense of a slight initial strategic sacrifice, had they struck straight at Verdun. In the second place, he declared, I had not realized the enormity of the German policy of frightfulness. He quoted Emperor William's speech at the time of the Boxer Rebellion. He said that such a policy, openly avowed and ruthlessly pursued, could not fail in the end to bring down upon Germany world-wide condemnation and possibly new enemies.

What praise he had of the book he phrased in general terms. He said that much of my criticism of France, Russia, and England was well taken. He was glad to see that the younger members of the faculty were taking an interest in public affairs and were seeking to interpret them. He hoped that I would look further into the perplexities of international politics.

After that night I called now and again at Dr. White's house. He was always charming and responsive and never in the least

condescending. He had a graciousness that is rare to meet, blended with a perfect dignity. Dr. White in these conversations did most of the talking. His age showed itself only in one respect: he was fond of reminiscence. He would tell of incidents in which he had participated during the Civil War and during his sojourns in Europe; but his mind did not dwell exclusively on the past. At the conclusion of an anecdote about Bismarck or Disraeli he would pick up from the desk the latest copy of the *London Saturday Review* and read to me a paragraph that he approved or disapproved. Dr. White drew a very sharp line between truth and falsehood. He did not hesitate to designate prominent men as blackguards. I remember that one evening he showed me a book, I think it was *Delane of the Times*, on the pages of which he had been penciling comments, as was his habit. He had made such notations as "This gives the exact truth," or "This is an outrageous lie," or "Utterly false."

To Dr. White the war, coming at the eve of a long diplomatic life, brought less astonishment than to most Americans. He viewed it as history even while it was going on. He had seen too many wars in his life, and too many narrow escapes from conflict, to imagine that any millennium was just around the corner. He did not indulge in any exaggerated hopes that the outcome of this war, whatever it might be, would bring mankind suddenly to an era of perpetual peace. Up to the time that America entered the war Dr. White believed that Germany could not be defeated crushingly, and that the war would end in a negotiated peace on the basis of a draw. His attitude toward the whole conflict up to 1917 was aloof. But his neutrality was not the neutrality of indifference or ignorance. I have heard him say a half a dozen times that Germany had suffered many genuine grievances from her neighbors, Russia, France, and England. I have also heard him half a dozen times condemn in strong terms the conduct of the Prussian Junkers. Although he was by no means a partisan of President Wilson, he supported the policy of neutrality that Mr. Wilson pursued up to the time of his second election.

Dr. White was never a whole-hearted admirer of England, although he saw many fine things in the British civilization. He said once, "I have received the best treatment and the worst treatment that I have ever encountered, in England." Yet he thought that English business men were more honest than those of the Continent and that French business men were more honest than German. He told his experiences in buying furniture at one time or another for

his ministerial residences to support these estimates of European tradesmen. Dr. White was in England as a young man during our Civil War; and the profound impression that anti-American feeling and misrepresentation produced upon him at that time was never quite eradicated. His subsequent experience inclined him to the view that the Tories and Junkers of all countries are very much alike.

The predominant emotion that the world war aroused in Dr. White was therefore not one of partisanship for either side, but of deep regret that such a calamity should ever come upon the world. He feared that the war, if too long protracted, might ruin European civilization. Dr. White had been the presiding officer of the American Delegation to the First Peace Conference at the Hague; and throughout his life he had labored incessantly for the promotion of international good will. The war therefore appeared to him as the frustration of high hopes and endeavors.

In politics Dr. White was more of a conservative than a radical. He set a very high estimate on David Jayne Hill, a successor of his as Ambassador to Berlin; and he frequently told me that he regarded Mr. Hill's book on *The People's Government* as a masterpiece. He was really a Liberal of the old-fashioned school, a school that seems to be gradually becoming extinct. He was not only the advocate but the embodiment of the best American traditions. He was high-mindedness incarnate. Although he never hesitated to condemn what he thought false or low, he was a man of generous admirations. He often spoke in terms of praise of Americans of both parties, of Cleveland and Wilson, of John Hay, Roosevelt, and Taft. He esteemed a man for his character and not for his opinions. He did not consider it an affront that a man should differ with him.

The day after war was declared by the United States early in April, 1917, I encountered Dr. White on the sidewalk of State Street, down-town in Ithaca. He was just about to enter his automobile. I asked him what he thought of the declaration. He said: "I think we should have been wiser to have stayed out. But now that we are in we must remember that we are Americans and all stand together." From that day forward, I am sure, he supported the American Government in every possible way. But he knew, with Lord Morley, that "The world is traveling under formidable omens into a new era."