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GERMAN BEST SELLER

Publication in complete form of two translations of Hitler's book "Mein Kampf," hitherto known here in English only in an abridged form, is a somewhat belated recognition of a more than "royal author." He wrote the first part when he was a sort of guest-prisoner in the fortress of Landsberg am Lech after the ignominious *Putsch* in Munich. The first part was published in that year, the second in 1927. At first the going was hard. A larger-type edition in two volumes for 24 marks was disposed of slowly. A popular edition for 8 was worked off more easily. When the corporal came to the purple his book became required buying if not reading.

The recent official figures put the circulation at more than two million copies. It is given away copiously, a prize to students, bridal couples, and so on. The style, if style can be attributed to it, sour critics say, is rhapsodic, repetitious. While his racial theories are those of Gobineau, Houston Stuart Chamberlain and more immediately of Rosenberg, it would be superfluous to suppose that Hitler took

them out of books. They were *volksisch*. They soaked into his mind from pamphlets and newspapers. The Hitlerian *Weltanschauung* is old stuff. The scorn of "nauseating humane morality," the praise of "barbaric ruthlessness," is no new thing in Germany. Hitler is a reviver and a disseminator of old myths and phrases. Blood and soil, about which there is a passage in "Mein Kampf" that may have been derived from Walter Darré, is a stock literary phrase.

From one point of view Hitler's book might be regarded as a sort of handbook of power attained by the credulity and emotion of the masses whom he despises. Rudolf Olden's charge that logic suffers cruel and unusual punishment in Hitler's idiom seems strangely out of place. Olden quotes him as saying of poverty: "Whoever has not himself been in the tentacles of this throttling viper will never know its fangs." A viper "has no tentacles, and a snake which can coil itself around a man has no fangs," writes Olden solemnly; and "if a man is throttled by a snake, he does not make the acquaintance of its fangs." German biology is different from that of the rest of the world as to human beings. Doubtless German snakes are different.