

the battle. Attacks by the British against the lower Rhine and by the 3rd US Army between Trier and the upper Ror were co-ordinated with the main thrust. By the middle of March the Allies had occupied the territory west of the lower and middle Rhine as far south as the Moselle River—with the exception of the Koblenz area—and had crossed the Rhine at Remagen. This advance compelled the Germans to withdraw their large bulge between the Saar and the Rhine, which had held out a long time against the attacks of the 7th US Army. On March 25 the last German formations in this area fought their way back across the Rhine south of Speyer.

The battle entered a new phase with the widening of the Remagen bridgehead and the breakthrough to the Sieg River and into the Lahn valley. This assault started on March 20 and was followed four days later by Allied crossings of the Rhine on its lower reaches.

EAST OF THE RHINE

Looking back at the fighting on the Western Front, we observe a striking difference between the events west and those east of the Rhine. Until they reached the Rhine, the Allies had to fight bitter and bloody battles for every square mile of German soil, and the Germans were even able to push them back temporarily in the Rundstedt offensive. Whenever the Allies had managed to pass on to mobile warfare and to make larger territorial gains at a quicker pace, they soon found themselves bogged down by new defense lines. But once across the Rhine their advance assumed Blitzkrieg proportions. What had happened? Had the German Army finally cracked? The Allies themselves do not seem to think so. Their own

reports continued to be full of references to "fanatical resistance" on the part of the Germans.

But the gaps between the centers of German resistance were so large that the Allies could, by bypassing them, move almost as fast as they could organize their supply lines. Only after the war will we know the true reason why there were so few German troops east of the Rhine to meet the Allied onslaught. The Soviets claim to know it already. And perhaps they are right. In the *Krasnaya Zvezda* of April 4, 1945, G. Aleksandrov, a leading Bolshevik, wrote that since the end of January 1945 the Germans had moved 44 divisions to their eastern front, mainly from the west. He asserted that, "by moving large troop contingents to the Soviet-German front, the German High Command left its western front without a serious defense." In addition it seems that the ceaseless bombardment of German armament plants and the loss of important industrial areas had reduced the quantity of arms available to the Germans to such an extent that an effective defense became impossible.

Our map shows the rapidity of the Anglo-American advance. By the middle of April the Elbe was reached in a number of places. The junction with the Soviets was effected on April 25.

Not shown on the map are the numerous nests of resistance which held out behind the Allied surge—except the largest of them, in the Ruhr area, which tied down some eighteen Anglo-American divisions for a considerable time—clinging to individual towns, villages, and road crossings, while small mobile detachments did their utmost to attack and disrupt enemy supply columns. Yet on the Western Front, too, the end was in sight.

THE RAINMAKER

By HERMANN HESSE

Hermann Hesse, now close on seventy, is one of Germany's leading authors. Ever since he wrote his first novel more than forty years ago, he has been struggling with the problems of human character and with the question as to what place is taken by the human mind in the universe. A year ago his latest work was published, "The Bead Game," a novel in two volumes. Included in it are three short stories, the first of which we present here in a condensed translation.



IT was many thousand years ago, and the women were in power: in tribe and family it was the mother and grandmother who commanded veneration and obedience; when children were born,

girls were much more highly prized than boys.

In the village there was a great-grandmother who must have been a hundred years old or more, revered and feared by all as a queen, although, as long as people could remember, she had but rarely lifted a finger or spoken a word. Many a day she sat in front of the entrance to her hut, surrounded by a suite of attendant relatives, and the women of the village came to pay her homage, to tell her of their affairs, to show her their children for

them to be blessed; pregnant women came and begged that she might touch them and provide a name for what they were expecting.

In the evenings there sat in front of the matriarch's mud hut not she herself but her daughter, hardly less white and dignified nor much less aged than the great-grandmother. From her mouth there flowed the source of knowledge; she preserved the treasure of the tribe under her white hair, behind her gently wrinkled brow lived the memories and the spirit of the settlement. If anyone had knowledge and knew proverbs or stories, he had them from her. Beside her and the ancient one there was only one more initiated person in the tribe; but he remained more hidden, a mysterious and very taciturn man, the weather- or rainmaker. He became the most important person in the village at those times when he had really to officiate as weathermaker. This happened when a long period of drought, wet, or cold laid siege to the fields and threatened the tribe with famine. Then Turu, the rain-

maker, had to apply means known against dryness and scarcity of crops: sacrifices, exorcisms, processions. If, in a stubborn drought or endless rain, all other methods failed and the spirits were not to be moved by any persuasion, supplication, or threats, there was, according to legend, one last, infallible means, which was supposed to have been employed now and again in the days of mothers and grandmothers: the sacrificing of the weathermaker himself by the community. The matriarch, it was said, had still witnessed such an event.

Among the listeners there also crouched the boy Knecht and beside him a little girl, called Ada. He liked this child and often accompanied and protected her, not out of a feeling of love really—he did not know anything about that yet, he was still a child himself—but because she was the daughter of the rainmaker. For him, the rainmaker, Knecht felt great veneration and admiration, next to the great-grandmother and her daughter for no one as much as for him. Now the weathermaker was a rather unapproachable man, it was not easy for a boy to get close to him; one had to use circuitous routes, and one of the circuitous routes to the weathermaker was Knecht's concern for his child. As often as he could, he fetched her from the weathermaker's hut, which lay some way off, to sit with her in the evening in front of the old woman's hut and listen to the stories, and then took her home again.

Turu responded to the boy's advances with very sparing steps, he did not make it easy for him. But the youngster was always after him. Sometimes Turu growled and ungraciously sent his pursuer on his way; sometimes, however, he beckoned him and kept him at his side throughout the day, letting himself be served by him, showing him this and that, letting him guess, testing him, telling him the names of herbs, ordering him to fetch water or build a fire, and for everything he did he had certain knacks, secrets, formulas, which the boy was adjured to keep secret. And finally, when Knecht was a little older, he kept him entirely at his side, acknowledging him as his disciple and fetching him from the boys' sleeping house to live in his own hut. This marked Knecht openly in the eyes of all the people: he was no longer a boy, he was a disciple of the weathermaker, and that meant that, if he stuck it and proved any good, he would become his successor.

A wealth of traditions and experience, all mankind's knowledge of nature, had not only to be maintained and applied but also passed on. A great, closely knit system of experiences, observations, instincts, and research methods slowly dawned upon the youth, almost nothing of it fixed in terms, almost everything having to be sensed, learned, tested.

One hour deeply engraved itself in Knecht's memory, an hour between night and morning, when his master had woken him two hours

after midnight and had gone out with him at dead of night to show him the last rising of a dwindling crescent. There they waited, the master in silent immobility, the youth slightly apprehensive and shivering from lack of sleep, in the midst of the wooded hills on a jutting slab of rock, for a long time, until, at the place previously indicated by the master and in the shape and angle previously described by him, the thin moon appeared, a delicate, curved line. In awed enchantment, Knecht stared at the slowly rising celestial body; between cloud eclipses it gently floated up in a clear heavenly island.

"Soon she will change her shape and swell again, then the time will come to sow the buckwheat," said the rainmaker, counting out the days on his fingers. Then he sank back into his former silence; as if left alone Knecht crouched on the rock shining with dew and shivered in the cold air; from the depths of the forest a long-drawn hoot of an owl rose up. For a long time the old man pondered, then he got up, placed his hand on Knecht's hair, and said softly, as if in a dream: "When I am dead, my spirit will fly to the moon. Then you will be a man and you will have a wife, my daughter Ada will be your wife. If she has a son from you, my spirit will return and live in your son, and you will name him Turu, as I was called Turu."

The disciple listened with amazement, he dared not say a word, the thin silver crescent rose and was already half swallowed up by the clouds. The young man felt a mysterious inkling of relations and connections, repetitions and crossings, among things and events; he felt himself mysteriously placed as a spectator and also as a participant before this strange night sky where over the endless forests and hills the sharp thin sickle had appeared exactly as predicted by the master; wondrous was the master in his eyes and enveloped in a thousand secrets, he who thought of his own death, he whose spirit would tarry in the moon and return from the moon to a human being who would be Knecht's son and was to bear the deceased master's name. Mysteriously rent asunder, and in parts transparent like the cloudy sky, seemed the future, seemed fate to lie before him, and the fact that one could know about them, name them, and speak about them, seemed to him like a vista of endless space filled with wonders and yet full of order. For an instant everything seemed to him within the grasp of the spirit, of the mind, of the powers of observation, the silent, unerring course of the heavenly bodies above, the life of men and of animals, their communities and enmities, encounters and struggles, everything big and small, as well as the death contained in all life, all this he saw or felt in a first shudder of presentiment, as a whole, and himself included in it in his proper place as a part of a

system, ruled by laws, and accessible to the mind. It was the first precognition of the great secrets, of their dignity and depth as well as their knowableness, which brushed the youth like a spectral hand in this forest coolness between night and morning on the rock over the thousand whispering treetops.



For Knecht it was the first time that he became aware of the voice of the mind, its enticement, its demand, its magic wooing. Many a moon had he seen wandering across the sky, and many an owl hooting had he heard at night, and from the mouth of his master, taciturn as he was, he had heard many a word of ancient wisdom or lonely meditation—in the present hour, however, it was new and different, it was the presentiment of the whole which had struck him, the feeling for relations and connections, for the system which included himself and made him coresponsible. He who had the key to this should be able not only to recognize an animal by its tracks, a plant by its roots or seed, he should be able to grasp the whole of the world, the stars, the spirits, the people, the animals, remedies and poisons, everything in its entirety, and be able to read from any part or sign every other part. There were good huntsmen who could recognize more than others from a track, a dropping, from a hair or trace: from a few tiny hairs they could tell not only from what kind of animal they came but also whether it was old or young, male or female. Others could, from a cloud formation, from a smell in the air, from a certain behavior of animals or plants, tell what the weather would be for days in advance; his master was unmatched in this and almost infallible. Others again had some innate skill: there were boys who were able to hit a bird with a stone at thirty paces, they had not learned it, they could simply do it, it was not the result of conscious effort but of magic or grace, the stone in their hand flew by itself, the stone wanted to hit, and the bird wanted to be hit. There must, so it seemed to Knecht at that moment, be in the vast network of connections a center whence everything could be known, all that had passed and all that was to come could be seen and read. To a man standing at this center, knowledge must flow like water toward a valley and a hare toward a cabbage, his word must hit sharply and infallibly like the stone from the hand of the sharpshooter, by virtue of his intellect he must unite all these various wonderful gifts and talents and give them free play: this would be the perfect, wise, matchless man! To become like him, to approach him, to be on the way toward him: that was the path of paths, that was the goal, that gave a life consecration and meaning.

Knecht's apprenticeship was not very different from the apprenticeship which, for instance, a young huntsman or fisherman goes through with a good master, and he enjoyed it greatly, for he only learned what was already in him. He learned to lie in wait, to listen, to creep up, observe, watch out, be on the alert, scent and follow a track; but the game for

which he and his master lay in wait was not only fox and badger, otter and toad, bird and fish, but the spirit, the whole, the meaning, the relationship. To tell, recognize, guess, and predict the fleeting moody weather, to know death lurking in berry and snakebite, to spy out the secret which connected the clouds and the storms with the phases of the moon and made them affect seed and growth in the same way as the prospering and ruin of human and animal life: that was what they were after. They did not detach themselves from nature and seek to penetrate her secrets by force, they never felt opposed or hostile to nature, were always part of her and devoted to her with reverence.

Beside Knecht, little Ada grew up in the hut, a pretty child, the old man's favorite; and when the latter deemed the time come, he gave her to his disciple as a wife.

From now on Knecht was regarded as the rainmaker's assistant, Turu introduced him to the mother of the village as his son-in-law and successor and thereafter let Knecht represent him in some of his duties and official acts. When he died—he was found dead at his hearth, crouching over some pots with magic brews, his white hair singed by the fire—the young man, the disciple Knecht, had already been known for a long time in the village as a rainmaker. The master's solemn burial was already an affair of the distant past, the old matriarch had been succeeded long ago by her daughter, among Knecht's children, of whom there were several to fill up Ada's small hut, there was a boy named Turu: into his body the old man had returned from his death's journey to the moon.

Knecht was considered a knowing and pious man, a man of great calm and slight fear of death, a man on good terms with the powers. He had to prove his gifts and virtues in many a hard test. Once he had to pass through a period of bad harvests and ill-disposed weather lasting for more than two years, it was the greatest test of his life. At that time it had become evident that in periods of unrest and worry a man's usefulness grows the more he has learned to revere, observe, worship, serve, and sacrifice. The two terrible years, which almost caused his own sacrifice and destruction, finally endowed him with great prestige and confidence, although not among the irresponsible crowd,

yet among the few who bore responsibility and were able to judge a man of his type.

He had also acquired the experience that men of intellect somehow give offense to the others and cause a certain curious kind of aversion among them, that although they are respected from a distance and called upon in cases of need, they are not loved at all or regarded as equals, but avoided. He had also learned that traditional or freely invented incantations or formulas of exorcism are accepted far more willingly by sick or unfortunate people than reasonable counsel, that a person will rather take discomfort and outward penitence upon himself than change in his heart or even just examine his heart, that people believe more easily in magic than in reason, more easily in formulas than in experience: all things which have probably not altered as much in the few thousand years since then as some history books would claim. But he had also learned that in his searching a man of intellect must not lose his love, that he must meet the wishes and stupidities of mankind without arrogance, but must not allow himself to be ruled by them, that from the sage to the charlatan, from the priest to the mountebank, from the helping brother to the sponging parasite it is always but a step, and that people as a rule would much rather pay a cheat and let themselves be exploited by a rogue than accept aid rendered selflessly.

Meanwhile he developed many a faculty in himself, among them also some which we people of a later age no longer possess and can but vaguely understand. There were weather situations, tensions in the air and temperature, there were cloud formations and winds, types of water, earth, and dust smells, there were threats or promises, moods and tempers of the weather demons, which Knecht could feel coming in his skin, his hair, in all his senses, so that there was nothing which could surprise him, nothing which could disappoint him. In consonance with the weather he concentrated it within himself and carried it in his heart in a way which enabled him to command the clouds and winds: not, however, from arbitrary power and at will but out of this very union and bond which completely dissolved the difference between himself and the world, between the spirit and the exterior environment. In certain periods of particularly pure harmony of the soul, he bore an exact and infallible prescience of the weather of the coming days within him, as if in his blood were written the entire score which would have to be played outside. Those were his good and his best days, his reward, his delight.

In these good times he was rarely seen at home; then he roamed and stayed outside, caught fish, went hunting, searched for roots, lay in the grass or crouched in trees, sniffed, listened, imitated the voice of animals, kept

little fires burning and compared the shapes of the smoke clouds with those of the clouds above, soaked his skin and hair with mist, with rain, with air, with sun or moonlight. He read the markings on a leaf, the net-like lineations on the cap of a morel, and in doing so he sensed mysterious, spiritual, future, possible things, the magic of signs, premonition of numbers and letters, capturing what was endless and multi-form in a simple system, in terms. For all these possibilities of seizing the world through the mind must have lain in him, nameless, unnamed, but not impossible, not unimaginable, still seed and bud but essential to him, part of him, and organically growing in him.

It was not given to the weathermaker to perpetuate one of his presentiments and to lead it closer to the point of being proved, a proof it hardly needed for him. He became neither one of the many inventors of script nor of geometry nor of medicine or astronomy. He remained an unknown link in the chain, but a link as indispensable as any other: he passed on what he had received and added new knowledge he had acquired and struggled for. For he, too, had disciples. In the course of the years he trained two apprentices to be rainmakers, one of whom later became his successor.

Nor was the weathermaker spared a very bitter experience and disappointment in this important, perhaps the most responsible sphere of his office, the passing on of traditions and training of successors. The first apprentice who sought his favor and was allowed after waiting and being put off for a long time to enter the service of the master was called Maro and caused him a disappointment which he was never quite able to get over. He was servile and flattering, and for long he assumed the guise of complete obedience, but he lacked this and that, above all he lacked courage, he feared the night and darkness, a fact he tried to conceal and which Knecht, although he noticed it, long supposed to be a remnant of childhood which would disappear. But it did not disappear. This disciple also completely lacked the faculty of abandoning himself selflessly and without ulterior motives to observing, to the acts and processes of his calling, to thoughts and intuition. He was clever, he possessed a bright, quick intellect, and that which can be learned without devotion he learned easily and well. But it became more and more obvious that he had selfish intentions and aims for the sake of which he wanted to learn rainmaking. What he wanted more than anything else was prestige, to play a part and impress people, he had the vanity of a person of talent but no calling.

Knecht was recompensed by his two later disciples, particularly by the second of these, who was his own son Turu. He loved this youngest and last of his apprentices and disciples very dearly and believed that he could

become more than he himself ever was; it was clear that his grandfather's spirit had returned to him. Knecht experienced the inspiring satisfaction of having passed on the sum of his knowledge and faith in the future, and of knowing a man, doubly his son, upon whom he could confer his office any day if it became too much for him. However, that first pupil, who turned out badly, could not be pushed entirely out of his life and his thoughts: he became a man who, although not highly honored in the village, was nevertheless extremely popular and not without influence among many, he had married, enjoyed favor as a sort of buffoon and practical joker, was even chief drummer in the drummers' chorus, and remained a secret enemy and envier of the rainmaker from whom the latter had to suffer many a minor and also major injury.

THEN came a year—Knecht's beard was already rather gray—when the order between heaven and earth seemed to have been altered and disturbed by demons of unusual power and malice. These disturbances began in the autumn, weirdly and majestically, frightening everyone to the bottom of his soul and clutching at his heart with fear, with a celestial spectacle never seen before which took place soon after the equinox. Knecht had for some days been feeling something which was stronger and stranger than that which could be felt every year at this time of shortening days, a working of the powers in the heavenly sphere, an uneasiness of the earth, the plants, the animals, a restlessness in the air, something unsettled, waiting, anxious, premonitory, in all nature. Among these indications were also the little clouds which, long after the sun had set, glowed quiveringly in the evening sky in a fluttering movement which did not correspond to the wind blowing on the earth. With the extinction of the last cloud taper, the stars in the greenish, phosphorescent sky suddenly became more clearly visible and rapidly increased in number and brilliance; where a moment ago two or three had been visible, there now stood ten, twenty. Many of them and their groups and families were known to the rainmaker; he had seen them many hundreds of times; their unchanged return had something soothing about it, stars were comforting. Although they stood far away and cold up there, radiating no warmth, they were reliable, firmly fixed, proclaiming order, promising duration.

Today, too, they looked down as always, only very light and as if they had been ground very sharply in the taut, thin air, but he could not find the serenity in himself to abandon himself to them; out of unknown spaces a power was dragging at him, hurting in his pores, sucking at his eyes, silently and constantly effective, a stream, a warning tremor. Beside him in the hut the warm, feeble light of

the hearth glowed dimly red, the small, warm life flowed on, a call, a laugh, a yawn resounded, the odor of human bodies breathed, the warmth of skin, motherliness, children's sleep, and seemed by its harmless proximity to deepen the falling night, to drive back the stars even further into the incomprehensible distance and height.

And now, while from within the hut Knecht heard a child's voice quieting a child with a deep, melodious hum and drone, began the catastrophe in the skies which the village was to remember for years. In the quiet, shining network of stars a shimmering and flickering appeared here and there, as if the otherwise invisible threads of this network suddenly flared up. Like stones being hurtled, glowing up and quickly going out again, a few stars fell diagonally through space, one here, two there, a few here, then swarms of dozens, of hundreds, of thousands. Like dead leaves, like wafted snowflakes, they fled, thousands and thousands, downward in ghastly silence, disappearing behind the wooded hills in the southeast, where in the memory of man no star had ever set, somewhere into a bottomless chasm.

His heart frozen, his eyes swimming, Knecht stood with his head thrown far back, looking up horrified and yet insatiable into the transformed and bewitched sky, not trusting his eyes and yet only too certain of the frightful disaster. Like all others who witnessed this spectacle of the night, he believed that he was seeing the well-known stars themselves flinching, scattering, and hurtling down, and expected that, unless the earth swallowed him up first, he would soon find the heavenly dome black and emptied. After a while, however, he perceived what others were not capable of perceiving: that the well-known stars were still in their places here and there and everywhere, that the blizzard of stars was not raging among the earth and the sky, and that these falling or flung, new, so quickly appearing and so quickly disappearing lights glowed in a fire of a slightly different color from that of the old, the real stars.

Soon he heard groans, screams, and exclamations of terror coming from other huts; others had noticed too, had called out the news, had alarmed the unsuspecting and the sleepers, fear and panic were about to seize the whole village. Sighing deeply, Knecht took it upon himself. It was he more than anyone else at whom this disaster struck, he, the rainmaker; he, who was so to speak responsible for the order in the sky and in the air. Hitherto he had always had foreknowledge or a premonition of great disasters—floods, hail-forms, violent storms—had always prepared and warned the mothers and elders, had prevented the worst, had placed himself, his knowledge and his courage and his faith in the superior powers between the village and despair. Why had he not known in advance

and taken measures on this occasion? Why had he not spoken a word to anybody about the dark, portentous premonition which, after all, he had had?

For a few more moments he remained, his face raised toward the continuing rain of stars, then he bowed his head, sighed once more from a heavy heart, and then walked rapidly through the night into the village, to the hut of the matriarch.

Here half the village was already assembled, in a subdued turmoil, in a paralyzed, half-suppressed frenzy of horror and despair. There were women and men who abandoned themselves with a sort of rage and lust to the feeling of terror and imminent extinction, who stood stiffly as if in a trance or flailed around with uncontrolled limbs, one woman foamed at the mouth, dancing all by herself a desperate and obscene dance, tearing out whole handfuls of her long hair. Knecht saw: everything was moving already, almost all of them were the prey of the delirium, bewitched and driven to a frenzy by the falling stars, it might easily lead to an orgy of madness, rage, and lust of self-destruction, it was high time to assemble and fortify the few courageous and sensible ones. The ancient matriarch was calm; she believed the end of all things to have come but did not resist, and showed fate a firm, hard face which looked almost ironical in its pinched acerbity. Around her and the weathermaker a small group formed of frightened but not frenzied people who were ready to be led.

Until the moment before he arrived, Knecht had hoped to be able to allay the panic by example, reason, speech, explanation, and persuasion. He had hoped that he would be able to persuade them to realize above all that it was not the stars themselves, or at least not all of them, which were falling down and being carried off by the cosmic storm; and that as a result of advancing from helpless terror and amazement to active observation they would be able to withstand the shock. But he quickly perceived that in the whole village there were only very few whom it would have been possible to influence in this way, and by the time even these few had been won over, the others would have completely given themselves up to madness. No, here as so often, nothing was to be achieved by reason or clever words. Fortunately, there were other means. If it was impossible to dissolve the fear of death by permeating it with reason, it was still possible to guide the fear of death, to organize it, to give it shape and face, and to form a firm unit out of the hopeless confusion of frenzied minds, a chorus out of the uncontrolled, wild, individual voices.

Knecht immediately went to work, and the method immediately proved effective. He faced the people, cried out the well-known words of

prayer with which in other times the public mourning and penitential rites were opened, the funeral rites for a matriarch or the sacrificial and penitential ceremony during disasters threatening the whole community such as plagues and floods. He cried out the words rhythmically and supported the rhythm by clapping his hands, and in the same rhythm, chanting and clapping his hands, he bowed down almost to the ground, raised himself again, bowed down again, raised himself, and already ten or twenty others had joined in the movement, the ancient mother of the village stood, mumbling rhythmically and indicating the ritual movements with slight bows. Those still arriving from other huts automatically joined in the rhythm and spirit of the ceremony. Those few who were entirely possessed either collapsed quickly from exhaustion and lay immobile on the ground, or they were compelled and carried along by the murmuring chorus and the rhythmic bows of the ceremony. He had succeeded. Instead of a desperate horde of madmen, there now stood an assembly of worshipers ready to do sacrifice and penance, in which every heart was fortified by the opportunity, instead of hiding his fear of death and horror or giving vent to them in his own screams, of taking his place in a solemn ceremony, rhythmically, in an organized chorus of many voices.

While the whole night sky was still covered by the hosts of shooting stars as by a soundlessly hurtling cascade of drops of light, the dread of the village was transformed into surrender and devotion, into supplication and a feeling of penitence, and the disorganized heavens were confronted by the fear and weakness of human beings as order and ritual harmony. Even before the rain of stars began to tire and flow more thinly, the miracle was achieved and radiated healing power, and when the sky seemed gradually to calm down and recover, the exhausted penitents all had the redeeming feeling of having pacified the powers and restored order in the sky by their exercises.

Knecht did not share in this mood and in the gradual calming down and forgetting of the great event. To him the weird experience remained an unforgettable admonishment, a goad that never left him in peace, and to him the fact that it had passed and had been lulled by procession, prayer, and penance did not mean that it was finished and done with. There was something approaching, a danger and threat from those spheres with which he was connected by his office and, in whatever shape they appeared, they would, above all and explicitly, be directed at him. To confront this danger wakefully and with determination, to prepare his soul for it, to accept it, but not to let himself be humiliated by it, that was the warning and the decision which he deduced from the great omen.

WINTER came and went, a damp and rather mild winter. No more stars fell, no great or unusual things happened, the fears of the village were allayed, the hunters went regularly in search of booty, the bundles of stiffly frozen pelts rattled everywhere in windy, cold weather against the sticks from which they were suspended over the huts, on long smooth poles loads of wood were drawn across the snow from the forest.

It was only in spring that the gloomy premonitions of the weathermaker were in part confirmed. It turned out to be a very bad, unwilling spring, betrayed by the moon, without surge or sap; the moon was always behindhand, never did the various signs coincide which were needed to determine the day of sowing, feeble was the blossoming of the flowers in the wilderness, dead hung the closed buds from the twigs. Knecht was very anxious without showing it, only Ada and Turu noticed how he suffered. However, when the usual date for sowing was long overdue he had to report to the matriarch; and here, too, he met with misfortune and annoyance. The old woman, kindly inclined toward him with an almost motherly feeling, did not receive him, she was not feeling well, she was in bed, had handed over all her duties and rights to her sister, and this sister felt rather coldly toward the rainmaker. She did not have the severe, straight nature of the older one, was somewhat inclined toward entertainment and amusement, and this inclination had brought the drummer and mountebank Maro to her, who was adept at entertaining her and flattering her. And Maro was Knecht's enemy.

Knecht finally fixed the date for sowing on the first day of the third quarter of the moon. On top of everything, it so happened that, one day before the long-awaited and prepared ceremony of sowing, the old matriarch died, the ceremony had to be postponed, and instead the funeral had to be announced and prepared. It was a first-rate ceremony; behind the new mother of the village, her sisters and daughters, the rainmaker had his place, in the great processional robes, with the high pointed foxskin cap, assisted by his son Turu, who beat the two-toned hardwood clapper. Much honor was accorded to the deceased as well as to her sister, the new village mother, Maro with the drummers led by him put himself into the limelight and attracted attention and applause. The village wept and celebrated, it enjoyed mourning and the festive day, music of drums and sacrifices, it was a great day for everybody, but the sowing had been postponed again. Knecht stood there full of dignity and composure, but was deeply anxious; it seemed to him as if he were burying all the good times of his life with the matriarch.

Soon after, the sowing took place, at the wish of the new matriarch again with unusual splendor.

Knecht breathed a little more easily when the ceremony was finally completed. But the crops sown so festively were not to yield any joy or harvest, it was a year without blessing. Beginning with a relapse into winter and frost, the weather played every imaginable malicious trick during the spring and summer, and in the summer, when finally a thin, low, scanty crop covered the fields, came the last and the worst, a terrible drought such as there had never been in the memory of man. Week after week the sun broiled in the whitish glare of heat, the small streams dried up; all that remained of the village pond was a dirty bog, the paradise of dragonflies and of a monstrous brood of mosquitoes; in the dry earth deep cracks gaped, and one could watch the crop sicken and shrivel up. Every now and again clouds gathered, but the thunderstorms were dry, and if a little dash of rain fell, it was followed by days of a withering east wind, lightning often struck high trees, whose arid tops went up in flames.

"Turu," Knecht said one day to his son, "this affair will not end well, we have all the demons against us. It began with the falling stars. It will, I believe, cost me my life. Remember, if I must be sacrificed, you will take my place in the same hour, and the first thing you will demand is that my body be burned and the ashes be strewn over the fields. You will have a winter of famine, but the misfortune will be broken then. You must see to it that no one touches the village's store of seed, it must be punishable by death. The coming year will be better, and people will say: it is a good thing we have the new young weathermaker."

The processions, the sacrifices, the long, heart-rending drum choruses, were unable to improve matters. Knecht led them, it was his office, but when the people dispersed again, he stood alone, shunned by all. He knew what was necessary, and he also knew that Maro had already demanded the sacrifice of his person from the matriarch. For the sake of his honor and his son he took the last step: he dressed Turu in the grand ceremonial robes, took him to the matriarch, recommended him as his successor and laid down his own office, offering himself as a sacrifice. She scrutinized him curiously for a short while, then she nodded and agreed.

The sacrifice was carried out the same day. All the distinguished members and dignitaries of the village went along, the matriarch with two of her sisters, the elders, the head of the drummers' chorus Maro. They were followed by the rest of the people, walking in an unorganized crowd. Nobody abused the old rainmaker, it was a rather silent, uneasy affair. The procession moved into the forest and arrived at a large, round clearing which Knecht himself had designated as the place for the ceremony. Most of the men had brought

their stone axes to help with the wood pile for the burning. The rainmaker took his place in the middle of the clearing and the dignitaries formed a small circle around him, the crowd standing a little further back in a large circle. As everybody kept an irresolute, embarrassed silence, the rainmaker himself began to speak, "I have been your rainmaker," he said, "I did my work for many years as well as I could. Now the demons are against me, I have failed in everything. That is why I have offered myself as a sacrifice. That will reconcile the demons. Farewell! And who will kill me? I recommend Maro the drummer, he should be the right man to do it."

He fell silent, and nobody moved. Turu, his face dark red under the heavy fur cap, looked around the circle with tormented eyes; his father smiled ironically. Finally the matriarch stamped her foot angrily, beckoned Maro and shouted at him: "Go ahead! Take your ax and do it!" Maro, his ax in his hands, stood before his former master, he hated him more than ever, the touch of irony on that taciturn old mouth caused him deep pain. He lifted his ax and swung it back over his head, holding it high while he aimed, staring into the eyes of the victim and

waiting for him to close his eyes. But Knecht refused to do so, steadily he kept his eyes open and looked at the man with the ax, almost without expression; but whatever expression was discernible hovered between pity and irony.

Angrily Maro flung away his ax. "I won't do it," he mumbled, forced his way through the circle of dignitaries and disappeared in the crowd. A few people tittered. The matriarch was pale with wrath, over the cowardly, good-for-nothing Maro no less than over that arrogant rainmaker. She beckoned one of the elders, a venerable, quiet man, who stood leaning on his ax and seemed to feel ashamed of the whole embarrassing scene. He stepped up, he nodded briefly and in a friendly manner at the victim, they had known each other since childhood days, and now the victim willingly closed his eyes, Knecht closed them firmly and inclined his head slightly. The old man hit him with his ax, and he collapsed. Turu, the new rainmaker, could not utter a word, only with gestures he indicated what was necessary, and soon a pile of wood was built and the body placed on it. The solemn ritual of drilling fire with the two sacred sticks was Turu's first official act.



BOOK REVIEW

Goethe's "Faust" als Anleitung zum Leben (Goethe's "Faust" as a Guide to Life), by Gustav Röhreke. (Shanghai, 1945, Max Nössler & Co., 164 pp.)

The author, although not a philologist by profession, presents a book which reveals expert knowledge of the subject as well as a true pedagogic enthusiasm. Known to many Germans in the East as an excellent reciter of Goethe's works, he is at the same time a discerning and affectionate commentator. To him, poetry is not mere art or embellishment: he seeks in it the poet's wisdom culled from life. From Goethe's classical *Faust* he draws lessons for living which apply always and wherever it is a matter of forming true, noble, and useful minds. With this classical idea of education, he appeals as a man of our day to his contemporaries. And, indeed, this idea is not "ob-

solete." One might even say that, to a certain extent, it is more modern than ever; for how is contemporary man to find his way through the storms and dangers of events throughout the world unless he possesses within himself a clear, firm, moral substance?

The author takes those by the hand who hesitate at the idea of reading *Faust* because it is too difficult to understand, particularly in its second part. His book really guides one through the drama, scene by scene, and it is well provided with all possible explanations for which the reader might seek.

The rich, instructive contents of Gustav Röhreke's work should prove a welcome addition to the foreign-language books published in recent years in the East in an attempt to fill the gap caused by the war. —C.H.E.