

NIETZSCHE DEFENDED.

It is deplorable that it has become necessary to defend that truly great philosopher and gifted writer, Nietzsche, against the charge that his teachings are largely responsible for present-day German aggression and German cruelty. But the war has caused even thinkers to lose their intellectual perspective, and quotations from Nietzsche's voluminous works have been made frequent use of, and distorted from their original meaning to show that he was an utterly remorseless monster and the foe of justice and honour. It is far from the truth. Nietzsche's works are gold mines of aphoristic philosophy, and exceedingly tempting to the writer or speaker seeking for apt quotation; and it must be confessed that, owing to a certain want of unity in his teachings, it is possible to find an arresting sentence to support almost any contention, especially if the user of it be not scrupulous about the qualifying context. Professor A. Wolf, lecturer at the London School of Economics and Political Science, delivered a series of lectures early this year on Nietzsche, before the University College, London. They have been published by Constable, London, in book form. Dr. Wolf condemns as unwarranted and absurd the constant coupling of Nietzsche with Bernhardi and Treitschke as one of the inspirers of the war. He was, says the author, one of the most searing critics of German megalomania. German pride of race he denounced as a "mendacious race swindle." The German people, he declared, were "boorish and devoid of general culture." In 1871, when Germany was triumphant, he dared to tell his countrymen that the culture of France was incomparably superior to their own. Professor Wolf disposes of the popular view of Nietzsche as an apostle of hate and intimidation by this quotation—"Better to perish than to hate and fear; and thrice better to perish than to make oneself hated and feared!" The reason advanced by the author for the general false impression created by Nietzsche's philosophy is that "any system of ethics that is characterised by naturalism and evolutionism lends itself readily to the kind of glorification of struggle, war, and victory that gives a certain specious support to the cause of militarism and jingoism." Dr. Wolf's book furnishes a good general outline of Nietzsche's teaching, and is very well worth careful reading.

BOHEMIA.

A study of the ideals and aspirations of the Bohemian and Slovak peoples is given in "Bohemia Under Hapsburg Miracle," edited by Thomas Capek (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co.; Melbourne: Melville and Mullen). There are contributions on the various aspects of the subject by six different writers. Mr. Capek, who is a well-known authority, has written about half of the volume. The object of the book is to make Bohemia and its people better known to the English-speaking world. Mr. Capek fervently hopes and believes that the Allies will win this war, and, assuming this, he says that the Bohemian people, so long suppressed, stand on the threshold of a new destiny. Self-government is "not only an ideal, but a necessity to Bohemians." Bohemia, Mr. Capek reminds us, is one of the oldest States in Central Europe. As a kingdom she ante-dates the German kingdoms, even those of Prussia, Saxony, and Bavaria. The "United States of Bohemia," including Moravia, Silesia, and Slovakia, would have a population of about 12,000,000. The country is naturally extremely rich. Mr. Capek's book is interesting in its speculations, and highly informative.

A MOORISH POET KING.

Mu'tamid was a Moorish king or sultan of Seville in the days of that famous Spanish warrior the Cid, that is to say, in the latter

half of the eleventh century. For twenty-two years he ruled over a large tract of country in sunny Andalusia, a quick-tempered man of fiery passions, capable of slaying in his wrath with his own hand a Vizier who had been his bosom friend for a quarter of a century, but whose fidelity he had reason to doubt. Yet he was no uncouth savage or semi-savage, but a lover of learning and of literature, repining verses with his courtiers, and revelling in the sensuous beauty of his stately palace and delightful gardens. An ardent lover of many a dusky Moorish maid, but a devoted husband to one woman whom he had raised from slavery to share his throne, he was something more than a mere maker of verses. He was a poet who could sing with lyric force of the loves of his youth, his abiding affection for the woman who remained faithful to him even in adversity, and of the vanity of life as he felt it in his latter years when he was de throne and driven into exile by Yusuf, the Moslem invader from Africa. A number of his poems have been translated into English verse by Dulcie Lawrence Smith, and published in Murray's well-known "Wisdom of the East" series. The translator gives in an introduction a short sketch of Mu'tamid the man, and also appends English versions of a few poems composed by men who frequented Mu'tamid's court.