

War, War!

BARON FRITZ. By KARL FEDERN. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1930. \$2.50.

NO HARD FEELINGS. By JOHN LEWIS BARKLEY. New York: The Cosmopolitan Book Corporation. 1930. \$2.

Reviewed by EMERSON G. TAYLOR

THE material for Karl Federn's lively record of a young German artillery officer's adventures in the Great War was drawn from the personal notebooks and diaries of actual participants in the conflict. By setting the scenes of the narrative on the Russian front, later with the Turks in Palestine, and finally in Flanders and Picardy, the very distinguished author is enabled to present a dazzling variety of campaign pictures, a gallery of often satirical character drawings, and countless snapshots of life in and just behind the German battle lines, all vigorous, all high in color, all executed with dash and spirit, full of atmosphere. And while the verisimilitude of each incident, grave or gay, is undoubtedly strengthened by its being founded on fact, the pictures are unrolled at so fast and furious a pace that the average artilleryman, perforce a somewhat sedentary person after trench operations began, may be excused for wondering that one of his crowd could experience so very much of life in even four long years.

By way of explaining his hero, the author endows him with a French patronymic and an Irish ancestry; but perhaps a clearer insight into Baron Fritz's nature might have been afforded by stressing his probable descent from the illustrious Baron Munchausen. Whatever his ancestry, however, and whatever his amazing luck in being always on the spot whenever anything of interest was toward, the gallant, skylarking, hardworking battery commander is invariably attractive when sober, and most amusing when drunk—a state, one deduces from the evidence of many purple passages, which appears to have been normal if not regulation whenever two or three of the All Highest's combat officers were gathered together and off duty. Since the favorite beverage of these hardy warriors was mixed rum and claret, with which they washed down Gargantuan quantities of roast pork, the layman, reading of the war, wonders anew that the Central Powers put up so magnificent a fight for so long a time. It is refreshing, at all events, to read a war book in which the characters take fighting and fun as they find it, death as almost inevitable and therefore unimportant, with victory or defeat as mere turns of capricious fortune. Thousands upon thousands of honest soldiers, who did their bit not only with zeal but zest, would recognize Baron Fritz at first sight as one of their company. He can be philosophical even about the breakdown of the splendid German war machine, to which he added an ounce of power with his very last breath save one. That he expended on a kiss.

In this week's other narrative of a soldier's life, John Lewis Barkley, late Corporal, K Company, 4th United States Infantry, tells the world that he and his gang were exceedingly tough *hombres*, that, in the Second Battle of the Marne and in the Meuse-Argonne operations, he killed a vast number of bloodthirsty Germans with his trusty rifle, by serving a machine-gun, or with pistol and knife, that he was profusely decorated, was always in the fore-front of duty and danger, and spent a furlough in Paris with Marie. Ho-hum!