



for

Rudolf Steiner

(1861-1925)

he was always

‘George Kaufmann’





Maths papers archived in Dornach



Maths papers archived in Dornach

September, 1940.

CHANGE OF NAME.

It is announced in the London Gazette of 10th September that we have changed our surname from Kaufmann to Adams. In making this known to our friends we wish to add a few words about our reasons.

The great movement of our time is universal, and we should not wish to dissociate ourselves from any people. We know indeed that the resolves and failings of different peoples come to expression in the present conflict and create inexorable destinies. Yet beyond this we also know that the real issues of today do not follow the dividing lines of nations but confront all mankind with the same great tests of judgment. Men of all nationalities can be and are united with the ideals of humanity which the British people above all are having to uphold today.

The fact is however, we stand in the movement of our time as English man and woman, one of us being by descent three parts English and the other wholly so, and both of us by birth and upbringing; and we take our part as such in our spiritual work as well as in the special services the moment calls for. We have found that the surname Kaufmann gives rise to mistaken impressions and can hinder the work we have to do. And so it is for us today a practical and natural step to adopt, with the approval of her surviving relatives, the maiden name of George's mother.

GEORGE ADAMS  
MARY ADAMS

3 siblings ...

Katy Kaufmann -> Katy Elgin

George Kaufmann -> George Adams

William Kaufmann -> William Mann





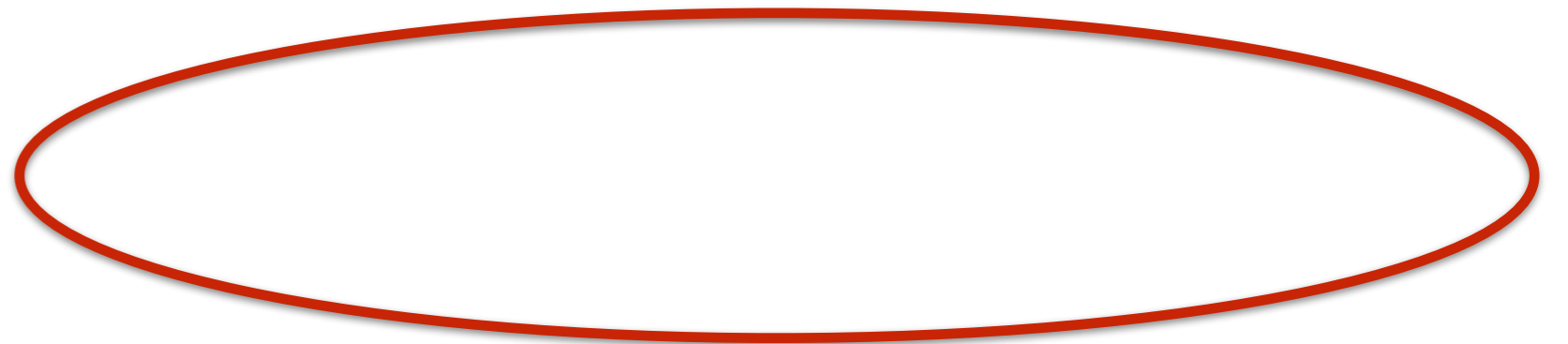
George von Kaufmann senior

Mining engineer

born in Australia

German father

Father  
Melbourne  
Argus  
1888

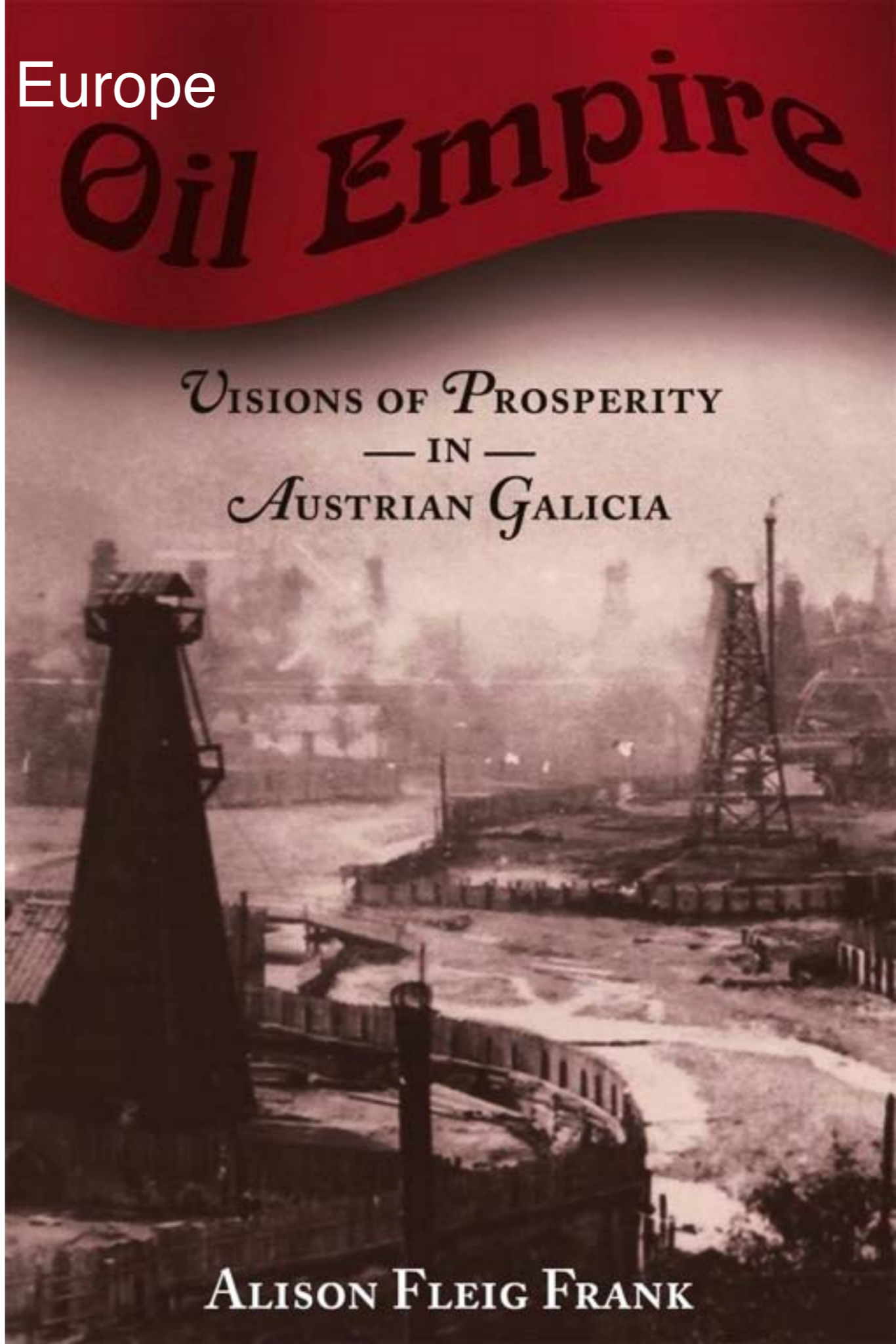


## From Australia to Eastern Europe

- George (father)
- Kate (mother)
- Kate (sister)
  
- George born

## Settled at Solotwina

- William born



## 3 Siblings

- Kate b. c.1890
- George b.1894
- William b.1890



Mill Hill School, London  
boarding school

“1905-1912”\*

“his father lived in Poland”\*\*

“At public school, George was unhappy”\*\*\*

childhood commute London  $\longleftrightarrow$  Poland

\*CC Cambridge Archives

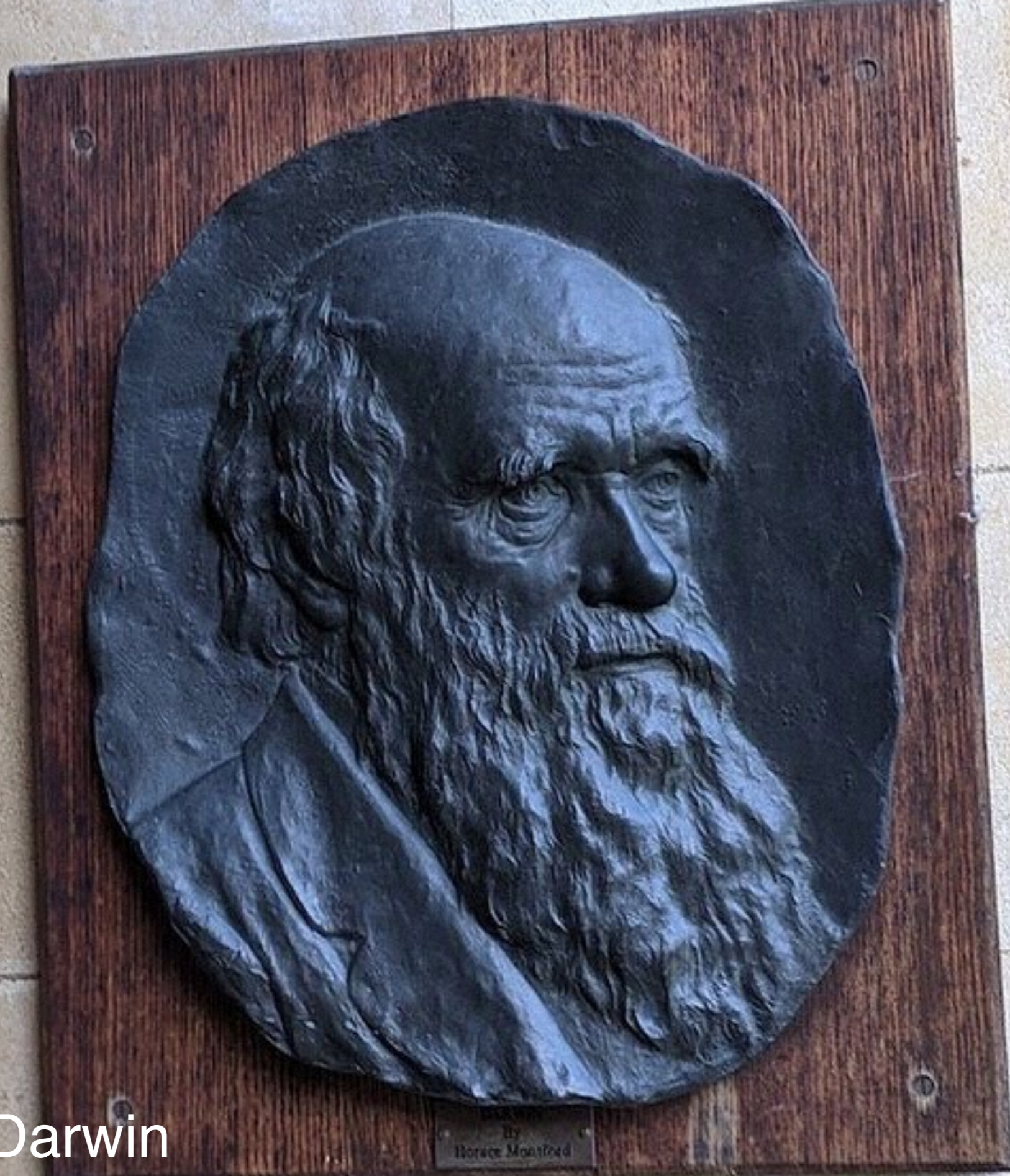
\*\*Mill Hill Archives

\*\*\*Olive Whicher, 1977, p11

images: Good Schools Guide



1912-1915  
Mathematics  
Chemistry  
BA\*



Charles Darwin  
Christ's College, University of Cambridge







Founding President  
of the  
Cambridge University Socialist Society (1915)



921)\*

s College, University of Cambridge

\*Cambridge Uni

4 August 1914

Germany

invades

Belgium

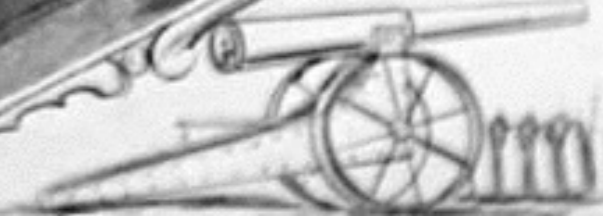
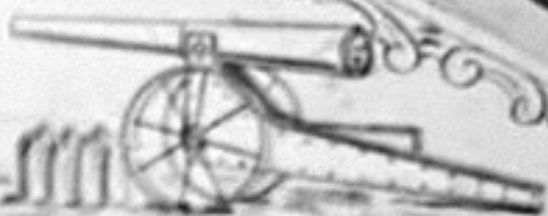
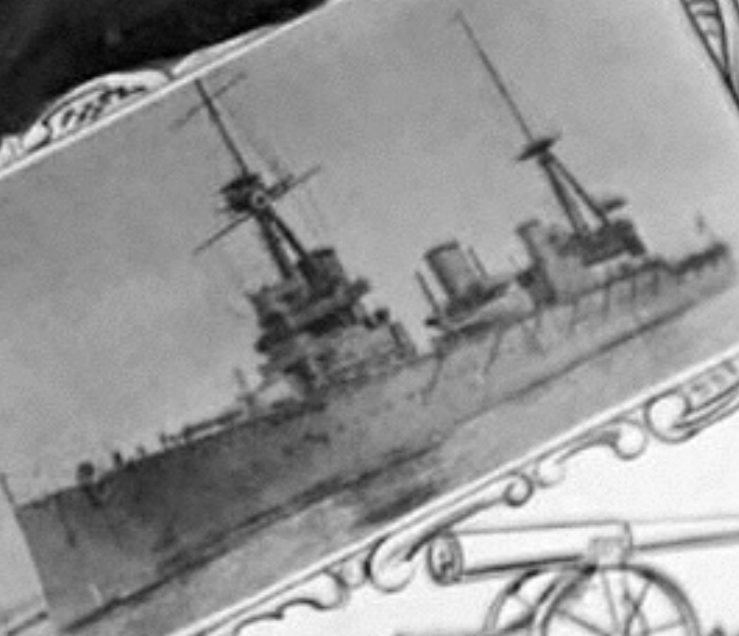
SOUVENIR.

OF WAR, AUG. 1914.

DECLARATION



GOD SAVE OUR KING



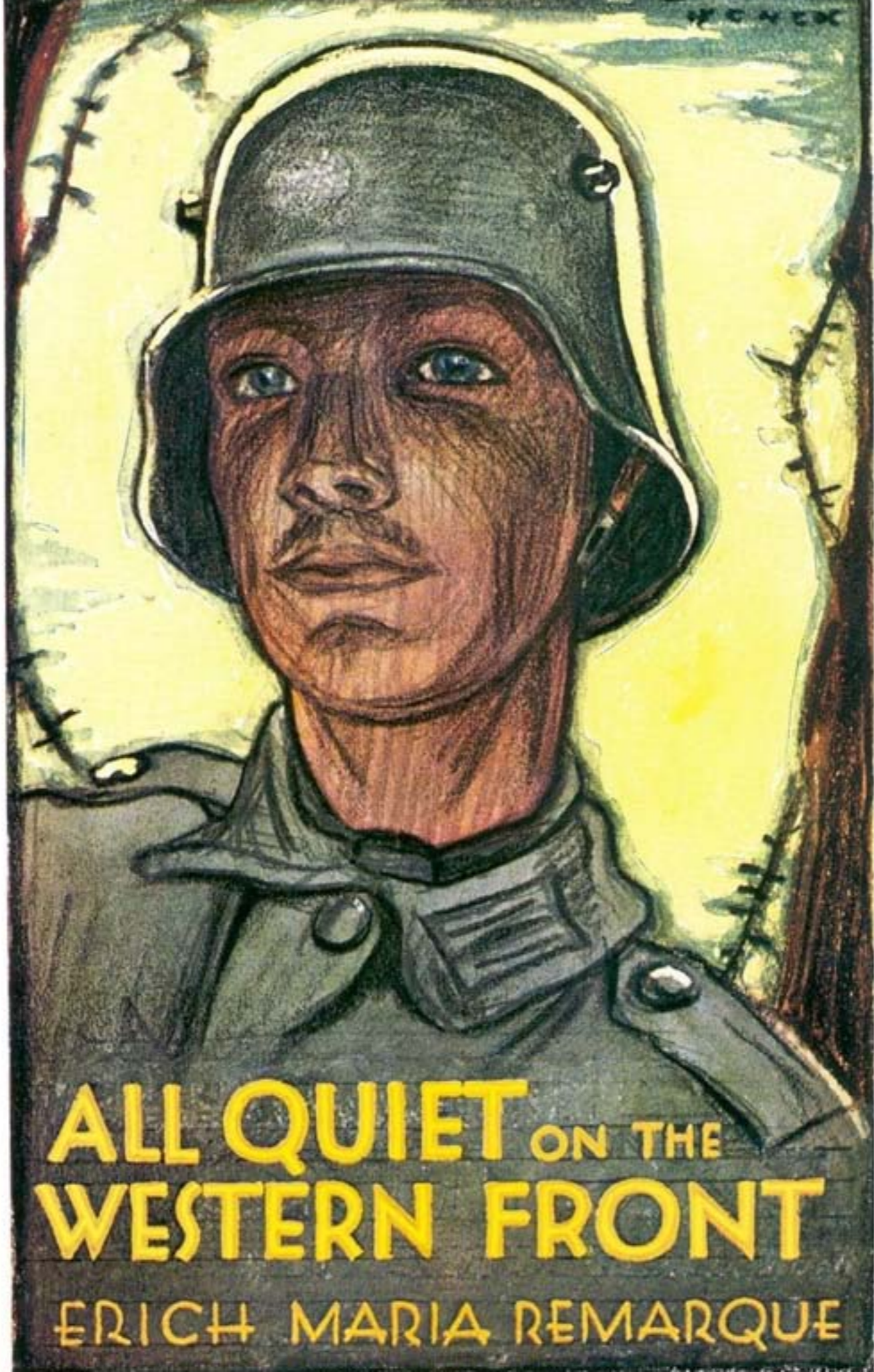
FOR A WORTHY  
SHALL NOT LAY  
UNTIL THAT  
EN ACHIEVED."  
*The King.*



THE  
NEED  
FOR  
FIGHTING  
MEN  
IS  
URGENT.







**ALL QUIET** ON THE  
**WESTERN FRONT**  
ERICH MARIA REMARQUE

# HM Wormwood Scrubs Prison (London)





“I am well on the way to Court Martial now.

Offence is refusal put on uniform ...

when you write put in von, for there have been other

Kaufmann's here”\*



“I am still out and I hope to remain a little while”\*

\*George Kaufmann “Dear Miss Fry ...”, manuscript letter, [Quaker Relief], 15.5.1917

# HM Wandsworth Prison (London)







# First translation for Rudolf Steiner at English Teachers Course c1919

Goetheanum I





*by G. Kaufmann*

REPORT ON STARVATION CONDITIONS IN THE CARPATIANS  
AND IN EAST GALICIA.

Many reports coming from different sources had reached us of the terrible starvation amongst the "Hutsuli", the peasants who inhabit the Carpatian mountain valleys in Eastern Galicia. Investigations were then made in the valley of the Czarna Bystrzuka river above Nadworna, which may be taken as typical. Here, starting from the source of the river, there are four "villages" in succession; Rafajalowa, Zielona, Pasiczna, and Pinow. (A "village", in these narrow mountain valleys, is a social unit centering in a church and commune, but may cover an enormous area and is often six miles from end to end. The usual population is from three to four thousand). The poorest of these villages are those that lie highest up the valley, where the available space for cultivation is narrower. Before describing the conditions actually obtaining, a brief survey may be given of the

Geographic and Economic Features of the Carpatian Valleys.

The higher mountains are densely covered with pine woods to the very foot; in the lower parts there are beech forests, and high hills where forest and brushwood alternate with pasturage and loose stoney cliffs. The tops of the higher mountains, above the forest line, contain, besides great wastes, of boulders and scree, valuable stretches of pasture and meadow land.

The valleys are in general narrow, widening out as they go down toward the plain. A disproportionate amount of space is taken up by the beds of the swift flowing rivers, which cover large areas with stone and gravel. The land that remains, where it is not boggy, is stoney; which makes ordinary ploughing difficult or impossible. The



George



Home of Rudolf Steiner at Dornach, image: J Paull



Glass House, Dornach, image: J Paull

Berlin 1920

Marriage

George Kaufmann & Mary Fox

met at Quaker War Relief





# Torquay, 12-20 August 2024







Glass House, Dornach, image: J Paull



Goetheanum II  
construction is well advanced in 1928



George Kaufmann

44

AGRICULTURE

RUDOLF STEINER

**1929**

1st English edition

Progeny of 2nd edition

Trans: George Kaufmann

Typed: c.100

10+ years

AGRICULTURE COURSE

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by

Rudolf Steiner, Ph. D.

Koberwitz, Silesia  
7th to 16th June, 1924.

Issued on behalf of the Natural Science Section  
of the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland, by  
Dr Guenther Wachsmuth.

English Translation by  
George Kaufmann, M.A.

English Copy, no: E 52

for Miss Helen Macpherson, Dandenong

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of the Author through the Natural Science Section of the  
Goetheanum.

1929

Typed

Marna Pease

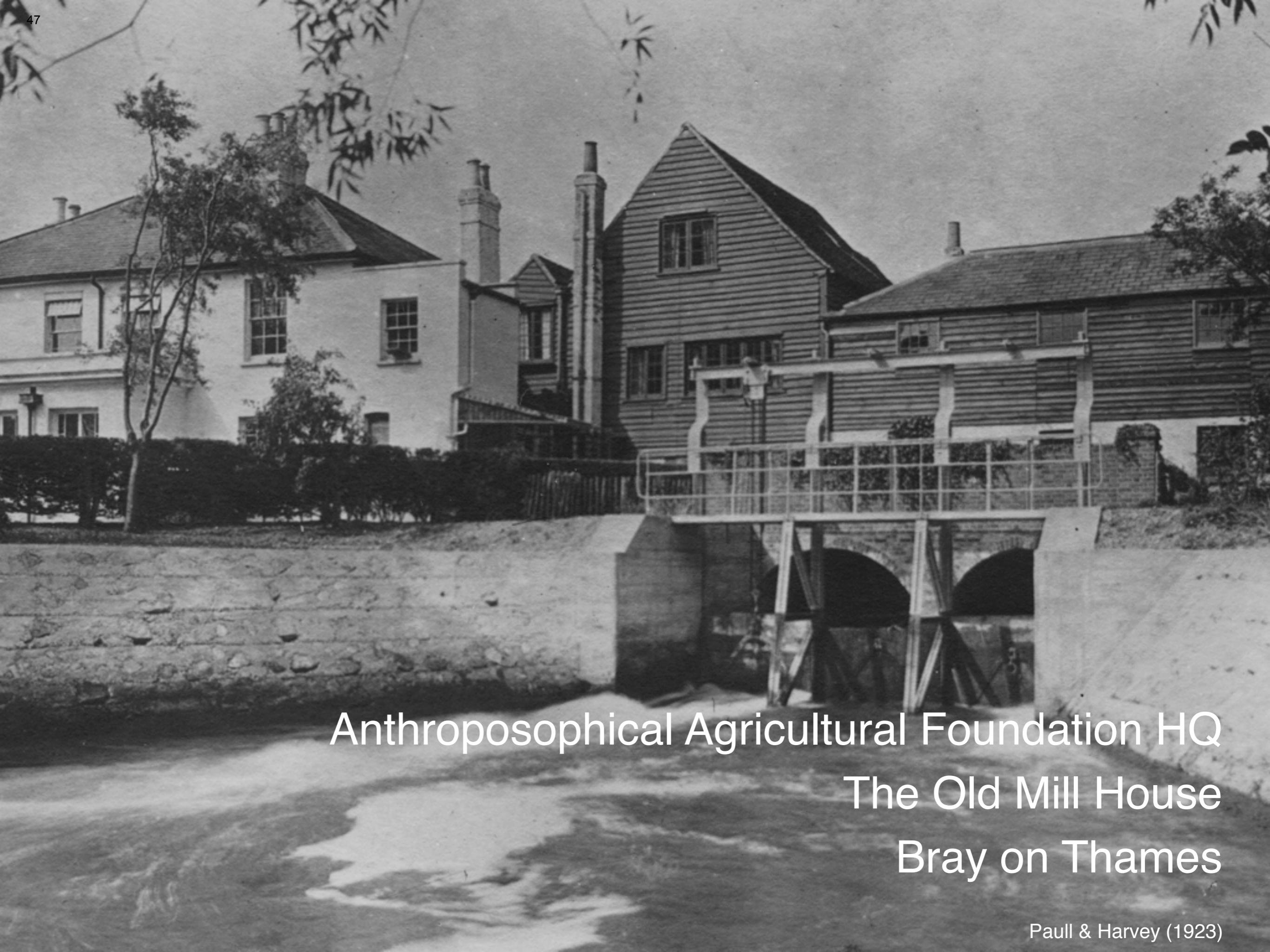
Numbered

Named

Experimental Circle

NDA





Anthroposophical Agricultural Foundation HQ  
The Old Mill House  
Bray on Thames

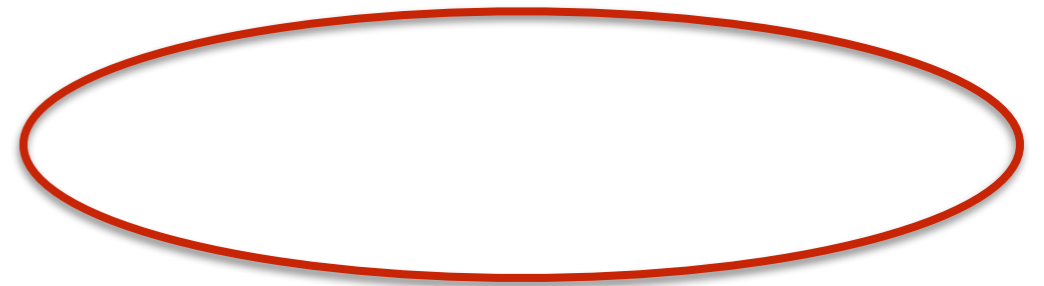
1934

‘Radiant World Design’

(Projective Geometry)



“his major work”\*







1935

The Great Purge

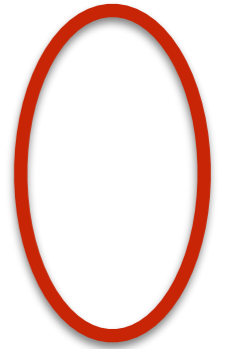
expulsions

Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain



Vreede Haus  
Arlesheim

UK Experimental Circle  
1946 - George Adams & Olive Whicher  
UK



## Leading Anthropop of his generation

- Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain
- Board Member
- Experimental Circle
- First Class (Dr Ita Wegman)
- taught science at Forest Hill
- Translated > 100 Steiner lectures
- Translated the 'Agriculture Course'
- George Adams >1940
- 1894-1963





# George Kaufmann: Pacifism, Prison & Poland

## Abstract

George Kaufmann (1894-1963) was the remarkably talented linguist who extemporaneously translated lectures of Dr Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) from German to English for Anglo audiences. Later, he was the translator of Steiner's Koberwitz 'Agriculture Course' (1929). His colleague, Olive Whicher (1910-2006), has written a biography 'George Adams: Interpreter of Rudolf Steiner' (1977). From September 1940, he was 'George Adams', adopting his mother's maiden name. During WW2 a Germanic name was a burden and all three Kaufmann siblings adopted new names (Adams, Elgin and Mann). But for Rudolf Steiner he was always George Kaufmann. This presentation considers his life in the formative Kaufmann years (before Olive Whicher's association). George's father was Australian born mining engineer (George von Kaufmann) and his mother British (Kate Adams). The couple moved to Eastern Europe and George was born shortly after. He attended Mill Hill boarding school in London, travelling home to Solotwina and Poland during school holidays. George studied Mathematics and Chemistry at Christ's College, University of Cambridge (1912-1915) and was awarded an MA. During WW1, George applied as a conscientious objector but recognition was refused. He was arrested, court-martialled, and served time variously in Wormwood Scrubs Prison and Wandsworth Prison. George joined the Anthroposophy movement of Rudolf Steiner in 1916 in Britain. After the war met Steiner at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland (in 1919). He married Mary Fox in Berlin in 1920 and he reported on post war conditions in Poland for Quaker Relief. As a translator of Rudolf Steiner George Kaufmann was without peer. He first translated for the English Teachers Course at the Goetheanum in 1919, and subsequently at Steiner's Summer Schools including at Penmaenmawr (1923) and Torquay (1924). George devoted his life to Steiner and Anthroposophy, and he was the leading British Anthroposophist of his generation. The prospect of the George Adams Research Centre at Sunhill, Clent sponsored by Ruskin Mill Trust is a worthy and welcome development.

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# Appendices

## GEORGE von KAUFMANN / ADAMS

*George von Kaufmann / Adams was a shy and quiet man, soft spoken and gentle, but full of warmth and interest in others with a delightful twinkle in his eyes. I sensed a deep wisdom in him, but sadly never had questions before his death.*

*George was the brother to William, my father, and younger brother to sister Katy. But the family were seldom able to visit together as WWII made travelling difficult and each of the three siblings were very active in their own areas.*

*My memories of Uncle George (as I knew him) were full of love and joy each time we met, like the huge hug as a teenager when bumping into him at school in Germany before running to the next lesson. Now this remarkable man lives on in his amazing body of work combined with precious recollections. For me Uncle George will always be a sweetie, I loved him dearly.*

Roswitha Spence

June 2024, Australia

# Olive Whicher

“George Adams von Kaufmann was born on February 8th, 1894, not, like his sister in Australia, but soon after his parents had moved to Maryampol in West Galicia, a region which belonged to the old Hamburger monarchy of Austria-Hungary ...

Very soon the family settled in the small town of Solotwina, in the foothills of the Carpathian mountains ...

George’s father was an early pioneer in the oil industry.

Apart from an interruption during the first World War, Solotwina remained the family home, until towards the end of the second World War when the country was overrun by the Russians ...

His mother was from a well established Birmingham family named Adams, living in Edgbaston ...

[The] father was proud of his British nationality and wished the children to be educated accordingly;

English was the language mainly spoken at home ...

A series of English governesses looked after the education of the two older children until, when George eleven years old, his father took him to England and, looking for a good non-conformist education for his son, finally settled him in Mill Hill School”\*

\*1977, Olive Whicher, p7-8

# Ernst Junger

German soldier, same age as George Kaufmann

19 years old when WW1 started in 1914

“Over the ruins, as over all the dangerous parts of the terrain, lay a heavy smell of death. because the fire was so intense that no one could bother with the corpses.

You really did have to run for your life in these places, and when I caught the smell of it as I ran, I was hardly surprised - it belonged to there.

Moreover, this heavy sweetish atmosphere was not merely disgusting, it also, with the piercing fogs of gunpowder, brought about an almost visionary excitement, that otherwise only in the extreme nearness of death is able to produce.

Here and only here, I was to observe that there is a quality of dread that feels as unfamiliar as a foreign country,

In moments when I felt it, I experienced no fear but a kind of exalted, almost demoniacal lightness; often attended by fits of laughter I was unable to repress”.\*

\*1920, of 1916 Guilleumont in Storm of Steel p93

## Erich Maria Remarque\*

“This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it.

It will try to simply tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war ...

... The morning is grey, it was still summer when we came up, and we were 150 strong.

Now we freeze, it is autumn, the leaves rustle, the voices flutter out wearily:

‘One - two -three - four’ and cease at 32.

And there is a long silence before the voice asks:

‘Anyone else?’

- and waits and ... a short line trudges off into the morning.

- Thirty two men”

\*1929, All Quiet on the Western Front, p5,p151

# George von Kaufmann

“When conscription was introduced into Great Britain by the Military Service Acts, 1916, I availed myself of the the right which those Acts recognised to individual liberty;

I appealed on the grounds of a conscientious objection, for exemption from military service and from service subsidiary to war.

This exemption was not granted by the Appeal Tribunal for the County of Cambridge.

I was called up to join the colours, and as I did not present myself at the appointed date, I was arrested and brought here by force”\*

\*Defence of George von Kaufmann, 19 Jan 1917



## George Kaufmann

“I do not think it right that a man should hand himself over body and soul, to a military authority which can command him to kill his fellow men — men with whom as an individual he has no quarrel, and who are as innocent a himself.

I believe wars can only be made to cease by such a realisation.

When individuals in all nations stand by this conviction, and work together independently of national boundaries, in their fight against militarism, then only will armaments and the continual threatenings of war cease”.

\*Defence of George von Kaufmann, 19 Jan 1917

## Peace Pledge Union

“He was refused CO recognition ... leading to arrest by the civil police in January 1917 for failing to respond to a call-up notice, appearance before the local magistrate’s court, and being handed over to the army, 31 (W) Middlesex Regiment. He refused to obey an order, probably to put on a uniform, and was court-martialled at Edenbridge, Kent, and sentenced to imprisonment, probably 112 days. At Wormwood Scrubs Prison on 10 March 1917, he was interviewed by the Central Tribunal, who found him to be a CO, and offered him entry to the Home Office Scheme devised to release COs from prison on condition of doing work under civilian control, but as an absolutist, he refused the Scheme.

He was later transferred to Wandsworth Prison. I cannot confirm that he joined in hunger strikes there, but it is very likely. As an absolutist he would have been collected by the military at the end of his sentence, given a fresh order, which he would again have refused, been court-martialled again and imprisoned again, until his final release, probably in April 1919”.

Bill Hetherington, PPU Archivist, personal communication, 2024.

## George Kaufmann

“In the late autumn of 1919 I went on from Switzerland to Germany and shortly after to Poland - to the South-Eastern borders of that country, where my home had been.

The towns and villages were laid waste; famine and typhus were raging.

My wife and I joined the War Victims' Relief Mission, organised by British and American Quakers”.

# George Kaufmann

“Oct 1920 Poland Report

Report on Starvation Conditions in the Carpathians and in East Galicia

George Kaufmann

Many reports from different sources had reached us of the terrible starvation amongst ... the peasants who inhabit the Carpathian mountains valleys in Eastern Galicia ... At present all these sources of supply are undermined ... After the ravages of war ... A large amount of sheep and cattle was lost in the war ... The frontiers are closed... this prevents the procession of harvest workers to Germany ... and the purchase of corn in Hungary ... milk and boiled nettles seemed to be the diet ... Bread is almost unknown now ... Some terrible pictures of starvation are seen ... and of ... children dressed in rags”.

# George Kaufmann

“... to me as one of mixed descent (my father’s father was German, my other 3 grandparents English) the War became a personal problem a special sense ...

I myself gravitated towards pacifism and social-revolutionary movements, and was among those who refused military service .

..... in the spring of 1919 came [Rudolf Steiner’s] newly written book on the Threefold Social Order ...

We wrote to Rudolf Steiner: it was important that this book should quickly be made available to English readers.

We offered to translate it ...

We were then invited to Dornach to go into the whole question.

“and in September 1919 we arrived there ...

[Rudolf Steiner} was very simple, courteous, friendly, - and happy”.

# George Kaufmann

“I come now to the unforgettable last three years when Dr Steiner visited England on no less than five occasions, generally for several weeks at a time ...

At Christmas and New Year, 1921-22, Dr Steiner gave his ... ‘Lectures to Teachers’, at the Goetheanum - in the upper room in the south wing ...

That was the first occasion when it fell to me to interpret Dr Steiner into English.

From then until his death I interpreted well over 100 lectures to English audiences, not including answers to questions, conferences and informal discussions.

Dr Steiner would nearly always divide the lecture into 3 parts, speaking for 20 to 25 minutes at a time.

While listening to him, I scribbled notes for all I was worth - never in shorthand. which I purposely refrained from learning ...

I invented signs.

At Cambridge ... I had picked up a smattering of symbolic logic, which I now turned to good account, though no doubt using the signs in highly unorthodox ways”.

## Rudolf Steiner\*

“We can look back with great satisfaction on the two Summer Schools [Penmaenmawr in 1923 and Torquay in 1924] that have been held here in England ...

Most especially I thank our dear friend [George] Kaufmann, who has been so visible beside me all the time in making sure in the most self-effacing way that what I have had to say could be adequately understood.

So I thank Mr Kaufmann very specially this evening ...

We have now reached the end of this Summer School.

Many things that might still have been said will have to be saved up for some future time.”

\*Torquay, 22 Aug 1924 in RS speaks to the British,p280, 282, 283

## Olive Whicher\*

“... he would stand up. so young a man, at intervals in a lecture divided into three part, and repeat again in beautiful English and with utmost devotion, almost word for word what Rudolf Steiner had just spoken in German in a lecture of vast spiritual content.

He made a few pictorial notes of his own creation and for the rest relied on his prodigious memory and spoke with great vitality and confidence.

In all he interpreted about 110 lectures besides many conferences and conversations,

For him and for those present it was an unforgettable experience, and Rudolf Steiner never failed to express his great gratitude”.



# George Kaufmann

“Dr Steiner entered with great kindness into the question of my future life and career.

I had ambitions in scientific research and had made a promising beginning.

But as the outcome of the War and the upheavals in which it ended, the social needs of mankind were in the foreground and I was wondering in which way to turn.

In answer to my question, Rudolf Steiner said: These issues are more urgent now than purely scientific work.”

1957, Adams, Recollections, p8

# George Kaufmann

“My own mother-tongue was English, and so was my upbringing.

I had British citizenship by virtue of my father’s birthplace [Australia].

At the outbreak of the first World War I was an undergraduate a Cambridge

That was the moment I first heard of Rudolf Steiner ...

I read right through his ‘Outline of occult Science’.

The book impressed me deeply ...

In the summer of 1916 I joined the ‘Emerson Group’ of the Anthroposophical Society in London”.

# George Kaufmann

“Warning:

For the most part I have not sorted out the possibly valuable part of each series from the pages of calculations in which I may have tackled a problem several times before I found the way to solve it.

Sometimes my efforts end in failure and the whole series ends by getting ‘bogged’ ...

The ideal thing would be if I still had time to sift the grain, of which there is quite a lot, from the chaff.

But I doubt if I ever shall; one has to go on to fresh tasks”.