

LITERARY . . .

The earth has swallowed the darkness—
Swiftly flowing, it sinks into the murky hollows
As if sucked down by some force beneath.
As daylight comes, I see anew the desolation
Of my country—the Hell in life of War —
I feel the happiness and comfort
That, brought on by the false security
Of horror-blotting night,
Has kept me alive, allowed my imagination
To picture again the beauties of my country
As it had been—
I feel my happiness and comfort
Slipping away—slipping, sliding,
Dragging away,
Sucked into the swirling vortex of the earth's bowels;
Until, with the return of all-concealing night
The earth again spews forth its darkness,
Which, rising, flooding, deepening, overflowing,
Drowns me in forgetfulness and sleep—

T. B.

The Definite Article

If through some misapprehension
You find difficult, retention
Of the German word convention,
Pay attention to declension;
For a varied circumvention
May bring on an intervention,
And the Powers, cause suspension
Of your studying pretention.
Furthermore, no condescension
Can atone for contravention
Of a proper planned ascension
To the land where apprehension
Is of most minute dimension.
I just casually mention
Out of very good intension,
(That's not past your comprehension)
'Cause you may win 'Special Mention'
If you really pay attention
To your article's declension.

'OMHPOS

The Rosary

'Twas Spring,
And all the world was fresh and green,
A promise of warmth and life to come.
A Rosary she gave to me,
To her a little trinket, but
To me a token of all the prayers
A human heart can hold, in Spring.

And now 'tis Fall. . . .
The fields are sad in rusty brown
And all the promises are gone.
The Rosary still I have, and still the prayers,
But where is she—

Oh where is she?
Tyresias.

Long since is gone the age of chivalry,
When in a blaze of glory every knight
Would issue, brave crusader, proud to fight;
For king or lady, honor's pawn to be.

The glory's gone from war; necessity
Alone remains. O'erpow'ring armies' might
Makes men machines. War's day is turned to night,
And battle's glory turned to drudgery.

But there are still crusades for us to fight
As long as women starve and children freeze
And men can earn no bread. It is not right
For us to lie replete on beds of ease.

The greatest deeds by far are yet to do;
Earth's noblest victories depend on you.

Pindar.

To The Inexperienced

If, sweet Friend, you are a lover,
And with deceit your sins didst smother,—
With coin, dispersing wee bothersome brother,
Or subtly soothing, dear, startled mother.—
Then Friend, may I caution you only on this.
If you're to continue your sweet state of bliss
Realize this: that before the next kiss
You must prudently plot, lest your plans go amiss.
For the ways of woman are the ways of the wild;
Her stark, subtle savagery soon has you riled,—
'Till you realize your own ways most surely are mild,
And Dame Fortune, perversely, on you hasn't smiled.
For in spite of, and 'cause of, your insidious lyin'—
Brother,—you've tied yourself tighter than twine!

H. E. A.

English Literature and the British War Effort

By ROY CAMPBELL

After the First World War it was four or five years before anything of real value was written about it in prose. Prose has been the normal vehicle of English thought and feeling for more than a century. But in Wartime there is always an increase in the output of poetry and also in the public interest in poetry. It may be that the excitement and emotional tension force one to seek the more concentrated and rhythmical form of expression. However that may be, it is certain that the writers of verse in both World Wars had formulated their experiences before the prose-writers had done so—with a few exceptions. Prose-writing requires more reflection and retrospection. It is still early to say what English literature will have contributed retrospectively to the allied war-effort for we seem to be only just at the beginning of a large harvest of war-books written by ex-service men and prisoners of war. The spirit which pervades these books has already functioned and made its contribution to victory in real life, on the battle-fields, in prison-camps, in the underground movements in the enemy's rear-guard; and in the most distant polar seas: so although these books are belatedly coming out in print and binding, we can count them as having contributed to the allied war-effort, since the very essence which informs them was not only contemporaneous with but a main ingredient of allied war-effort.

Such books are Richard Hilary's "The Last Enemy", Martin Lindsay's "So Few Got Through", Bernard Ferguson's "Beyond The Chindwin", Guy Gibson's "French Coast Ahead", Paul Brickhill's and Conrad Norton's "Escape to Danger", and one which actually appeared during the war though in the form of a novel—P. W. Mallalieu's "Very Ordinary Seamen". These are only a few of a daily-increasing output of war-books from the most diverse conditions and theatres of war ranging from the polar seas, to the tropical jungle, or the stratosphere.

If we compare this new English literature with the corresponding crop of books which resulted from the last war, we are struck beyond all things by the differences in the psychological atmosphere. Nearly all the books from the first world war had one thing in common: a sense of disillusion, frustration and disgust with the whole thing. There is no doubt that this mood helped to create the extreme pacifism of the period between the two wars.

In contrast with these gloomy books of the first great war, there is hardly a single book amongst those resulting from the last great war which is in any way morbid or frustrated. This is partly because, this last time, people were really convinced of the necessity or inevitability of the war, and had been expecting it for some time, whereas World War 1 took everyone unawares. There was a far greater variety of experience in this last war. It was mainly a mobile form of warfare and many soldiers travelled thousands of miles in pursuit of the enemy, and had seen victory after victory.

But in the first war the soldiers started and carried on in the same filthy, lice-haunted trenches. So even at the end there was no real feeling of victory. Thus it is that in the first war English literature did not contribute anything very much to the morale of war-effort except for a few romantic trumpet-flourishes at the very beginning of the war from poets such as Brooke and Grenfell, who fell early in the war. The poets and writers who survived them, the Owens and Sassoons, fill us with a kind of compassionate despair, which extends even to the enemy as a fellow-sufferer.

Though the poets in the late war do not seem to have produced such a genius as Owen, they have many advantages over the poets of 1914-1918. They could not

suffer the same cruel disillusionment since they started off with none of the romantic flourishes of their predecessors. In fact most of us expected this war to be worse than it was, since we had been nourished on the frustrated literature of 1914-1918. There is no doubt that many of the young poets who were formed by this war, would, in normal conditions, have been prose-writers, but that they took to writing verse owing to the exigencies of their service as soldiers. There is a kind of amateurishness about much of their work but it is compensated by a sincerity and a sanity which are not to be found elsewhere in English poetry since

the eighteenth century. Amongst this new generation of poets who were made by the war we may mention Keyes, Allmand, Alun Lewis, George Fraser, Alan Rock, Paul Potts, Currey, Fuller, Manifold, Litvinof, and others of the same type who contributed magnificently to the morale of their fellow-soldiers by contributing to the various military magazines which were edited both at home and overseas during the war. Many of these young men have been killed in action.

Sidney Keyes is perhaps the greatest loss amongst those who were killed since at the age of twenty-one he was already producing work of mature experience and technical excellence. Alun Lewis was also a great loss. Allmand received the supreme decoration for valour posthumously, and had written some very promising critical essays. Enough of these poets survive however to keep English poetry flourishing. They belong to a generation formed entirely by the war in the hard school of active service as soldiers. Many of their poems first saw daylight in those magazines which were edited by the soldiers themselves but which we shall mention elsewhere when we come to speak of the contribution of periodicals to the war effort.

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