



## LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Saturday August 14 1943

## CHIEF CONTENTS

Special Articles :	PAGE
The American Novel .. . . .	385
Menander's Mirror: "The Life of André Maurois" .. . . .	387
America's Foreign Policy .. . . .	390
World Affairs .. . . .	386
Sociology .. . . .	388
Novels of the Week .. . . .	389
Letters to the Editors :	
"Letter to Andrew" .. . . .	391
Good Germans? .. . . .	391
Nuttall of the Dictionary .. . . .	391
Alexander Woolcott .. . . .	391
Religion and Philosophy .. . . .	392
Biography .. . . .	392
Psychology .. . . .	393
Theatre .. . . .	393
Topography .. . . .	394
History .. . . .	394
Books to Come .. . . .	394

For Index of Reviews see Back Page

## THE TONGUE OF MARS

During recent months there has appeared a series of messages from General Montgomery to the Eighth Army. They will presumably be published in due course as part of the history of that conquering Army, and, read as a whole, they will form an index to their author's character; to read them one by one on their appearance has been a delight to all who enjoy that fit and individual use of words that gives the matrix of literary style. Their general appeal is indicated by the phrase "whatever may be your rank or employment," which occurs more than once in them, and which seems to recognize that the Army of to-day is not only built up from all sorts and conditions of men but affords specialized employment to many trades and professions. To address a composite body of that kind—"We are all one entity" said the General—in such a way that every man in it will at once understand its commander's mind and will share in his enthusiasm is a fine achievement, and the intimacy of the contact thus established is repeatedly shown in the cheery valediction "Good luck and good hunting!" Such an ending to a message is what one might expect from the man who, before the Battle of Egypt began in October, said that "Together, you and I will hit Rommel and his army 'for six' right out of Africa." In that metaphor there was a direct appeal to every man in the Army, and each of them must have responded, according to his age, almost, and experience, by thinking for a moment of some distant scene when his favourite slogger hit over the pavilion.

A commander of an army in the field to-day has opportunities of telling his troops what he is thinking which were denied to his predecessors, and he may be judged by the use he has made of them scarcely less than by his victories. "Marked intellectual capacity is the chief characteristic of the most famous soldiers," wrote Colonel Henderson in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," and the general public must look for that quality in what a soldier says or writes. Jackson's orders and written instructions were short and simple, and his biographer, when comparing him with Wellington, wrote of both that "their imagination was always controlled by common sense." For instance, when Wellington saw the moment was ripe for attacking Marmont he rode up to Pakenham and said: "Ned, move on with the Third Division; take the heights and drive everything before you." A similar firm intention of victory, expressed in the simplest and most forcible phrasing, is to be seen in the messages to the Eighth Army. It was shown to best advantage when the enemy, "caught like a rat in a trap," was about to attack from the Marech Line, and General Montgomery told his Army that "We will smash the enemy attack. . . . We will, in fact, give him a very bloody nose." Later on, after expressing his gratitude and admiration for the "wonderful fighting qualities" of the Army, he said that their triumphant cry had become "Forward to Tunis and drive the enemy into the sea!" The prophecy was not fulfilled. The campaign ended, thanks to the fine cooperation of the other Services, which the General most warmly recognized, in a "major disaster

for the enemy," and it is seldom that an expectation is so pleasantly dispelled.

In none of these messages is there any attempt to use literary artifice. Their wording is natural, and they form a model of clear, terse expression. It is true that General Montgomery quoted the Prime Minister's remark that it will be a great honour in years to come to be able to say "I marched and fought with the Eighth Army," and in that there is an echo from *Henry V*; but there was as little conscious art in that as there was thought of offering to let those with no stomach for the fight depart for home. Yet if there is no artifice there is an occasional flash of eloquence. The message of complete confidence to the invasion troops in Sicily is eloquent in the truest sense; it is apposite and effective. "Therefore, with faith in God and with enthusiasm for our cause and for the day of battle, let us enter into this contest with stout hearts and with determination to conquer." If one seeks in the sayings of great captains for an analogy to that exhortation it may be found in the most familiar of signals, which, in its original form, was "Nelson confides that every man will do his duty." In that form, wrote Captain Mahan,

it was the call of the leader to the followers, the personal appeal of one who trusts to those in whom he trusts, a feeling particularly characteristic of the speaker whose strong hold over others lay above all in the transparent and unswerving faith he showed in their loyal support.

## Reviewing the Reviewers

That authors are a *genus irritabile* has long been a commonplace of human observation. That there is an age-long feud between them and critics of literature many quite erroneously imagine. Unfortunately this error is propagated by a certain number of authors themselves. In the current issue of the organ of the Authors' Society, for example, nine members contribute to what is called a symposium entitled "Reviewing Reviewed." Here we find revived the antiquated gibes and peevish complaints which used to be familiar, but have lately been less frequently heard. Miss Phyllis Bentley suggests that reviewing is regarded as "hack work" to be done by "lithographers, dramatists, politicians" or such people as the clergyman who asked her for introductions to editors. Mr. St. John Ervine asserts that reviewers are most of them "beginners or the bored, boys and girls aspiring to be writers or elderly persons who have failed to make any mark in writing." Even Mr. Shaw, recalling a time when he insisted on being paid £3 a thousand words although the usual rate for reviewers was, he alleges, about 3s. a hundred, speaks as if they were still "poor devils of drudges" wretchedly paid.

All that is mere beating of the air, and no one ought to know it better than authors, so many of whom are now also reviewers. Whether this is a good thing for literature or not may be arguable, but it is a fact, and everybody is aware of it, since they usually sign their reviews. There may have been a period in the history of journalism when editors handed over parcels of new books to their friends or to any other amateur who pestered them sufficiently, and when they paid very little for what was of little worth. But even then the practice must have been confined to such organs as the *Estonsville Gazette*. Journals of any standing have always in the past kept up a fairly high standard of reviewing, and they do so still. They also pay for it reasonably well. There is no doubt that the generality of novelists or biographers who do reviewing receive more for it than they do for their books, if the so-much-a-thousand-word scale is applied. To call them, as Mr. Shaw does, "the submerged tenth of the upper ten" is to ignore altogether the conditions of the present age.

Nor is there really any more reason for Mr. Harold Nicolson's apprehension of "the danger of our literary criticism becoming degraded." Indeed, the circumstance that so much of it comes now from men and women of letters should be a guard against that risk. Author-reviewers are not likely at any rate to do their work in perfunctory fashion. They seem to have a positive passion for saying what they think about fellow-writers. This comes out in two of the contributions to the *Author's* discussion. Both Mr. Wells and Mr. Ervine seize the opportunity to do a little reviewing on their own account. The first breaks out against "one who is, I gather, a distinguished critic and novelist," but whom he finds "so invariably dull that for me he does not exist," and Mr. Ervine even more fiercely attacks another writer who has had the misfortune to displease him. Happily these outbursts do not represent the author-reviewer's usual style!

## Letters to the Editor

## "LETTER TO ANDREW"

Sir.—While I feel it is most ungracious for an author to find fault with a review in *The Times Literary Supplement*, some of the observations of your reviewer of my recent book "Letter to Andrew" seem to give so oblique a view of the main principles underlying the book and, incidentally, raise points of such fundamental significance that I trust you may find the space to publish a few essential corrections.

In his generous effort to do justice to a book with the philosophy of which he evidently disagrees, your reviewer has omitted to indicate by a single word the main purpose of the book. Written as a memorial to a fellow arguer in the R.A.F. killed in action, "Letter to Andrew" addresses itself chiefly to members of that younger generation, many of whom were my friends in the R.A.F. and the majority of whom appear to dismiss religion and its ideals as unrelated to the problems by which they are faced in their daily lives. Disillusioned by the obvious failure of politics, economics and even science to establish a better-order in the world, and suspicious of organized religion, these young people seem to feel that there yet exists some spiritual force capable of bringing salvation—if only they knew how to find it and how to correlate it to the realities of their own existence. What my book attempts to do is to present some of the guiding religious truths in the light of such searching and to "vindicat" them, in practical terms, as the only effective answer to man's individual difficulties.

Your reviewer suggests that I plead that the religious ideal ought to be compromised. I doubt whether anything in my book warrants such an assertion. But, basing myself on my intimate knowledge of the younger generation and of their profound scepticism, I did not feel that I should be of real assistance to them if, in the manner of the more orthodox religious bodies, I limited myself merely to placing before them an ideal in all its painful brightness, an ideal moreover, which was dismissed by them as utopian and as having no bearing upon their own daily lives. "Would it not be more helpful to acknowledge existing facts, to bring that ideal into a workable relationship to their immediate problems, to show them that even without reaching instantly the ideal they might yet begin to shape their conduct in accordance with it and, thus, utilize spiritual energies that hitherto they had left untapped? In no way does this imply diluting the ideal. It seems to me that to the hungry half a loaf is better than no loaf.

Your reviewer also suggests that I "brush aside the monastic ideal," and dismiss those who hold it as "religious fanatics." What I actually say is that the "monastic existence" (not "ideal"—a most important difference) "is to-day the privilege of a few only"—which surely no one would deny—and that religious fanatics are those who claim that "religion as the exclusive centre of our life is at present no more than an ideal beyond the common reach." Would indeed anyone but a fanatic claim when casting a glance upon the surrounding scene that it is not so? My words however do not imply that I dismiss either the religious ideal in all its purity or that of monasticism. Surely there is a fundamental difference between an ideal and its practical application or an existence shaped by it.

My book pleads incessantly that happiness and the solution of our problems are beyond our reach unless we try to live up to religious truth and follow "some lamp in heaven to guide us."

Your obedient servant,  
ROM LANDAU.

## GOOD GERMANS?

Sir.—May I congratulate you on the most excellent reviews in your issue of July 31, on Thomas Mann's book "Order of the Day," as well as "Menander's Mirror: A Good German."

If all England would understand Germany as well as these two reviews show I dare to say the world would be more secure for the future.

To us who know Mr. Thomas Mann and who have carefully followed his development his book is no surprise. Even in his deep conviction of the terrible deeds now committed by the Germans he cannot get rid of that philosophy to which in November, 1914, in the *Neue Rundschau* he gave expression with the words:—

The militarism inherent in the German soul, its ethical conservatism, its soldierly morality, a demonical and heroic element—these are the factors which refuse to recognize the civilian spirit as the final ideal of mankind.

Yours faithfully,  
WALTER LOEB.

## NUTTALL OF THE DICTIONARY

Sir.—Your leader on Lowndes, the bibliographer, is interesting. It is odd how authors of reference books, who are known by name to all, are biographically forgotten.

Nuttall of "Nuttall's Standard Dictionary" is not even in D.N.B. Nobody seems to know his first name or the dates of his birth and death. His first recorded book, an edition of Virgil, was published in 1826, and his last, "A Dictionary of Scientific Terms," in 1869. It is not even certain when the first edition of the famous dictionary appeared. His name is given as P. Austin Nuttall. He must have been born about 1800 or earlier, and probably died soon after 1869. It would be a service to his memory if someone acquainted with the facts would print them.

Yours truly,  
ARTHUR J. HAWKES, Borough Librarian,  
Central Public Library, Wigan.

## ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

Sir.—The letters of the late Alexander Woolcott are now being collected for publication by me, as his friend and literary executor. If any of Mr. Woolcott's friends in England have letters they are willing to lend for the purpose, I shall be most grateful for copies of them. I may be addressed, care of, The Viking Press, 18 East 48th Street, New York 17, New York, U.S.A.

Yours, etc.,  
JOSEPH HENNESSEY.

## NISBET

## HUMAN DESTINY

By  
REINHOLD NIEBUHR

This is Volume II of Dr. Niebuhr's NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN, in which he submits to a searching examination classical and modern conceptions of history and its interpretation.

"It deals with a great theme greatly. . . . Has a power to stimulate reflection such as few recent works possess."—The DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S in the Spectator.

"Every page is worth careful pondering."—The Times.

"Its profundity, its insights and its amazing learning defy summary."—Church of England Newspaper.

15/- net

## RECOLLECTIONS

By  
P. CARNEGIE SIMPSON  
MAINLY ECCLESIASTICAL  
BUT SOMETIMES HUMAN

"Abounds in admirable vignettes of a great number of distinguished people about whom he tells many witty stories."—The Times.

4/6 net

In Preparation

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

By  
LEONARD HODGSON

Canon of Christ Church  
Professor of Moral Theology, Oxford  
October. 15/- net

NOW READY

★  
and

Egypt at its romantic best is the setting for this unusual novel. A

seven

casual fortune-teller in Cairo tells Lord Eversham, "Six others will die first

shall

. . . and you will be the seventh. . ." Here is romance and high adven-

die. . .

ture told in the grand manner. Ask for it at your library or bookseller NOW 8/6

by  
VICTORIA WOLF

★  
19,000 copies of REPORT FROM TOKYO have been sold and it's still in big demand. The author is Joseph C. Grew, who was U.S. Ambassador to Tokyo 1932-41. *The Listener*.—"By far the best book that has yet appeared on the Japanese war situation." Paper 2/6, Cloth 4/-

HAMMOND, HAMMOND,  
& COMPANY LTD  
36, Gt. Russell St. W.C.1