

for the author to fling his thoughts and conceptions up on stronger wings than an uninformed and meticulous realism that is accurate enough but no more. It would be difficult to find a masterpiece that is not based upon symbols, the terms of which have more or less passed into the daily parlance of our speech.

If the younger American novelists — most of them so informed, so excellent, so keenly reactive to the sensations of life about them — could more fully circumscribe their pictures of contemporary life in symbols it is to be suspected that their work would reach infinitely higher planes than it does at present. It is true enough that some of these younger writers sense the power in the symbol, understand that more may be conveyed by its use than by reams of precise naturalism in prose. But they do not carry it far enough. They are too intent upon a photographic recreation. They should retain this effective approximation of reality but, at the same time, they should inform it with a symbolic value. Only in this way can literature be lifted from parochial standards into a universal category.

### THE IMMORALITY OF ANONYMITY

SINCE Margot Asquith came to these shores to follow up the triumph of her literary indiscretion, there have come into being — and have since passed out — “Dusters” and “Mirrors” and “Recollections”, censored and otherwise, which, like children born of unknown fathers, have made the neighbors nudge and wink. In some cases the content of these nameless utterances could be accused of ex-

citing neither nudge nor wink. It was throughout of high moral rectitude, immaculate save for the little tang of suspicion engendered by that word “anonymous”, which, biographically speaking, has come to connote the unsavory. It conjures up pictures of sneakings down backstairs, of smugglings out by servants, of eyes at the keyholes of lavatory doors, of furtive jottings on the cuff under the meagre light of street lamps, of watchful lurkings in the club o’ nights in the hope of overhearing something good, of dawn spyings in the corridors of country houses: and then at last the trading for thirty pieces of silver. . . . At least “Margot” had the courage of her indiscretions.

It seems to us that self revelation, confession, is the only excuse for anonymity; though, paradoxically enough, the psychology of self revelation seems to make not for a screen but for a megaphone. The unsigned revelations of the *faits et gestes* of others, living or dead, seem to us to be altogether inexcusable, to be indeed an adult reproduction of the manners of those questionable urchins who scrawl on the school door, “Billy Jones loves Susie Smithers!” and then run away. The adults call it literary biography, or recollection, or reminiscence. We call it the immorality of anonymity and invert our thumbs.

### THE GREAT BOOK OF THE WAR

TO the thirteenth edition of his “Gallipoli” John Masefield writes an introduction that is honest, clear, forceful. He explains that his description of the great campaign was written frankly as propaganda, that it is a mere sketch. He refers the reader to the authoritative books on the campaign.

He speaks bitterly of censorship and its power, the limitations it placed upon truth telling. "This censorship was submitted to by the public", he writes, "in every country, in the belief that it would be a sword in the hands of their skilful generals. No doubt in some cases it proved to be so; but far more frequently it served as a shield to hide the incompetence of generals, staffs, War Offices and the politicians who set them moving, or checked them (or set them moving and then checked them), as their ambitions or their cliques dictated. Early in 1916, this censorship was not, in this country, such a power as it afterward came to be, but, as a matter of course, it barred out the two most important sources of possible information, the Admiralty and the War Office." In effect, this prose epic was written as a message to America. It stands now, accurate or inaccurate, as a saga of heroism. Mr. Masfield finds himself puzzled by unwillingness to glorify war, yet no book could possibly do more to make for peace than one in

which the terrors and struggles of war, and the humanity of the soldier in face of tremendous odds, are so aptly told. What a mastery of prose rhythm! This prose is almost poetry, yet starkly simple. Homer is the name that comes to mind. Any page carries with it a sense of the march of history. If "Gallipoli" is not a proper textbook for those studying the history of the war, it is essential for an understanding of the spirit of the war, and it should be on every library and home shelf that boasts the inclusion of modern literary masterpieces. We quote at random:

This word of victory, coming to men who thought for the moment that their efforts had been made in vain, had the effect of a fresh brigade. The men rallied back up the hill; bearing the news to the firing-line, the new, constricted line was made good, and the rest of the night was never anything but continued victory to those weary ones in the scrub. But 24 hours of continual battle exhausts men, and by dawn the Turks, knowing the weariness of our men, resolved to beat them down into the sea. When the sun was well in our men's eyes they attacked again, with not less than twice our entire strength of fresh men, and with an overwhelming superiority in field artillery.

## HUSHED MIDNIGHT

By John Hall Wheelock

**I** HEARD the owlet call,  
 A little, quavering call —  
 Timidly, timidly out of the dark it cried:  
 'Twas midnight,  
 By candlelight  
 I sat alone, and the light was burning low;  
 And I thought of you that once had loved me so,  
 And of my lonely youth, my stubborn pride.  
 Heart of my heart, it was you out there in the night —  
 It was you that cried!