

No choice forevermore! New warnings came,
But came too late. Her dear sweet random ways
Would more and more reveal their tragic phase—
As of a candle with unsteady flame
Through fierce combustion of uncouth element—
Proving that love itself, though it can put
Light in the eyeball, swiftness in the foot,
Cannot restring within its choral tent
The mind 'twould play on, as a lyre or lute,
When God has tampered with the instrument.

That lover, then, could not stoop to prudence nor, being human, wholly conquer misgiving. Pity and nobility and love made all calm weighing of issues impossible. Whence, then, came the choice and the decision? Mr. Leonard answers that question in a stanza which marks one of the loftiest points of his own and of our national poetry:

We act in crises not as one who dons
A judge's robe and sits to praise or blame
With walnut gavel, before high window-frame,
Beside a Justice-and-her-scales in bronze;
We act in crises not by pros and cons
Of volumes in brown calf-skin still the same;
But, like the birds and beasts from which we came,
By the long trend of character—the *fons*
Fons et origo—fountain-head and source—
Of deeper conduct, whether in unleashed hound,
That tears the fleeing stag unto the ground,
Or thrush in battle for its fledgling's corse,
Or boy who sees a cracked dam, hears a sound,
And down the peopled valley spurs his horse.

Saecla Ferarum

By WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

I

'Twas when at last the million flags were stacked
And all the hosts had signed the Great Peace Pact,
I saw before a winter's dawn the stars,
In skies as strange as if I saw from Mars:
The Dipper toppling on its handle-end,
Arcturus under, carrying out the bend;
Orion's Oblong tilted, twisted, slim,
With Sirius spurting fire atop of him;
The V of Taurus poised upon its point,
And moonless Dragon sprawling out of joint,
With Jupiter so bright, a fool had said
A comet's tail was arching from its head . . .
Aratus, when he sang his Catalogue,
Saw not the Shining Ones so far agog;
And no witch-woman with a Lybian cry
E'er charmed the Constellations so awry. . . .

II

And then across the frozen marshes leapt
A train's fierce whistle while my townsmen slept;
And, as it died along the trailing smoke,
Upon the gap of starry silence broke
In jumbled yelps, threaded by wailings through,
The coyotes by the lake-side in the Zoo;
As if first startled in the prairie nest
By the first locomotive rolling west—
That line of moving lights they've ne'er forgot,
Behind the low stack flanging like a pot.

III

So blew the whistles at the armistice . . .
The coyotes answered as they answered this. . . .

IV

O never think that all of life is vain—
Though towns be built on dead men's bones in mud,
And fields, even when they best put forth their grain,
Be curst, as fertile but with dead men's blood—
Yes, though still issue from the Mountain Door
The unborn generations to be slain,
With unknown flags and engines for new war,
Till self-destroyed, on coast and hill and plain,
Mankind with town and harvest is no more! . . .
O never think that life thereby has ceased:
Eating and drinking and the will to strive
(And sleep by rock and rainbow after feast)
And the great thrill of being here alive,
Will yet remain in birth succeeding birth,
With trails still open from the north and east,
All up and down this goodly frame, the earth—
Will yet remain in fish and fowl and beast! . . .
And, lo, the Beasts not only wake in Man
Hope for the Life-Force still, beyond his span;
But offer him, before he sink and cease,
New life his own and intervals of peace . . .
Nay, more than Egypt's Cult and India's Kine,
The Animals may vouch us the Divine;
And Man may yet outwit his doom forecast—
Even by becoming one with them at last! . . .

V

Why were we all so self-absorbed in woe
Through those four years not very long ago?
We are not what we seem, and we have powers
That touch on deeper, other Life than ours:
Though path were lost that Christ and Buddha trod
Whereby the self may lose itself in God,
There yet remained to us the blest escape,
By sprawling trance in disencumbered hours
(With face and belly flattened to the sod),
Where self may lose itself in Ox or Ape.
But no man cropped the grass among the flowers!
And no man wound a tail about his nape!
Or felt the heat and rain, or saw the sky,
But with a human skin, a human eye! . . .

VI

Yet all these years, whilst our one paltry race
Bustled with flame and sword from place to place
(So troubled lest man's great ideals die),
The old telluric Animals, I guess—
That sniff at hole, or stop with ears aprick,
Or cower forward from the young they lick,
Or with deep meditation prowl and pry,
Knowing their waters in the wilderness,
Knowing their seasons through the land and sky—
Repeated those vast worlds of consciousness
That furnish earth her answer to the moon
And to the sun and stars her reason why—
The Life-Force of her ancient night and noon:
From Arctic tundra to the pampas south,
By glen and glacier, on the seaward ness,
Through belting forests to the river's mouth,
On shaggy mountains in the drench and drouth,
And down the air and ocean stream no less!
The paws, the wings, the fins, wherewith they pass,
And scaly bellies wriggling through the grass!
The fuzz, the fur, the feathers, and the chines,
And in the thickets bead-eyed balls of spines!

The spots, the stripes! The black, the white, the dun!
 And stalking water-birds ablaze in sun!
 Behind façades of motions, shapes, and hues,
 Behind this moving veil, what news, what news?
 When the Field Gray defiled through Brussels town,
 What did the Bear devise on flopping down?
 When Lusitania sank, was the Raccoon
 Dreaming of fish in tree-top under moon?
 When bayonets plunged (so skilfully withdrawn),
 What felt the Tiger with his tooth in fawn?
 When man's four limbs convolved in pain and hate,
 What felt the Octopus through all his eight,
 Cast on the beach by tidal wave at dawn?
 What felt the Mole, the blind and blindly led,
 Burrowing with paws and ridging earth with head?
 What felt the Hawk, who, in the clouded night,
 Swooped to the pinfold by the window-light?
 Or Shark on back, with lower jaw agape—
 That chinless jaw, on top and toothed for rape? . . .
 What sense, where limbs stumped on without their toes,
 As Caterpillar's feet on stem or rose?—
 Where hands were claws and hooks (not made but born),
 And lips were lengthened into beaks of horn? . . .
 When lightning cried the slain from land to land,
 What mused the Turtle rounding out the sand?
 When boys and girls on Volga starved and Rhine,
 What smelt Rhinoceros and Porcupine?
 When the Four Sages under Mirrors sat,
 What pow-wows were the Jackals, Buzzards, at? . . .
 Huge as the monster Tank that lately rose
 Like Dinosaur from mud of fen and flat,
 The Elephant erects his trunk and blows:
 Is it his joy in Man which causes that,
 Or a straw tickling half-way up his nose? . . .
 What secrets in the purring of a Cat?
 The cooing of the Dove, the shriek of Jay?
 Or scream of Sea-Lion, tumbling flapper-finned?—
 The air is full of sounds, beside the wind. . . .

VII

Have ye not heard how, as in womb ye grew
 (So long before ye waxed to men and slew),
 Ye bore from week to week trace merged in trace,
 There in the silence, of your pristine race?—
 The gills of fish, the two-valved heart of bird,
 The simian's tail, the huddled body furred?
 Well, then be comforted: for still we find
 Body is ever correlate with mind,
 And, whilst ye shared the frame of bird or fish,
 Ye shared no less its feeling, fancy, wish.
 And know: the heart, the tail, the fur, the gill,
 However altered, are our portion still;
 And so it follows: still the mind no less
 Secretes some portion of their consciousness.
 The Muse of Darwin! . . . Next the Muse of Freud:
 We know that all we fancied, feared, enjoyed,
 From babyhood upon these shores of light
 Works still in us, most manifest at night,
 Whence dreams, they say, and ghosts, and second-sight.
 Why not the fancies and the fears and joys
 We shared before our birth as girls and boys—
 The animal sensations of our prime?
 Are these not there? Shall they not have their time—
 To link us, by probed memories within,
 Unto the larger life, the vaster kin? . . .
 Plotinus, Bergson, ye can gloss my rhyme!

VIII

The stars ere dawn are twisted out of place!
 Something is working in my brain, my face!
 Lion and ferret, muskrat, eagle, deer,
 Penguin and seal, porpoise and wolf and whale,
 And horse and cow, and dog with wagging tail,
 Are circling round me, near and yet more near:
 From jungles, canyons, oceans, trees, and skies,
 From crags, from coves, from river reeds, they peer,—
 Earth's Animals, with old familiar Eyes . . .
 Whilst, ever since the hush of guns, I hear
 Familiar invitations in their cries.

Books

The Ruler of the King's Navee

The World Crisis. By Winston S. Churchill. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$6.50.

ONE of the unforgettable pictures of Mrs. Asquith's reminiscences was of the midnight scene at No. 10 Downing Street at the outbreak of the war, when she saw Winston Churchill "with a happy face striding towards the double doors of the Cabinet room." The culminating moment of his career had arrived. The die had been cast for the greatest naval struggle in history, and he was himself in control at the British Admiralty.

In the leisure given him by Dundee's preference for E. Scrymgeour and E. D. Morel, Mr. Churchill has prepared this apologia of his work as Great Britain's naval minister in time of war. How much more fortunate his lot than that of his American namesake! It was of a merely national crisis that the New Hampshire Churchill wrote, and one in which he had himself played no part. Nothing less than a world crisis is the Englishman's subject, and much of his chronicle is autobiography. Indeed, there is one side of this book that needs a Mr. Dooley to do it justice. The reviewer should hold the pen that wrote "Alone in Cuba." Mr. Churchill has a truly Rooseveltian passion for being in the center of things. One is surprised to find how much this civilian head of the Admiralty had to do with the actual direction of naval strategy and the planning of the details of offense and defense. To say nothing of Sir Joseph Porter, one cannot imagine his predecessors—such men as W. H. Smith, or Lord Spencer, or Lord Selborne—mobilizing the fleet in defiance of a Cabinet decision, or deciding what vessels should be sent here and what there, or assisting in the designing of new ships, any more than one can imagine any of them spending eight months afloat, as Mr. Churchill did, in the three years before the war. Not less unthinkable would be their personal participation in anything of the nature of the Antwerp adventure.

Mr. Churchill can never forget that he is a descendant of the great Duke of Marlborough, and one finds him here always itching to take command, whether by sea or land. At Antwerp he intervenes to direct the naval brigade, and wires home offering to resign his post and take formal military charge of the British forces in that city. At times one might almost suppose that he was not only First Lord of the Admiralty but Secretary for War. He pays, for instance, a visit to the front in France because he thinks it "vitally important" that he should see with his own eyes what is passing. "Looking back with after-knowledge and increasing years, I seem," he confesses, "to have been too ready to undertake tasks which were hazardous or even forlorn."

All the same, his defense of his policies and actions is brilliantly successful. Granting that there must be navies and naval wars, no country could be better served than was Great Britain by Winston Churchill. This record is a revelation not only of unwearying diligence and intense devotion but of keen