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and approaching complete disintegration of their language.

The actual or human motives for the *Conversation* remain unclear; its drama is static, and it ends as it began: a flood of talk in the dim, smoky air of a West Tenth Street room, a room filled with literary people, who, even as they become vulgar, speak with a certain pride of their vulgarity, as though vulgarity itself could prove to them that they were human beings and still alive. It is in this fashion that they attempt to reassert their humanity: Pygmalion speaking of a firing squad in every john, Ricardo chanting "He drinks with drooling lip/The myriad stench of man," John saying, "I'll punch your nose," Merton replying to Carl, "Your masses are fleas," and Carl answering by speaking of Park Avenue deserted, and the moon shining down on little dog-heaps. Matthew Arnold, who is now re-read as a discerning social as well as literary critic of his day, would have said again, should he have heard them: "What a set, what a set!" And his horror would not be mere Victorian prejudice, for he had praised highly Robert Burns's "The Jolly Beggars." One can be tolerant only if one sees Miss Millay's seven men as abstracted types of a moribund, middle-class literary New York society entering the discomforts of their middle age, with the curtain ready to fall and mercifully bring an end to their disaster.

Yet Miss Millay has written as best she can of the things we have been reading in the newspapers. And though the present work is an avowed experiment, I doubt if in its lighter passages, written in dispraise of women, she has actually traveled far beyond the *Vanity Fair* satire of *A Few Figs From Thistles*. In one sense (and after the Shakespearean tour of *Fatal Interview*) the return to West Tenth Street is a return home. This last return, however, lacks the sharpness and finality of another return which was said so well in the first poem of *Wine From These Grapes*, but it should be remembered that Miss Millay has always concerned herself with a social picture of the world as she saw it. She is still the spirit of a time and place, and though time recedes and places change, Miss Millay remains the spokesman of the group which once flourished with such ease and eloquence, south of Fourteenth Street in the city of New York.

HORACE GREGORY.

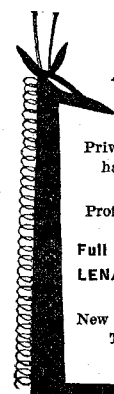
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WAR ON SATURDAY WEEK, by Ruth Adam.
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John, the youngest, grows up to enlist as a crack aviator of the Royal Aviation Force, while the child Cedric finds a disillusioning future in the role of a tired and cynical London reporter. Only the two girls are to know the full horror of the childhood game suddenly become tragic reality.

The book, in no sense a distinguished piece of work, but a very sincere attempt to "shoot" the changing social picture of present-day England, is built around Nora and Mary, the two modern daughters of the Victorian preacher. Mary, first of the offspring to be wed, sees her mildly liberal husband David jailed for his unaggressive pacifism and then shot down in cold blood during a riot precipitated by Mosley's Blackshirts. A surface glimpse of the revolutionary movement in England is afforded through the story of Nora who becomes identified with underground Communist activity, in which she doggedly participates throughout the crucial mobilization period and the reign of terror that precede the imminent world conflagration.

One of the most significant episodes in Mrs. Adam's honest, if somewhat poorly constructed novel is the description of the German air raids in the Nottingham munitions district during the last war.

ABEL PLENN.

Brief Reviews

FLYING DUST, by Edward Leon Meyerson. Poetry Publications. \$1.50.

Meyerson's poems are, for the most part, revolutionary in subject matter. Anachronistic dashes of sex and sophomoric metaphysics are handled awkwardly. Unfortunately, Meyerson's technique has not caught up with his ideas; I think he has stolen a great deal from Hart Crane. If Meyerson is to contribute anything to contemporary verse, he must dispense with the stock-in-trade emotions and prune the clumsy phrasing. There is plenty more at the source of most of this poetry, and we hope there is more in Meyerson.

R. H. R.

THE REHABILITATION OF OKLAHOMA COAL MINING COMMUNITIES, by Frederick L. Ryan. University of Oklahoma Press. \$1.50.

Eastern Oklahoma contains an area of about twelve thousand square miles, extending north and south from Kansas to Texas and east to the Arkansas line, which for some sixty years now has been the scene of more or less extensive coal mining operations. Dr. Ryan, for the first time, presents a concise and yet broad outline of the economic and social history of this region. The facts he brings to light (buttressed by fifteen comprehensive statistical tables and two score bibliographical references) tell a familiar story: intensive exploitation of natural and human resources resulting in huge profits to the operators, criminal waste of mineral wealth, and recurrent poverty and destitution for the workers. Dr. Ryan, however, revealing an intimate and thorough understanding of his subject, is able to point out the particular nature of developments in this district and to explain the interplay of social, economic, and political phenomena. Not the least interesting feature of the book is its far-reaching pro-



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