

But it may be necessary to kick one's enemy in order to make friendship possible." Again, after praying in the cool green shadows of his cell, he might reflect that, "If we fought from blood-lust or hate, war would be sordid. But if we fight, as only a Christian may, that friendship and peace with our foes may become possible, then fighting is our duty, and our fasting and dirt, our wounds and our death, are our beauty and God's glory."

If he put these thoughts on parchment the chances are that they would some day make some twentieth century scholar smile over the charming religious naïveté of the middle ages. Books of to-day have not the longevity of parchment, and so there is little probability that any thirtieth century professor will ever smile over *A Student in Arms*, the book from which these quotations are taken. Its author, Donald Hankey, was a young aspirant to the Anglican priesthood. He had, to use his own phrasing, for some years been wandering in the inconclusive mists of modern theology. Then his country went to war in what he considered a righteous cause, and despite his "gentle birth" he enlisted as a simple private. Before he was killed in action he had had time to publish his reflections on what has been called the spiritual aspects of the war.

But beyond a certain fresh clarity of style these conclusions of his have little value, unless one understands from them that he went into the war as unprepared to meet realities as the templar's sword would have been to meet a machine gun. It shocked him into partial comprehension. In the barracks he found "the dignity of labor" and evolved a maxim that, "Outward rank is deserving only of outward respect; genuine respect should be accorded only to real usefulness." Before his enlistment he had been worried about the irreligious workingman. Now he decided that praying was very difficult after a day of strenuous labor, and in the trenches he discovered "the religion of the inarticulate," which manifested itself in the unselfish, cheerful, coöperative and democratic spirit of the army. But he did not reflect that all these hopeful human qualities might equally well have been evoked by an earthquake, fire or flood or religious persecution. He credited them all to the uplifting power of sacrificing one's life in a holy war. He had to believe this. He must convince himself that the awful slaughter had the justification of a great crusade, and that the men who fought it were bettered and not degraded. And since his was a temperament as naïvely religious as the medieval monk's, he succeeded. The last words of the notebook in which he jotted down "the chief truths impressed on him by study and experience" were a "Nunc dimittis" because "I have seen the naked souls of men, stripped of circumstance. Rank and reputation, wealth and poverty, knowledge and ignorance, manners and uncouthness, these I saw not. . . . I have seen with the eyes of God. I have seen the vanity of the temporal and the glory of the eternal. I have despised comfort and honored pain. I have understood the victory of the Cross. O Death, where is thy sting?"

But one does not dismiss *A Student in Arms* as one does the conventional recruiting cant about a country's regeneration through war and the radiance of the military virtues. For that it is too desperately sincere, too openly the product of brave and unsophisticated youth. It is rather with a sort of reverence that one finishes a book so thoroughly imbued with the most promising of human tendencies, the wish to be justified on a constructive instead of on a destructive basis.

SIGNE K. TOKSVIG.

Recent Publications

In the War, by V. Veresáev. Translated by Leo Wienew. New York: Mitchell Kennerley. \$2.00.

WRITTEN by a doctor in the Russian-Japanese war, these memoirs offer a ghastly indictment of the waste and cruel stupidity of armed conflict. The corruption and inefficiency of the Russian autocratic military machine as here revealed almost exceed human belief. Divisions were left wandering about behind the lines at Mukden with no orders and no direction, uncertain as to whether they should advance or retreat. Hospitals were established in empty barracks with no beds or blankets or medical supplies—those, or what there was left of them, were left in idle cars a few miles down the track. Food was a happy gift, never a certainty. Even on the trans-Siberian trip the fresh troops were obliged to "live off the country," and often there was little attempt to disguise plain looting from the officers. In fact, any romantic halo which enshrouded the Russian common or peasant soldier is effectively shattered by Veresáev's simple and straightforward narrative of dirt and despair and cruel slaughter. What war can do to even the greatest of men is shown here in a realism which would be merely revolting if it were not for the note of bitterness and irony that gives an undercurrent of clear criticism to the sluggish and sickening stream of war's horror. Of heroism and nobility and self-sacrifice there was a pathetic profusion, yet the balance of misery and degradation far outweighed them. The degeneration and moral discouragement of so many was far too high a price to pay for stimulating the higher instincts of so few. Nevertheless, everything isn't pessimistic. At least six-tenths of the waste and futile savagery of it all was due to the autocratic machine, bound up hopelessly in the evils of its own graft and redtape. One understands better now how any long war was bound to result in revolution for Russia. It has come, and already, after only a few weeks, *In the War* seems a description of a past era. For now, whether misfortune overtakes her or not, Russia has but one enemy to fight, the external enemy. Heretofore, as Veresáev so memorably shows, she has always had to fight two.

A League to Enforce Peace, by Robert Goldsmith. New York: The Macmillan Co. \$1.50.

BECAUSE the essential desirability of a League to Enforce Peace has been a favorite conclusion of high-school debating forums for some time is hardly a valid reason for jeering at the conception. Maturity is slow in catching up with the easy reasonableness of youth. Progress is often nothing more than a rediscovery of the truths we were so vividly aware of when adolescent, but which are flattened out and broken on the wheel of grown-up chaos and a muddled world. Every attempt to popularize the idea of a League to Enforce Peace is a distinct service to civilization. To many, Mr. Goldsmith's little book may seem like the re-beating of the obvious, but that doesn't in the least detract from the genuine publicity function such a volume performs. It is popular without being flimsy. Best of all, it is simple and clear and direct. Mr. Goldsmith shows that it is not the lack of goodwill which made the war; it is the lack of a decent organization of that goodwill. There is intelligence enough in the world to conquer war; it merely needs direction. So the League to Enforce Peace becomes not a

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Lydia of the Pines, by Honoré Willsie. New York: F. A. Stokes Co. \$1.40.

IN a land where sunshine and the silver lining are still the national philosophy, "wholesome" has become a somewhat devastating adjective. Yet in spite of its anaemic associations, one is tempted to employ it of Mrs. Willsie's new novel. Seldom have our native authors sketched a cheerier and brighter and less pretentious picture of the mid-Western, upper Mississippi valley life of a decade ago, so typically American, so vibrant with material plenty and pioneering optimism, so money-mad and graft-ridden, so eager, nevertheless, to slough off the ugliness and corruption of the small town for an ideal of democracy but half understood. Then the early free-and-easy individualism was slowly becoming self-conscious and self-critical. Lydia herself reflected this change in her own development. As a story, *Lydia of the Pines* is obvious and sentimental enough. The style has small glamour of its own, nor have any of the characters except Lydia much more than a vivid surface plausibility. Of subtleties of introspection and brooding, or of a modern polyphony of emotional variations the book is quite free. What one responds to is the direct and homely idiom, the delicate and arresting unfolding of Lydia from girlhood and adolescence to the maturity of young American womanhood. Somehow Mrs. Willsie contrives to make an honestly American quality radiate from Lydia. All our embarrassed idealism and puzzled, inarticulate striving seem to find expression in her. Like Lake City, that grafted off the wretches on the Indian Reservation, we also are stirred by her, she belongs so essentially to America in her naïveté and pride and intelligence.

The Way of the Wind, by Eugenia Brooks Frothingham. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. \$1.40.

APPARENTLY one of the minor characters in *The Way of the Wind* is the spinster aunt, Miss Abigail, who lives behind Revolutionary window panes at the foot of Beacon Hill. Her only function does indeed seem to be that of providing temporary shelter for the heroine, her niece, but one soon perceives a more subtle significance. Her thin, sweet, naïvely platitudinous person is the very incarnation of the point of view from which the book is written. Miss Frothingham sees life through Aunt Abigail's window panes. In *The Way of the Wind*, Janet, over thirty, learns that Edgar, the brother of the woman she is visiting, is the family skeleton. Therefore she is surprised to find him a pathetically lovable creature of twenty-two. Yet Edgar really has a past. To be sure he does not himself speak of his "plunge into the dark

mystery of an underworld," but his sister has no such reticence. Bitterly she tells Janet that what killed their father was Edgar's final orgy in college, when he played poker from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning, and then appeared in chapel perceptibly under the influence of intoxicants. After that scene he did not even wait to be expelled. He plunged—Miss Frothingham positively refuses to say into what—but at any rate he returned, and now he is tremulously eager to be reformed and loved by Janet. After she has called him her foolish boy a great many times, and he has promised not to play tennis any more, because "it leads to other things," both love and reformation seem assured. And finally they are, of course, though there is an interval of nearly a hundred pages when an unfortunate accident named Mary precipitates Edgar back into his past again, and Janet is left to ponder over Aunt Abigail's maxim that "Life takes a long time to live."

The Rib of Man, a play by Charles Rann Kennedy. New York: Harper & Bros. \$1.30.

MR. KENNEDY is an apostle of general reform. He does not believe in delimiting the problems to be solved, nor even in attacking them one at a time. In *The Rib of Man* he has two purposes. One is to advocate the sublimation of sex and the other the abolition of war. By contrasting a sex-absorbed conventional woman with a sublimated unconventional one, he proves the first thesis. By letting an ex-aviator tell of his reaction to war atrocities and his subsequent conversion to pacifism, he proves the second. Had Mr. Kennedy not enlisted the aid of symbolism the simplicity of his program might perhaps have been quarreled with, but he envelops the issues in such allegorical vagueness that realistic standards are inapplicable. Anything may happen in a play in whose cast of characters one can find aliases like Basil Martin the aviator, *A Fowl of the Air*, Peter Prout the scientist, *The Subtle One*, Rosie Fleming, *The Rib* and Diana Brand, *The Spare Rib*. If Mr. Kennedy were more familiar with the American free-lunch counter, he would have hesitated to call his sublimated heroine the *Spare Rib*.

The Torchbearers of Bohemia, by V. I. Kryshanovskaya, translated by Juliet M. Soskice. New York: R. M. McBride & Co. \$1.40.

The information that *The Torchbearers of Bohemia* is the first translated work of a modern Russian author creates the hope that here is a historical novel that is psychological as well. This may not be a fair frame of mind in which to approach the book, but nevertheless it exists, and one resents its disappointment. *The Torchbearers of Bohemia* differs from the novels of Henryk Sienkiewicz only by greater condensation, a kinship that may be a distinction, but which fails to satisfy those whom modern Russian literature have trained to expect less of a surface treatment. The stage of this romance is set in fifteenth century Bohemia, and its description of the Czech struggle to win national and religious liberty from the Germans is fairly exciting; a conflict that has especial interest in these days of proposed Austro-Hungarian partition. Then it was John Hus in whom Czech nationalism centered, and it is his self-sacrificing personality which is etched most convincingly in *The Torchbearers of Bohemia*. Considered solely as a conventional historical novel, the book is vivid enough.