

Outlook Book Choice of the Month

Reviewed by Robert Cantwell

THE FIRST WORLD WAR: A PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD. Edited with an Introduction by Laurence Stallings. \$3.50. New York: Simon and Schuster. 320 pages.

THERE ARE five hundred and thirteen photographs in this book, chronologically arranged, and designed to build up a sense of the far reaches of the World War, of its immeasurable cost in terms of human suffering and material destruction, and of the appalling uselessness of war as an instrument for solving those problems which, we are so frequently told, make it inevitable. I imagine that there are now very few who would not agree with the general message conveyed by the photographs; few who would not agree that the World War created vastly more difficulties than it settled; that it led to the creation of means of slaughter more ingenious and more barbarous and more cruel than any man had previously imagined; that the years, while it raged, represented the lowest known point in man's recorded history; that the unknown millions who were sacrificed died, by a refinement of horror, most thoroughly in vain. Or, if there are some who cannot accept this view, "The First World War" should be forced under their eyes. It might not convince them. It would at least disturb their complacency.

It would disturb them in spite of the fact that the photographs as a whole by no means emphasize the physical horrors of the conflict, or dwell exclusively on the human suffering involved, as have several collections of war photographs in the past. On the contrary, such photographs are perhaps too infrequent in this volume, although, in general, those which are included are effectively placed. What Laurence Stallings and the staff that prepared the book have obviously tried has been to suggest, as completely as pictures can suggest, all the different sides of modern warfare: propaganda, mass excitement, diplomacy, training methods, revolution, mechanical warfare, strategy—and, of course, actual fighting, famine and death. The

photographs show the excitement of crowds on one page, and acres of dead men a few pages farther on; the concern of rulers and the drawn faces of starving individuals; the plans of generals and their consequences in terms of territory, shells and human flesh. There are pictures of factories and churches, and reproductions of cartoons and newspapers, as well as the more usual scenes of devastation on the battlefields; and there are a few ironic civilian glimpses, like the one showing a portly Englishman urging that aliens be imprisoned, which remind one forcibly that a sense of humor must be the first quality to be destroyed in war time.

From this point, after it is said that almost every photograph has some exceptional quality, and that none of them are familiar, a review of "The First World War" must become a simple enumeration of some of the more striking impressions it conveys. Laurence Stallings calls attention to a few of the outstanding photographs in his introduction, but there are dozens which stick in the memory like thorns, and which convince one again with the difficulty of communicating visual impressions with words. First, there is the dazed, expectant and almost child-like expression of the faces in the early crowd scenes. In a photograph of a column of Eton students, parading with rifles and top hats too large for them, the faces have a drugged, imbecilic appearance; there is not a spark of human curiosity, humor or cunning as far as the eye can reach.

In a group of French prisoners, the five most conspicuous faces reflect despair, defiance, vanity, suspicion and bewilderment with such unmingled emotion on each face that the picture serves as a kind of synthesis of all possible attitudes toward the War. A few pages further on there is a picture of a group of London policewomen running through the streets warning of a Zeppelin raid; to look at it is to imagine how drastically the normal courses of their lives were interrupted; they look as if they had stitches in their



sides, as if their feet hurt them. Then there is the sharp contrast between the first pictures of mass enthusiasm and the enthusiasm of an anti-conscription meeting in London, of a protest in Brooklyn, of the revolutionists in Petrograd and Berlin—these pictures suggest that for the mass of the people the war enthusiasm disappeared as fast as the casualty lists came in, and the expressions on the faces of the crowds reading the reports confirms such a view.

But this touches only a few pictures out of more than five hundred, and it is only isolating what is much more powerfully communicated by the photographs themselves. One point remains to be made, and that is that the meaning of individual pictures grows steadily the more the book is studied. I cannot summarize my own impressions of it, except to say that it now seems, making due allowances for the tendency of strong impressions to disappear, to be unforgettable.

Books and Reviews

This month's unbalanced reading list must surely begin with "Anthony Adverse," Hervey Allen's five pound romance, published by Farrar and Rinehart. It is something of a literary, critical, and commercial surprise, a novel of twelve hundred pages, laid in far places and remote times, and yet exciting a large body of readers, and setting the critics to falling all over each other's superlatives in praising it. Laid end to end, Anthony's adventures reach from Africa to Cuba and back to Paris. There are dozens of plots and enough characters to fill a good-sized village. There are several love stories (generally good) and a surplus of battles, journeys, intrigues, commercial dealings, speculative and philosophical interludes. The book is careful.
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Majorca Madness

THE CURRENT GOINGS-ON in Majorca, as reported by the daily press, remind us of a similar melodrama that was put on in Palma last summer. Incidentally, we are in a position to assure skeptical newspaper customers that these pleasing Majorcan wrangles are really on the level, and not just publicity stunts thought up by the Spanish Tourist Bureau to keep the Balearics before the American eye.

Three expatriates (one female, American; one male, American; one male, English) were seeing some friends off on the Barcelona boat. There was a goodly crowd around the gangplank, what with passengers, crew, hangers-around, police, gypsies and spies, and the see-ers-off became separated—the lady getting on board with the departing guests while the two men were delayed. When they tried to get on in their turn for the last farewells, they met with the obstacle one is always running into in Spain: the ubiquitous *Guardia Civil*. The Anglo-Saxons had mislaid their phrase-books, and they probably couldn't have found the appropriate sentiments anyway, so they just tried to push through. This is always a grave tactical error in dealings with the *Guardia*, even if they do wear tiny, black patent-leather tricorne hats and green suits; in this case, our heroes were neatly handcuffed and led with fitting ceremony to the nearest jail before they could say "*mañana*."

When the lady came back off the ship and learned what had happened, she was, naturally, much upset. She immediately went to the *Gran Café* to pull herself together and to take counsel. Then she moved on across the street for more condolences and advice. There was considerable variation of opinion concerning the best course to follow for the liberation of the prisoners, as well as to the location of

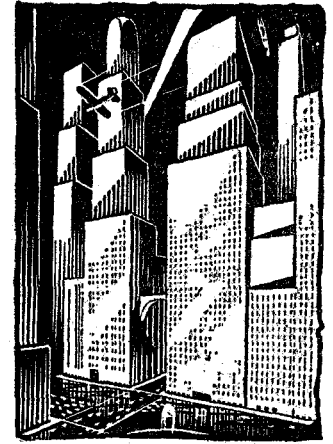
Talk of the Nation

the jail. After a great deal of telephoning and messenger-work it was found that the British Consul had left the island for a visit; that there never had been an American Consul; and that the *Gobernador* was in his palace after a hard day and couldn't be reached.

The prisoners were finally located and interviewed by a searching party of Americans. Like all good expatriates, they were fairly well acquainted with the interiors of Continental police-stations, and they behaved much more philosophically than their sympathizers. They even intimated that their cause might be served better if the relief squad returned to bed (by this time it was about two in the morning) and ceased their eloquent harangues to the puzzled jailers. So wine and cigarettes were obtained, exhortations to courage were distributed, the visitors left with reluctance, and the guards were finally able to get back to their cards.

Next day the foreign colony was humming with indignation. The journalistic group, as a man, decided to attend the hearing and show the magistrate that the great newspapers of the world would hear of the outrage.

At the police court that afternoon the two culprits were summarily discharged with a 25-peseta fine. The spokesman for the journalist arose in protest. What had these men done, he asked; it was intolerable that these free citizens be penalized for a grotesque blunder by the police. And so forth. It was a good speech. The magistrate asked who all these interested spectators were. When he was told they were gentlemen of the foreign press, he asked for their passports. As passports were just not being carried that summer in Palma, not one was forthcoming. In accordance with an obsolescent statute, therefore, the magistrate ordered a fine of one hundred pesetas to be paid by each reporter present.



The Unblemished Record

MR. FRANK MYERS, of Grand Rapids, Mich., writes to us submitting his name for the all-time unsuccessful job-hunters' championship. It is his proud boast that he has been trying to get a job almost continuously for twenty-nine years, ever since he came out of college with a Mining Engineering degree. Any kind of a job. So long as he got paid some fixed sum at stated intervals, it would be just what he wanted.

The nearest Mr. Myers ever got to regular gainful employment was when he applied for admission to the Army in 1918. He was accepted and ordered to report for duty on November 15. Any history expert will be able to compute for you that he was just four days too late.

The March of Education

FROM THE EXTENSION DIVISION of the New York State Colleges of Agriculture and Home Economics (in coöperation with the United States Department of Agriculture) comes a bulletin on hat-picking.

In language that is reminiscent of the beauty-specialists' most eloquent literature, the ladies of the Empire State are directed to "look critically at face and figure in a full-length mirror, both with and without the hat. If the face shows deep lines from nose to mouth, or even tiny sagging lines in the cheeks, close-fitting, up-turned models will be more becoming than those with wide, droopy brims, which repeat the drooping lines of the face. On the other hand, a round, plump face looks all the rounder and plumper in a snug turban which outlines the face. [Yum yum!] To repeat, in a hat, lines which appear in the face, generally accentuates the face lines. The rule holds for good lines as well as for bad ones..."