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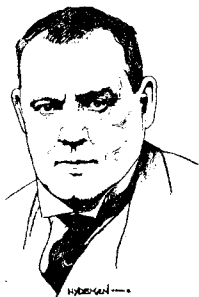
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Books of Special Interest

War—A Diagnosis

THE EVOLUTION OF WAR. A MARXIAN STUDY. By EMANUEL KANTER. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company. 1927. \$1.

CAUSES OF WAR AND THE NEW REVOLUTION. By TELL A. TURNER. Boston: Marshall Jones Company. 1927. \$2.

WAR—CAUSE AND CURE. (The Handbook Series). By JULIA E. JOHNSON. New York: H. W. Wilson Company. 1926. \$2.40.

STATESMANSHIP OR WAR? By JOHN MCAULEY PALMER, Brigadier-General, U. S. A., Retired. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company. 1927. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN BAKELESS

Author of "The Origin of the Next War"

WHEN one considers their importance and the length of time the human race has been suffering because of its failure to eliminate them, the causes of war have been singularly little studied. Indeed, if we except the writings of G. Lowes Dickinson, Oscar Crosby, and a few others, there have been practically no books of genuine importance on what is, after all, the chief problem of the twentieth century. Such an opinion neglects, of course, the all-too-plentiful maunderings of the professional pacifists; but as these are for the most part purely emotional efforts to deal with a problem that primarily demands intellectual solution, what else can one do but neglect them?

Nor do the three latest books on the causes of war offer very notable contributions to the literature of this neglected subject. The fiercest of the three is Emanuel Kanter's Marxian solution of the puzzle. It is all quite simple—Mr. Kanter turns you off a neat solution while you wait in precisely one hundred and twenty-three pages. War is due to Capitalism—with a big C, please; and it will be done away with by Communism—which requires an even bigger C and, if possible, red ink. A solemn, discursive little book, with abundant allusion to primitive practices, Homer, cannibalism, American Indians, and innumerable encyclopedia articles and books by other people. Prehistoric man's supposed habits, of course, offer convenient argument for almost anything, because nobody really knows much about them and our unfortunate ancestors are not here to defend themselves.

Savages and barbarians, according to Mr. Kanter, are on the whole peaceable and well-disposed—one wonders, how he knows—and rarely undertake military operations more ambitious than raids to secure captives for sacrifice or slaves. But you can't call that war. "The basis for the relative peacefulness of barbarians is found in the fact that private property in the means of production, as well as the division of society into warring classes, is nowhere fully developed." Later on in the process of social evolution, "the State and the private ownership of land usher in Civilization, the Society of War *par excellence*."

The last stage of all, which will assuredly end this sad eventful history, is Communism—"and in such a society," says trustful Mr. Kanter, "War and Revolution will have become a social anachronism." This will be news to the Chinese associates of Mr. Borodin, who have lately been giving an exceedingly practical demonstration of a somewhat different doctrine. It will also be news to the Polish soldiers who only a few years ago watched the Communist armies sweep almost to the gates of Warsaw, and who of late have anticipated the necessity of facing a war with the only organized Communist state!

The most important part of Mr. Tell A. Turner's "Causes of War"—and that is not very important—consists of "brief narratives of the principal wars from the Spanish Armada, 1588, to the Treaties of Locarno, 1925." His lists of the causes of each conflict would be valuable if he had the least idea of the distinction between fundamental and merely precipitating causes, or any conception of documentation. "Causes of War" is a well-meant, futile little book, which ends with a solemn prophecy of "the momentous revolution that is now pending." Let nobody, however, get excited and look under the bed for a Bolshevik. This revolution will be merely a "war to end war." Somehow, that phrase seems familiar.

Mr. Turner also observes that President Coolidge is neither a visionary nor an alarmist—which nobody can deny.

A refreshing contrast to this windy idealism, and by far the best of the three books, is Miss Julia E. Johnson's unpretentious and useful little compilation, "War—Cause and Cure," which is primarily intended as a guide to undergraduate debaters, but which is equally convenient for any one else interested in the subject. It brings together a mass of magazine articles, some of which, at least, are worth preserving; and it provides an extended bibliography of genuine value.

Brigadier-General Palmer's "Statesmanship or War" is a downright, soldierly book which deals neither in lofty generalizations nor in pious platitudes. General Palmer is concerned not with the causes of war but solely with the proper military policy for the defense of the United States, which he believes is to be found in a modification of the Swiss system of military training for every able-bodied male citizen. It is surprising to find a professional soldier advocating reduction of the Regular Army; but then, General Palmer is by no means an ordinary soldier.

He distinguishes between offensive and defensive armaments, pointing out that the former foster war, whereas the latter promote peace; but unhappily he fails to define his terms; nor does he adequately explain the obvious contradiction between his conception and the maxim that the best defense is an offensive. Presumably General Palmer would retort that the ocean barriers to east and west of the United States make an ordinary American armament defensive only, simply because there is no other country within reaching distance. But, in spite of the traditional good feeling, which will in all probability endure forever, Canada might not regard a great American army—even a citizen army—with equanimity; and Mexico certainly would not.

At any rate, General Palmer pins his faith to what Washington describes as a "respectably defensive posture,"—a phrase which the Father of his Country encloses in quotation marks,—which would enable the United States to defend its Continental possessions, Panama, and Hawaii, without threatening other nations. The Regular Army would then constitute simply an expeditionary force, large enough for emergencies, but too small to alarm other nations, and it would also provide a staff and other necessary organizations. But wherever possible, General Palmer would leave training in the hands of the citizen-officer, choosing him carefully and demanding a high standard of military attainment to avoid past disasters with militia.

Sane and well-informed as most of General Palmer's book is, it is a distinct shock to find him totally ignorant of the transformation which accepted views on responsibility for the World War have undergone in the last few years.

The fact that his views on world politics are out of date is incidental, however, and does not invalidate his extremely intelligent ideas of American military policy.

Russian Folk Lore

KRYLOV'S FABLES. Translated into English verse by Sir Bernard Pares. Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1927. \$5.

Reviewed by PITIRIM SOROKIN

WHAT la Fontaine is in French, Esop in Greek, or the "Pilgrim's Progress" in English, Krylov's Fables are in Russian. Published between 1809 and 1844, they at once became classical in Russian literature; passed into Russian proverbs; became a part of the Russian folklore; and are still as fresh and popular now as at the time of their publication. They are a concentrated expression of the wit, and humor, and common sense of the Russian nation. Like other classical fables, they are the most national in their character, and at the same time, quite cosmopolitan, equally comprehensible for all nations and for all age-groups.

Sir Bernard Pares's translation has now made them accessible for English readers, and especially for English children. The translation itself is a real masterpiece. Krylov's adequate translation into a foreign language is almost impossible. And yet, the translator has succeeded in expressing in English Krylov's style, idioms, metre; in brief, he gave in English the real Krylov's Fables. Only the talent of the translator, and twenty years of work over the translation can explain such an artistic achievement.

Pirandello Plays

"EACH IN HIS OWN WAY" AND TWO OTHER PLAYS. By LUIGI PIRANDELLO. Translated by ARTHUR LIVINGSTON. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1927. \$2.

Reviewed by CLEVELAND B. CHASE

IT is doubtful whether the publication of translations of three more of Pirandello's plays will add greatly to his reputation in this country. Not that the plays are not up to his standard—quite to the contrary. But they impress us anew with the fact that he is a dramatist with such an *idee fixe* that he seems to have reduced play writing to a formula. Each of his plays is only an attempt to pound in with new evidence his not so original conviction that all reality is fictitious, and that human beings don't act, or rather, react logically. To quote Mr. Livingston's prefatory note, "Stripping reality of the attributes that make it seem to us most real, reducing personality to a fleeting, changing moment, identifying illusion with reality and vice versa . . . Pirandello makes people over into something like ghosts . . . We experience a certain bewilderment, a certain tense strain, a 'torment of the spirit' . . . This mood . . . is the essence of his art."

Pirandello has taken a leaf from the humorists' manual, and has applied the *reductio ad absurdum* to logical theories about life. The resultant discrepancies, however, he takes with the utmost seriousness. Writers from the days of the Greeks to those of our own Will Rogers have remarked the contrary unwillingness of human beings to be logical. In "Candide" Voltaire sketched the subject with unsurpassed wit and penetration. But Pirandello must needs get upset about it. With Latin volubility he shakes us by the shoulders and shouts, "Look here! Things aren't what they seem!" To which it has ever been the custom of the world to reply, "But, of course, they never were."

His is an amusing point of view, but he varies the formula too little. His plays are nothing but comments on life, and his comment is essentially the same, whatever the immediate point under discussion. An intelligent person will get him the first or, at any rate, the second time. After that his repetition of the theme gets dull. And the unintelligent reader—or listener—won't ever discover what he is driving at, anyhow.

Of the three plays here translated, "Each in His Own Way," an example of Pirandello's method at its best, suggests the manner of the author's first Broadway success, "Six Characters in Search of an Author." If the latter may be said to be the drama of writing a play, the former is the drama of the presentation of a play. "The Pleasure of Honesty" is an involved affair which seeks vaguely and vainly for some working definition of honesty. "Naked," the last of the three, failed when it was produced in New York last autumn. It takes up the question of the wrong man does woman by idealizing her.

Ancient Towns

VANISHED CITIES OF NORTHERN AFRICA. By MRS. STEUART ERSKINE and MAJOR BENTON FLETCHER. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1927. \$6.

THIS is a book for the special reader rather than the general public. It is written for the student of antiquity and archaeology, for the reader who prefers his fire-side travel to be touched with the authenticity of historical data rather than the enthusiasm of a fired imagination. For a popular travel book, its minute searchings make for monotonous reading. It suffers too much from the dust of class room style and has not enough of the burning, picturesque sands of the desert. On the other hand, for those who would like nothing better than to go with pick and shovel along the northern strip of the Dark Continent, eyes ever on the alert for footprints of those Roman conquerors whose lives are so inextricably bound up with the misfortunes of the ancient cities of the North African coast, there is much interesting information presented in a straightforward and orderly manner. The book abounds in dates, names of battles, and famous Roman, Carthaginian, and Arab soldiers. In addition one will find a veritable catalogue of museums and ruins where may be examined everything of importance bearing upon the heyday of the vanished cities of Northern Africa.

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A London Letter

By LOUIS UNTERMEYER

COMING back to London after a year's absence I find it is no longer considered good form to talk about literature. The more determinedly intelligent among the intelligentsia are several leaps ahead of Gilbert Seldes and his "Seven Lively Arts." Even the latest of light arts, far from being lively, is appraised (if considered at all) in terms of the lugubrious. "Technique" is something applied to a "system" at roulette; "form" concerns a cricket match; "style" is mere "shop" and, hence, taboo. This, of course, is only relatively true; contrariwise, the publishers' announcements have seldom been so bright and (as one of them confided to me) so "American" in tone. Moreover, it was pleasant to arrive in the midst of a controversy—two of them in fact.

The first of these was provoked by the annual H. G. Wells novel and centres about H. G. in general. Once more, he has introduced "real characters" in what the critics variously judge to be a work of fiction, a piece of polemics, a diary of oddments, an essay in education, and a system of philosophy. Meanwhile, Ernest Benn, Ltd., has forced a reconsideration of the newest and the earliest Wells by accomplishing a minor miracle in book-manufacture. "The Short Stories of H. G. Wells" is a volume of more than eleven hundred pages; it contains sixty-three tales (some of them as long as "The Time Machine"); it is not only carefully but decoratively printed; and it sells for seven shillings, sixpence! The collection, *per se*, is of first importance—especially for even the sketchiest estimate of Wells. Considered only as a prophet of the material world, this volume establishes him. It is true that the theory of time as a fourth dimension did not originate with him, but the central *motif* of "The Time Machine" brings the reader closer to Einstein than all the subsequent interpreters. The tanks, those armored behemoths, first startled an incredible world during the Great War, but "The Land Ironclads" was first published in 1903. Yet it is not as either prophet or politician that Wells bids fair to survive, but as teller of some of the most extraordinary fairy tales that ever delighted adults. Rarely have fantasy and horror been so delicately combined as in "The Valley of Spiders" or "Pollock and the Porrah Man" or "Jimmy Goggles the God" or "The Plattner Story." But—and here the young and quite forgotten romancer will prove to be a Wells of purest fancy undeffiled to this generation—"The Door in the Wall," "The Magic Shop," "The Country of the Blind" (possibly the finest short story in the language) reveal, what so few of his critics have acknowledged, the instinctive lover of beauty. Countless essays (and at least four books) have been written about Wells the Educator, Wells the Agitator, Wells the Bourgeois Realist, Wells the Historian, Wells the This, That, and the Other. But I do not recall any examination—and this collection will be sure to force one—of Wells the Poet.

Poetry furnished the setting for the other controversy and Humbert Wolfe was its centre. Wolfe had already published some half-dozen volumes which critics had definitely praised and readers had, even more definitely, refused to read. "Kensington Gardens," for example, was the sort of volume that, unlike Barrie or Milne, should have appealed to the admirers of both. The public, however, would have little or none of it. Whereupon, after two more volumes which made even less impression, Wolfe issued his most difficult and ambitious work, "Requiem," sombre in tone with a structure as involved as a fugue. And "Requiem" promptly went into its sixth printing. This success had little to do with the merits of Wolfe's poetry *qua* poetry and much with the curious reception encountered by the latest volume. The first few reviews hailed "Requiem" with unstinted extravagance and its author as "the greatest living poet." Roused by these superlatives, the opposition denounced Wolfe's rhetoric, his symbolism, his choice of subjects, his "suspended rhymes," his editing of the new series of the Augustan (or Sixpenny) Poets, everything in short except Wolfe's conduct in the Ministry of Labor.

The issue was joined with less and less critical judgment; it reached comic proportions when Hugh M'Diarmid (in *The New Age*) accused J. Middleton Murry of having used his (M'Diarmid's)

points of attack as the base of his (Murry's) animadversions in *The Scots Observer*. Whereupon Murry replied by printing in the first issue of his own reorganized quarterly, *The New Adelphi*, the only detached and dispassionate critique of Wolfe that has appeared in England. (The review incidentally was the work of an American, Robert Hillyer.)

Meanwhile, Wolfe's publishers have not allowed their presses (or Wolfe) to remain idle. Wolfe's "Others Abide," two hundred rhymed epigrams from the Greek Anthology, has just been issued and has already been praised by James Stephens; twelve of his new Sixpenny Poets (including Donne and Edward Lear) will make their debut before the end of the year; and as a final exhibit of versatility this indefatigable poet has in preparation a set of metrical stories and satires for children to be called "Cursory Rhymes."

Another disproof of the often-encountered "Poetry doesn't sell" has been vouchsafed by Faber and Gwyer with their Ariel Poems. This series consists of a number of three page booklets (nine of them to date) each of which contains one hitherto unpublished short poem, a colored illustration, and a cover by some well-known artist. The series began with Hardy's "Yuletide in a Younger World" with two drawings by Albert Rutherston, and now includes T. S. Eliot's most recent "Journey of the Magi" (in tone curiously like MacLeish's "Bleheris") and Aiken's later monologues, with drawings by McKnight Kauffer, Chesterton's "Gloria in Profundis," De la Mare's "Alone," and Sassoon's "Nativity." The illustrated pamphlets are extremely decorative and since they cost only a shilling, will probably be used instead of broadsides and Christmas cards.

Hardy continues to defy time and criticism. His "Yuletide in a Younger World" is not merely the best of the poems in the Ariel series, but the freshest. And Hardy is eighty-seven. No wonder there are so few "new" poets. What's the use, the discomfited beginners must cry, when "the grand old man" continues to write younger (and, incidentally, more experimental) verse than the youngest of the newcomers. If Hardy should live to be ninety, his octogenarian work will, in all likelihood prove to be his finest poetry. If he survives his hundredth birthday, the anthologies of the period will contain nothing but selections from Thomas Hardy.

To sound the other extreme, a casual mention of the fact that I was still engaged on a collection of the World's Worst Poetry has brought me countless specimens of the Victorian era. Unfortunately, most of these are assigned to "Anonymous" and, since the work is to be an eminently scholarly one, the sources must be "fixed." Possibly some reader has definite information concerning two glorious but, alas, severed couplets. The first is supposed to have been the climax of a broadside circulated upon the death of Queen Victoria. It runs:

*Dust to dust and ashes to ashes:
Into her tomb the great Queen dashes.*

And this, my informant assured me, was from one of the bucolic idylls by Alfred Austin, once Poet Laureate, but I have been unable to track down the memorable lines:

*Spring has come; the Winter is over:
The cuckoo flower gets mauver and mauver.*

Other things than poetry are making this autumn lively for writers and readers. One hears, on every hand, of Tomlinson's "Gallions Reach," Susan Ertz's "Now East, Now West" (not to be confused with Felix Riesenbergs novel of New York), "Greenlow," by Romer Wilson, J. Middleton Murry's reorganized quarterly, *The New Adelphi*, the forthcoming "Are They the Same at Home?" by the audacious Beverley Nichols. For this reader, however, the fall lists were even more distinguished by the "Collected Poems 1914-1926," of Robert Graves, "Rustic Elegies," by Edith Sitwell, "A Survey of Modernist Poetry," a collaboration by Laura Riding (once Gottschalk) and Robert Graves, the popular reprint of "Selected Poems," by James Elroy Flecker, and A. E. Coppard's exquisitely made "Pelagea." But of these the American publishers will undoubtedly have more to say.

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