

# The Saturday Review

## of LITERATURE

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY



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TWO PICTURES FROM "BRAZILIAN ADVENTURE"  
The expedition on the Tapirapé River; inset, four of the explorers, the author second from left.

### In the Wilderness of South America

**BRAZILIAN ADVENTURE.** By Peter Fleming. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1934. \$2.75.

Reviewed by JULIAN DUGUID

WHEN it comes to recounting his adventures, the writer who goes exploring is in a far more ticklish position than the explorer who merely goes writing. If he be craftsman enough to select his incidents, the arm-chair geographer will grumble. On the other hand, if he omit nothing, he becomes quite easily unreadable. Pundit or public: which shall he offend? It is a hard choice.

Mr. Peter Fleming, the latest amateur explorer of Brazil, is more than a writer. He is an editor; and he has nearly succeeded in a compromise. His book is well-written and lively; supremely truthful. Yet the result is disappointing. His habit of laughing uproariously at every triviality has the effect of making the narrative seem one hundred pages too long. This is a pity; as is his repeated and priggish assertion that most travellers are less scrupulous than himself. In his anxiety to debunk exploration he has shot to the other extreme, denying himself even the simple emotions. After all, a novice who is honest with himself must surely feel some wonder and alarm when dropped for the first time in the Brazilian wilderness.

This weakness of Mr. Fleming for nervously insisting that none shall mistake him for a Western hero (what have the pulps to do with exploration anyway?) has spoilt an otherwise good book. Nevertheless he deserves our thanks. He is the first man to tabulate the known data and probable fate of that interesting legend, Colonel Fawcett. He has said straight out what I told him before he left for Brazil, that those who know believe it to be a million to one chance against Fawcett being alive. If he is not dead he has certainly lost all memory. Nevertheless, the fact that Mr. Fleming knew this before he started does not diminish the courage with which he faced the wilds. For, in spite of his refusal to appear anything but a weekender, he was in some very tight places.

Will he forgive me for suggesting that

(Continued on page 394)

### Sib to De Quincey

**JACK ROBINSON.** By George Beaton. New York: The Viking Press. 1934. \$2.50.

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

THIS is subtitled "A Picaresque Novel" and in its freshness and vigor it has much in common with the famous eighteenth century stories of vagabondage. But in its psychological comments, often of startling though rather intentional beauty, it is definitely of our own time. It is the story of a fifteen year old boy who runs away from home (in the West of England) intending to go to sea. He falls in with beggars, grifters, ponces (a ponce, apparently, is what is known hereabouts as a nance), drabs, and trulls of all sorts. He lives in a thieves' kitchen in Bristol and is trained in the arts of cadging and street patter. He rambles through the country with Kelly the vagabond theosophist—a "lay wanderer" Kelly calls himself; the antics of this cunning simpleton are among the best humors of the tale. "The New Jerusalem," a rural hospice kept for vagrants by an eccentric Colonel Harrison, is well worth a visit. "The New Jerusalem," says its notice-board, "contains beef, beer, tobacco, female society and everything necessary for a cheerful, happy existence." There is an enchanting love episode in a snowbound country cottage, and some excellent scenes of low life in

(Continued on page 393)

### Tollhouse

By DAVID MCCORD

THIS is the way:  
I know not where it goeth,  
But that a man must pay  
Whatso he oweth,  
And this I say  
As sure as the stream outfloweth  
And the wind outbloweth.

For gold and silver gone  
His tribute taketh  
More than a body's brawn,  
Than the blood maketh:  
Yet he shall go on  
Till the heart breaketh  
Or life him forsaketh.

## New Wars or Old?

BY LIDDELL HART

CONSIDERABLE attention has been attracted—by skilful publicity—to a book entitled "What Would Be the Character of a New War?"\* It is a collection, arranged by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, of the views of eighteen writers. Quantity, however, is not a guarantee of quality. Nor does it tend to clarity.

There is much of value in the book, yet, if I may judge by my own impression, it will leave even the student of war with a sense of confusion. As for the general reader, I wonder whether he will derive more than a deepened conviction that the next war is going to be "a dreadful business."

Several of the more specialized essays which come later in the book array facts that will be of service to the private student and the public speaker. But of those which paint the broad canvas of war there is only one, that by General Fuller on "The Mechanization of Warfare," which seems to me adequate to its theme in presentation and scope. The others suffer from the technician's fault of missing the wood for the trees.

Yet it is these, rather than Fuller's brilliant and historically based forecast, which have a present-day significance. For they represent the type of mind that is likely to direct the strategy of another war, if it comes within the next decade.

Thus for General Réquin, an eminent French authority, the development of machine-power does not affect the need of man-power—"it is . . . useless to pretend that a future war can be conducted with reduced effectiveness." He recognizes both the difficulty of destroying the enemy's armed forces "by reason of their number," and the possibility of destroying the "principal elements of strength . . . such as his factories, his railway stations, his electric plants." Nevertheless General Réquin is persuaded that "the general military character of a future war would largely resemble that which the war of 1914-1918 assumed in its last phase."

It follows from this theory that more comprehensive efforts than ever are to be taken, and are being taken, to organize the nations for war—to prepare plans by which both people and industry can be mobilized for military service. Compared with these efforts, the sale of armament material by private firms is, at the worst, but an aggravation of an organic disease. This lies in the notion of the "Nation in Arms" which, developed so powerfully between 1870 and 1914, is today being pressed to a higher pitch—of absurdity.

This *reductio ad absurdum*, in which may lie the salvation of the peoples, is due more to the myopia of authority than to the ignorance of the lay public, which at least has a half glimpse of the truth. For the popular idea is that, if another war comes, it will be waged mainly in and by the air; that it will begin with the launching of vast aerial armadas against the enemy's cities.

The military idea is different. And as the military authorities control the instruments of war, it is their idea which matters, at any rate in the opening stages of another war. It will prevail in their own

countries, even if it does not prevail over the enemy.

So far as one can gauge the thought of General Staffs of Europe they picture another war in terms of the last—as beginning more or less where the last left off, with the important difference that they have less of modern equipment. They are still in the grip of that theory of *mass*, a monstrous fallacy, which was the offspring of the French Revolution by Napoleon. It dominated military thought during the century between Waterloo and the World War, and was largely responsible for the strategic abortiveness of that war, with its ruinous effects.

In "The Ghost of Napoleon" I have recently traced the origin and distorted growth of this theory, which so strangely coincided with a period of intense mechanical and scientific progress. Now, from another angle, yet converging to the same conclusion, comes "Peace and War," by the famous historian, Guglielmo Ferrero. I have not read for years a book that has impressed me so much. He steers a middle course between "the philosophical lyricism of the nineteenth century" which "exalted war as a dazzling glorification of the divine," and the emotional objection to force which becomes a negation of government.

Ferrero points out that "between these two extremes lies a moderate doctrine which belongs to the eighteenth century. It is that there is no law and no judge between States; when two States assert competing rights and neither will give way, there is no other law and no other judge than arms." Again, realism must recognize the fact that there are other issues far beyond the present power of reason to settle, as when "a system incrustated with conventions stifles and fetters the new forces that might regenerate it."

The eighteenth century mind, essentially realistic, evolved a method of reconciling force with reason so far as possible—by limited warfare.

Its complicated and cunning rules, which it is so hard for us to understand

## This Week

A NEST OF SIMPLE FOLK

By SEAN O'FAOLAIN

Reviewed by Kimball Flaccus

AT 33

By EVA LE GALLIENNE

Reviewed by Margaret Breuning

MEN AGAINST THE SEA

By CHARLES NORDHOFF and JAMES NORMAN HALL

Reviewed by Oliver La Farge

L'AFFAIRE JONES

By HILLEL BERNSTEIN

Reviewed by Theodore Purdy, Jr.

PASSIONS SPIN THE PLOT

By VARDIS FISHER

Reviewed by William Rose Benét

THE BOWLING GREEN

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

## Next Week or Later

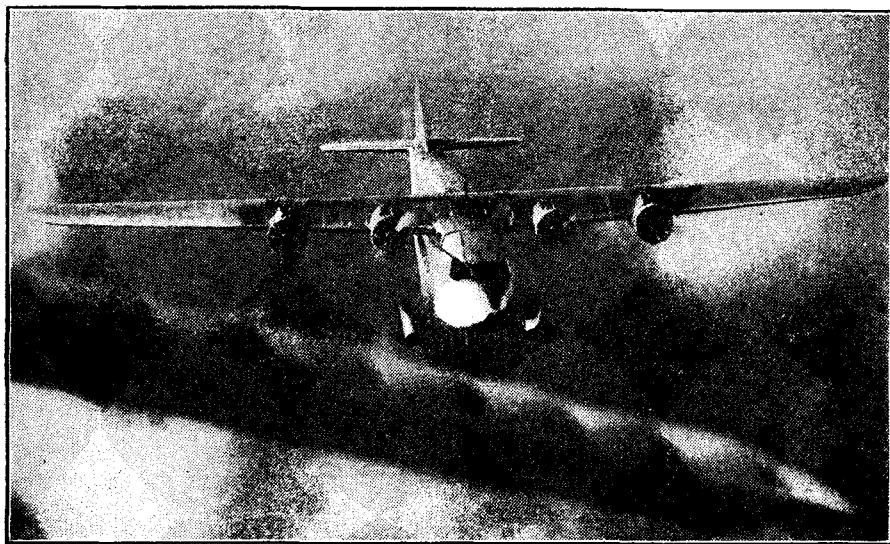
THE MOTHER

By PEARL S. BUCK

Reviewed by Florence Ayscough

\*WHAT WOULD BE THE CHARACTER OF A NEW WAR? By Eighteen of the World's Greatest Experts. New York: Harrison Smith & Robert Haas. 1933. \$2.50. Reviewed September 23, 1933.





MILITARY AVIATION: A POST-WAR BRITISH PLANE

today, form one of those peaks of human evolution which man painfully attains from time to time. . . to slide back once more into imperfection. They are the elaborate corrective, discovered after three centuries of toil, to the great but dangerous invention of firearms.

"Marshal Saxe's warfare without battle is one of the noblest visions of the human mind."

By contrast, twentieth century "Europe is in a state of chaos, because she waged war regardless of these two categorical imperatives—proportion between aim and sacrifice, and a minimum of bloodshed and destruction." Ferrero's historical conclusions are reinforced by another able analysis, "Can We Limit War?" by Hoffman Nickerson. Its particular value is that it brings out, if perhaps a shade too prominently, the part played by so-called democracy in thwarting the rational limitation of war. It is refreshing to come upon such profound studies after the emotional or technical superficiality of most modern books devoted to the propagation of peace. Like Lord Raglan's anthropological "Science of Peace," and Edward Glover's psychological "War, Sadism, and Pacifism,"

scheme of research which might produce an interim report at the end of fifty years! Nickerson seems to pin his faith to a revival of spiritual unity such as existed, however imperfectly, under the medieval Papacy. If we survey the world as a whole, this seems as remote a hope as Glover's. Ferrero suggests a Four-Power agreement between England, Germany, France, and the United States, to act as guarantors of peace. There would seem quite as much chance, indeed more chance, of achieving the plan for which Lord Davies argued so well in "The Problem of the Twentieth Century"—that of the nations surrendering some measure of their sovereignty to an international tribunal armed with an international police force.

I find that thoughtful minds are moving, under pressure of gathering danger, more and more towards this plan as the means of preserving peace. But thought is such a light weight compared with instincts and "interests" that realism must admit the odds against the growth of such consent catching up with the growth of the war menace.

Yet, even if war comes soon, there may be more chance of civilization surviving the shock than either the scientific or the sentimental pacifist imagines. My reason for this opinion lies in the combination of a factor—the air power—which Nickerson rather underrates, with a factor—mass—that he, like Ferrero, justly points to as the source of past evil. The persistence of this dangerous factor may counterbalance the growth of the other—and become, ironically, a means of salvation, or at least give civilization a second chance. I will point out why.

Despite the hard lessons of 1914-1918 the theory of mass still holds sway over military minds. The bulk of the armed forces consists of infantry, and with astounding optimism these hordes of infantry are still being trained to advance against machines—and machine guns. Yet the fallacy of the theory of mass was exposed a generation ago by the mechanical progress which made one man sitting behind a machine

gun the superior of a hundred, or even a thousand, who were advancing against him on foot with rifle and bayonet.

Machine guns of every kind have multiplied everywhere since the last war—increasing the already overwhelming advantage of the defensive on land. In contrast, artillery has decreased in proportion. That perhaps matters little, for at its utmost the gun was an inefficient and uneconomic machine-gun destroyer. More significant, although tanks have greatly improved in design, they are relatively few in comparison with the masses of infantry in all armies.

It is thus a safe calculation that the advance of such armies would be foredoomed

a continuous barrier across which they could only sit and glare at each other. The sanction of mustard gas by the League of Nations might well prove a most effective way of disarming the existing armies of all nations!

But if these armies, even without mustard gas, are little danger to each other—in a realistic calculation—they may well be a danger to themselves. The larger they are, the easier they will be to paralyze by air attack on their assembly positions and routes, on their road and rail communications, on their supply and munition centres.

Thus it is doubtful whether the armies would ever come to the point of sighting each other; whether they would ever come within reach of the battlefield.

When we consider the intricate mobilization arrangements of a modern "horde army," with all its interlocking cogs, we should be able to realize the ease with which it can be thrown out of gear—before it has begun to move. Even if we allow for the customary misuse of any new weapon, and also make a heavy discount from the claims made for the accuracy of air bombing, it remains difficult to see how an army of one or two million men on foot could get under way and make a time-table advance like that of the Germans in 1914.

For the air forces will be ready to strike in the first hour of the war, while the armies require a week or two to mobilize and concentrate. The greater the tendency of the military authorities to confine the new air weapon to military uses, the more

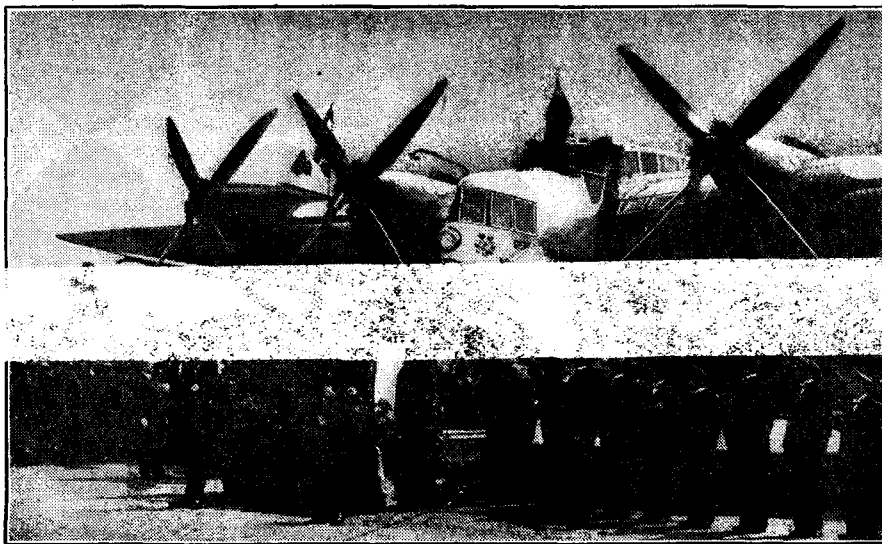
tate a state of rapid congestion, hopeless to relieve. The overburdened arteries will give a multiplied effect to the enemy's air attacks in producing a paralytic stroke. And the effects may put an unbearable strain on the bonds of discipline. One can picture swarms of starving soldiery pouring over a countryside—their own countryside—which otherwise might have been able to live on its own local supplies until the flow of traffic was restored.

In such opening conditions of future warfare the only type of military force that might be able to operate at all would be small mechanized forces. Their most potent action will be to supplement their own air force in interrupting the enemy's "circulation." And they in turn may be supplemented by motor guerillas—hastily equipped from the "pool" of motor vehicles now available in every town and village. While local fuel supplies last, such motor guerillas may have ample scope for raids that will accelerate the general paralysis (of the insane).

The "rationalization" of industry, the increasing centralization of water, light, heat, and power supplies, all tend to make dislocation easier and paralysis more sure. Within a few days of the outbreak of war the warring nations may be in the grip of a general strike far more complete than the most belligerent trade unionists have ever conceived—a super-general strike of unintended production.

The effects may not be wholly ill. By paralyzing action they may give a chance for passions to cool, and for folly to be realized. If so, the restoration of peace might be purchased more cheaply by this swift internal breakdown than by the exhaustion of a four years' war of attrition like the last.

Naturally, the effects as between belligerents may vary. The nation with the largest air force has an evident advantage. Yet the value of mere quantity is as apt to be overestimated in the air as on land. Technical efficiency counts for more than numbers. Much, too, will depend on in-

MILITARY AVIATION IN GERMANY  
Goering dedicates a new Junkers plane, the Hindenburg

to failure. They would reach stalemate even sooner than in 1914. When the advancing hosts made contact with each other they would be driven to entrench as the alternative to suicide, and would become embedded in the ground.

The possibility that gas may be used tends to strengthen rather than weaken this conclusion—unless we go contrary to the general verdict of chemists and assume the discovery of some essentially new form of gas that will penetrate present gas masks. Otherwise, the defender has the advantage over the attacker when gas is employed, because of the superior ease of protecting troops who are stationary.

This is particularly true of mustard gas, the least lethal yet most potent type yet used. It can be spread over large tracts of country to form an invisible and long-lasting barrier. To be secure against it an infantryman must wear not merely a gas mask, but a complete diver's suit, in which he could not move—unless in a mechanized vehicle. And one man who, passing through a contaminated area, gets a smear on his hands or clothing, may "infect" many others before he even knows that he is affected. Mustard gas has the physical and also the moral—the demoralizing—attributes of an epidemic disease.

Most significantly, it tends to strengthen the already strong defence rather than the attack. Because of its powers of delaying a hostile advance, it is not unlikely that each side would use it to cover one part of their front, with the idea of concentrating their forces for an offensive on the other part. And thus the farcical situation might be produced of both contributing to create

probable becomes the paralysis of the armies and the premature decease of the military plans. While, if a wider outlook prevails and the air attack is directed at "basic" targets—munition factories, power centres, ports, aerodromes—the power to make war may be crippled at its source.

We still talk of the last war as "the Great War." Our sons may refer to the next war as "the Great Chaos."

The larger the armies that are mobilized the more they will contribute to that chaos. The concentration of forces, according to accepted military principles, will precipi-

ties would tend to maintain the biggest armies, and, consequently, the biggest armament establishments. That fact makes them more susceptible to paralysis. In the air the offensive is as superior to the defensive as it is inferior on land. The weaker side has not only the motive but the opportunity of evading battle in the air, and striking direct at its ground targets. And the very weakness of one country in comparison with another may, if not too pronounced, retrieve the balance of strength—by reducing the target open to the enemy.

If I saw a nation deliberately cutting down its army—its infantry hordes—while developing its air force, I should become more concerned than today as to the possibilities of successful aggression. For in that case an aggressor might have a prospect of procuring his opponent's paralysis while preserving his own immunity.

Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, the outstanding military critic and historian of England, is military correspondent of The Daily Telegraph and military editor of the "Encyclopædia Britannica."

MILITARY AVIATION IN THE UNITED STATES  
A new bimotor bombing plane, near Mount Rainier