the war; let us patiently examine how war-experience can be communicated. The novel gives the greatest opportunity for selecting and arranging episodes of universal meaning; of novels, we shall see Remarque's, and Tomlinson's, and Sassoon's continuation of the "Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man"—no two presenting the same aspect, but all of the first rank. Apart from novels, what else? There might be documents. I am not aware that documents have been collected from the troops, to any extent; yet it is worth seeing what documents can tell. Here is one, on tiredness in war:

> The tiredness is not physical, not worky-worky tiredness. One does little continuous work. A steady struggle with bodily spasms is enormously telling, and the little more than humanly possible, done at intervals, is what kills. It is galloping consumption through extreme nervous agitation. It is a roaring wasting sickness.
>
> The stages of tiredness are these:
>
> 1. Fear (sudden). Terror, or a confused anger.
> 2. Extreme nervous riot and self-discipline.
> 3. Fear (steady except for crevasses where sudden sobs may occur).
> 4. Shuddering and quaking of the muscles of the jaw and the thighs.
> 5. Collapse and languor in the biceps and the legs. I think, though I can't swear to it, there is a flux from debility. One sits down, or maybe vomits, and feels all over filthy.
> 6. The stomach yawns and then nausea and cold shivers.
> 7. Equilibrium supervenes, the body greatly weakened but submissive to the will and the absolute necessity of further exhaustion, seen as without end.
> 8. Automatic movement, stupor and loss of a sense of landscape. Sight is wooden and short. This lasts a long time. Constipation.
> 9. The eyes gape. They look like fishes'. The mind is rolled up like a hedgehog. One goes where one is told.
> 10. Sits down. Despairs and is killed or taken prisoner or neither. It is all the same then.
>
> At all stages after 1, two and two make four. At all stages up to 10 (excluding this) I believe immediate danger is capable of arousing enormous energies.
>
> At all stages excepting 6 (I believe one is very near death at this point; but it ends as I say in a sudden shiver, the back of the mouth full of spittle, and it is over with a kind of choked snort) and 10, extreme self-sacrifice is always possible to some, general heroism to many less.
>
> This is a purely personal self-analysis. Food of course must be little or none; sleep little or none. Opportunities

That is one form of communication. In this instance it transcends the "purely personal." Thoughtful men, without experience of war, may recognize parts of it. But such ability to analyze is extremely rare. A document like this might release another; a collection might be formed; but I am not aware of one.

Less dangerously difficult than novels or documents is the intermediate personal narrative or journal form of writing. Like any other form of writing this may or may not be a work of art; it will be, if it communicates experience by selection of significant detail, of detail which is invested with universal meaning; if there is "balance of truth in observing, with the imaginative faculty in modifying, the objects observed; and above all the gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world around forms, incidents, and situations, of which, for the common view, custom has dimmed all lustre." The form of the journal is not necessarily exacting, but the gift of grace is always rare, and it may never be out of season to point to authentic examples. An instance from November 9, 1918:

> Even my bookshelves seem strange to-night. They look remarkably like a library I saw once in a house in Richbourg S. Vaast, which, you may remember, was a village near Neuve Chapelle. Those French volumes also survived from circumstances that had past. They were litter. They had been left behind. I doubted whether, if I tried, I could touch them. They were not within my time. That was on a day more than three years ago—it was July, 1915—and Richbourg then had just left this world. There was a road without a sign of life; not a movement, except in one house. The front of that house had gone, exposing the hollow inside, the collapsed floors and hanging beams, and showing also a doll with a foolish smirk caught in a wire and dangling from a rafter. The doll danced in hysteric merriment whenever hidden guns were fired. That was the only movement in Richbourg S. Vaast, and the guns made the only sound. I was a survivor from the past, venturing at peril among the wreckage and hardly remembered relics of what used to be familiar. Richbourg was possessed by the power which had overwhelmed it, and which was reforming it in a changing world. To what was the world changing? There was no clue, except the oppression of my mind, the shock of the guns, and the ecstatic mockery of mirth over ruin by that little idiot doll.
>
> Beyond the sloughing and leprous tower of Richbourg Church, where the ancient dead in the graveyard had been brought to light again, there was a house which seemed in being. I entered it, for I was told by a soldier companion that from a displaced tile in its roof I might see La Bassée. I looked through that gap, and saw La Bassée. It was very near. It was a terra-cotta smudge. It might have been a brickfield. But it was the Enemy.
>
> What I chiefly remember to-day is only the floor of that upper room from which, through a gap in its wall, I saw the ambush of the enemy. On the floor were scattered, mixed with lumps of plaster, a child's alphabetical blocks. A shoe of the child was among them. There was a window where we dared not show ourselves, though the day was fair without, and by it was an old bureau, open, with its pad of blotting-paper, and some letters, all smothered with fragments of glass and new dust. A few drawers of the desk were open, and the contents had been spilled. Round the walls of the room were bookcases with leaded diamond panes. Whoever was last in the room had left sections of the bookcase open, and there were gaps in the rows of books. Volumes had been taken out, had been dropped on the floor, put on the mantelpiece, or, as I had noticed when coming up to the room, left on the stairs. One volume, still open face upwards, was on the bureau.
>
> I barely glanced at those books. What could they tell me? What did they know about it? Just as they were, open on the floor, tumbled on the stairs, they were telling me all they could. Was there more to be said? Sitting on a bracket in the shadow of a corner, a little bust of Rousseau overlooked the scene with me. In such a place, at such a time, you must make your own interpretation of the change, receiving out of the silence, which is not altered in nature by occasional abominable noises, just whatever you wish to take. There the books are, and the dust on them is of an era which abruptly fell; is still falling.

Rare indeed is the richness, the working under full compression, the mastery of directing feeling, of Tomlinson. A journal of such impressions might, as a whole, be unshaped; it would in any case last as a string of clouded rubies; the powerful communication takes place locally.

It is in this form, dominated, so far, in English war books, by Tomlinson (who speaks not as a soldier, but as a mature observer of the earlier years of the war), that Blunden shapes his memories, recapturing the feeling of an officer in the infantry up to 1917; an officer who was scarcely more than a boy,—he came of age the year the journal stops. We follow him to France in 1915; our initiation is his own:

> no news came. At last a small straggling group of those unfortunate selected soldiers blundered dazedly round the trench corner into Port Arthur, and lay down in the first shelter available, among them Sergeant Compton, a brave and brilliant young fellow. All too eagerly I asked him, as I brought out to the sweating and twitching wretches whatever refreshment my dugout held, "What things were like"; in a great and angry groan he broke out, "Don't ask me—it's terrible, O God—" Then, after a moment, talking loud and fast: "We were in the third line. I came to a traverse, got out of the trench, and peeped; there was a Fritz creeping round the next traverse. I threw a bomb in; it hit the trench side and rolled just under his head; he looked down to see what it was . . ." He presently said that the attack had failed.

There are, throughout, unforgettable scenes. So far as possible his memory avoids what was shambling and ugly, the extremes of horror and obscenity. He does his best to keep his eye for courage and devotion, as in the midst of the riot at Dombarton Lakes. The lakes were "a swamp with a dry crust of a surface, and tree stubs here and there offering substantial foothold. Already there was a marked track across, and shells were thundering and smoking along it . . . we looked silently at one another, and went. We immediately passed two men just killed, the sweat on their faces, and with shouts of uncontrol we leaped for life through the shelling and the swamps. . . . Beyond, one of my signallers whom I had not seen lately approached us, and showed the inimitable superiority of man to fate by speaking, even then and there, of the German artillery's brilliance. 'Never did see such shelling,' he said. It was exactly as if he had been talking of a fast bowler, or art for art's sake. . . ." Where what he tells is sickening, a sentimental reader might think him callous; but in reality, in his effort for detachment there is a tenderness more deep and painful than any superficial gush of sentiment. Though younger than R. H. Mottram, he represents, and seems to me to represent even more adequately, what is spiritually the same generation; not the last generation of all (for there were, spiritually, several generations in the war) which seems to me still more pitifully burnt out, and which, if it is to find expression (I should say one representative in England was Wilfred Owen; others, now living, are Herbert Read and T. E. Shaw, once Colonel Lawrence; and in Germany, Remarque) must speak in a manner still more searing.

Blunden was obviously an admirable man at the front; one more example that enduring courage is a matter not of physique but of spirit. He is at his best in describing action. Behind the lines one is conscious of personality, of his being somebody not oneself. The particular books he carries with him, the particular affection for place-names and localities, the "harmless shepherd" touches, are not always expanded into things of universal significance, as are the details in the extraordinary passage quoted from Tomlinson. I wish to be quite clear that this is not dispraise on any low plane. Blunden is a very gifted writer. If one cannot quite match the very best moments of Tomlinson or Sassoon, it is nevertheless not such a bad life if one comes near them. It is, in a way, the coming near them which is disturbing. Behind the lines with Blunden there is much that is allusive, mainly to be relished by the caste of writing men, and by comrades, friends of Blunden, in his own army. The prose behind the lines might not translate with ease; not all of it might carry into another climate or another time. But there is no dissociation when he writes of action. There we are carried with him, and see what he sees, feel what he feels, without intervention. That is a great achievement.

Unpedestalling Women

UNDERSTANDING WOMEN. By K. A. WIETH-KNUDSEN. New York: Elliot Holt. 1929. $3.

Reviewed by JOSEPH JASTROW

SOME readers will condemn this book because of its conclusions, and some despite them; others will condemn it for different reasons. Among them will be readers critical and readers casual, readers oriented scientifically and readers disposed sentimentally towards this most persistent of discussions since the serpent spoke [illegible] Eden, or (if an historical date is pre[illegible] tain that until the eternal feminin[illegible] tled, there is not much use in writing on anything less important.

In so intensely controversial an issue, a personal confession seems demanded as a warrant of the reader's confidence. I regard the subject as of momentous significance, its discussion indispensable to clarity of vision upon the leading issues of the day and (with diminishing pertinence) of the ages. I regard this book as important because it is a serious and objective (in its intent, scientific) study of the relations of men and women. I dissent from its central conclusions strongly, while approving of its approach and some of its incidental positions.

The book takes it start from the question of a puzzled Japanese scholar as to why European men treat and regard their women with a respect tinged with adoration. It concludes that by this unnatural homage the European white man, the Nordic especially, has earned the dire doom that awaits his civilization; "and if his intellect now at the eleventh hour does not recognize the true nature and extent of the danger, and oppose it in a sweeping reaction against all this farrago of feminism, pernicious alike to Man, Woman, and Child, fatal to culture as no other 'movement,' a curse and a poison to all that has been built up in the sweat and blood of our race for the security of mankind's frail life upon earth—well, then the white man has seen his best days."

The "*Carthago delenda est*" of Dr. Wieth-Knudsen is that woman must be dethroned from her pedestal; with a sort of serious good humor he wields his ax and enjoys the crash as the fragments fall. America is the worst offender, but the same rotten state exists in his own Denmark; and were the term current there, he might have called his essay: "Debunking Woman." That there is a well used bibliography of over a hundred references shows how amply the study is documented.

It proceeds by considering the biological sex-characteristics, primary and derivative, which prove convincingly that woman is the weaker, more primitive, less developed organism; and with bodily frailty is associated a still more comprehensive repertory of psychic, including mainly intellectual, ineptitude. This thesis of the grosser and finer contrasts of the

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masculine and feminine body and mind—soma and psyche—I heartily endorse, and agree that these differences are more fundamental and far-reaching—of greater depth and breadth—than even our modern psychology has recognized. The contrary thesis that men and women are substantially alike, so dear to certain educational (?) psychologists, and so popular with editors of popular magazines, has disseminated a fallacy which will with difficulty be dislodged. It is based on the argument that all tests, from I. Q's to Phi Beta Kappa keys, show slight contrasts of distribution, forgetting that nature's program of intelligence is not that of the schoolmen and her consideration of Greek-letter insignia negligible. In a recent popular article an able "social psychologist" argues that the woman problem is a myth; that because the manner in which the powers and ways of women have been incorporated in institutions does not correspond to the traditional version of their qualities, said qualities do not exist. I am pleased to record that three out of four intelligent persons to whom I put the question: What is wrong with this argument? promptly pointed out that glaring fallacy. Yet most readers will be completely misled. The basic conclusion that men and women are day by day and in every way more different and more different, may be adopted as a slogan, despite the fact that the modern world is determined to see those differences rightly and prevent them from introducing false inequalities or unwise disqualifications into the social system. In carrying out this program there is abundant room for folly, political, economical, and social, from the most intimate to the most formal relations.

The intimate aspects of the sexual relation are next examined with the conclusion that the frigidity and sexual indifference of the modern woman is a sign of degeneracy, and is a consequence of that false development of the woman's sphere for which feminism is the handiest collective name. The story of marriage through the ages is next passed in review with further historical proof that it proceeded favorably, however variably, just so far as the woman's [illegible] was recognized. The interplay [illegible] nature and her other endowments [illegible] of value. The last chapter in the [illegible] " which is not an economic move- [illegible] ly an emancipation from subjec- [illegible] subjected because by nature she holds a subject place), but a misguided bit of masculine generosity.

Man sets woman on a pedestal when he carries to excess "two of his noblest and most honorable virtues: his trust in woman's good qualities, and his leniency, born of the sense of strength toward her weaknesses, till these virtues became vices amid which his civilization will languish." Such is the answer to the disconcerting question asked by his Japanese friend, twenty years ago.

It is well to have this side of the question stated and a bit overstated, so long as it is done, as it is here, in a reasonably scientific way, and with no more than the ordinary human animus. I find the arraignment of feminine failings and failure strong but not venomous. It is free from the equally devastating assaults of Ludovici who calls his book on "Man" "An Indictment," and on "Woman" "A Vindication," though women readers find the subtitles reversed. It is equally free from the oversexualism of Lucka, and believe it or not, neither in the frankly *intime* discussion of sex-relations nor in the diagnosis of feminine character—in fact not once in the entire book—is Freud mentioned. One must likewise infer that the author is indifferent to all the recent intensified consciousness on the subject of sex and the relations of the sexes; that so far as he would recognize it, he would regard it as baneful and misplaced, as interfering with the worthier aspects of life's obligations.

Dr. Wieth-Knudsen's intent is that we shall see women as they are and not in a sentimental distortion, which is not a halo but a bit of fog. And he adds that women are aware of all or much of this, and that if, following Kipling with a different reference, you "will learn about women from her," you will get the true story as here told in yet stronger, franker, and somewhat malicious terms.

The reviewer's primary obligation is to present the author's position; and to this end the keen and admirable foreword of Mr. Ernest Boyd may be recommended, though it is not easy to infer the measure of Mr. Boyd's approval or dissent. Part of the confusion surrounding this intriguing enigma of the ages is the result of asking two questions at the same time and attempting a dual answer. The first relates to the true nature of woman and her distinctive qualities; the second: these being what they are, what is her proper place in the social system of control? The fact that we read her "nature" in the historical assignment of her "place" is an additional confusion; and that history is both made and written largely by men, still further complicates matters.

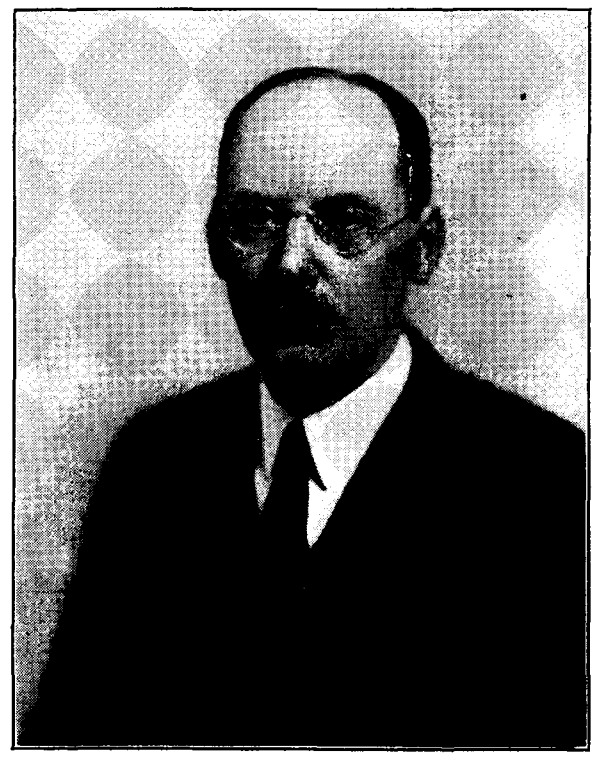
The trend of the modern way of living is bound to set our thinking toward a more authentic determination of feminine nature and a wiser solution of the part women can and should play in the interests of civilization. At the risk of being classified by Dr. Wieth-Knudsen as an incorrigible feministic weakling, I record my conviction that the part of women will be an increasingly important one, and that the idealizing trend—doubtless pernicious in its sentimental vagaries—is an essential ingredient in the redemption of civilization from the masculine, all too masculine protest. But to make clear the basis for this position would require a modest volume.

Essential Robinson

CAVENDER'S HOUSE. By EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.00.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

IT is a curious circumstance that Edwin Arlington Robinson, who is New England—and contemporary New England—to the granite bone, should so frequently be contrasted with two nineteenth century English poets. His manner has been likened to Browning; his matter (particularly the Arthurian themes) to Tennyson. The comparison to Browning, though superficial and inaccurate, is at least comprehensible. The author of "Merlin," like the author of "Sordello," delights in subtly psychological portraiture, in the half-withheld inner drama, in the shift of suspensions and nuances of tension. But here the resemblance ceases. Where Browning is forthright, Robinson is tangential;



EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

where Browning is lavish with imagery and flaring interjections, Robinson is sparse in metaphor and so niggard with words that almost every phrase is twisted forward, backward, and tied into verbal knots before he discards it. But the principal dissimilarity lies in their *Weltanschauung;* here they are diametrically opposed. Where Browning regards the universe compact of sweetness and light, Robinson observes a scheme whose chief components are bitterness and blight; the realm where "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world" becomes (as in the significantly entitled "The Man Against the Sky") a place where:

> *He may go forward like a stoic Roman*
> *Where pangs and terrors in his pathway lie—*
> *Or, seizing the swift logic of a woman,*
> *Curse God and die.*

Robinson's characters are, it is obvious, the projection and amplification of his characteristics. They are his philosophy made flesh. One can no more imagine Browning the creator of Bewick Finzer, Richard Cory, Miniver Cheevy, Roman Bartholow than one can imagine Robinson creating Pippa, Hervé Riel—or Marianna of the Moated Grange. Even Robinson's Arthurian figures are as unlike the parfit, gentil knights and stained glass ladies of the "Idylls of the King" as they are unlike the eloquent, self-dramatizing *dramatis personae* of "Men and Women." "Tristram" showed Robinson was anything but a converted Tennyson; "Cavender's House," which (the critics to the contrary) might have been built on the same Cornwall cliffs, shows he is no inverted Browning.

"Cavender's House" is a double story, or rather it is two stories, one coiled darkly within the other. The "outer" narrative concerns a man (Cavender) who has come back to a house "where no man went," revisiting the scene because of a compulsion that is also conscience. Thus murderers return to the scene of their crime—and Cavender, it is plain, is a murderer. In that half-teasing, half-tortuous manner, reminiscent of the early "Captain Craig," the narrator discloses the futility of the crime with its hideous aftermath: its physical finality and its unresolved perpetuity. Cavender in a nightmare of uncertainty, has killed his wife Laramie—and the dead Laramie, or her wraith, is the most living part of Cavender. It is here that the second story, the psychic parallelism, begins. Cavender's anguish or his memory summons Laramie and they converse. But it is an altered woman who holds out the few bitter "drops of hope" in that room where "midnight was like a darkness that had fingers," where the barren house was alive with triumph, "but none of it was his." It is no longer the pale ghost of a patient woman who alternately fires and freezes him, who asks:

> Why are we made
> So restless and insatiable in change,
> That we must have a food that is not ours.
> And having poured the vinegar of suspicion
> On food that once we found so appetizing,
> Why in the name of heaven are we amazed
> To find it not so sweet.

Gradually the reader is aware that this agonizing dialogue is no dialogue at all, or rather that is a conversation conducted by one person. Laramie, thrown violently out of his life, has entered Cavendish and is in complete possession; "she was the part of him that he had left and wandered from, and, wandering, had starved for." Yet it is not Laramie whose voice he thinks he hears; the ghostly apparition is hers, but the accents are his own. The questions—particularly the one question—hurled against her compel no answers, for she, being his own frustration, cannot tell him what he does not know. The end is no spectacular finale; there is no crying curtain, only—

> a peace that frightened him
> With wonder, coming like a stranger, slowly,
> Without a shape or name, and unannounced—
> As if a door behind him in the dark,
> And once not there, had opened silently,
> Or as if Laramie had answered him.

So much for the intricate structure. But, rewarding as the unfolding of the tale may be, it is the sheer poetry of it that compels and convinces. Compare it, for example, to the latest work of Edgar Lee Masters with whom Robinson is so frequently paired. In "The Fate of the Jury,"* Masters also has a story to tell and one which is as dramatic, as philosophic, and even fuller than Robinson's. But, poetically, it is feeble and, in the end, vitiating; Masters has little control over his words, they control him so far that he cannot bring them to the pitch that is poetry; the syllables that should condense in tone and shapeliness are merely sawed-off into rude pentameter lengths. The following is a typical speculation of Masters:

> . . . And few of us
> Have any one, or any book to guide
> Our way when we are headed towards results,
> This good, that bad. But then I must confess,
> I felt at times that Elenor lived a life
> As good as many, or as any maybe.
> Her case so much increased my skepticism,
> And made me resurrect old speculations
> On proofs of immortality, to illustrate,
> Where, as you know, the proofs are paralleled
> By just as many proofs that death's the end. . . .

And this is a not dissimilar inquiry from "Cavender's House":

> There are still doors in your house that are locked;
> And there is only you to open them,
> For what they may reveal. There may be still
> Some riches hidden there, and even for you,
> Who spurned your treasure as an angry king
> Might throw his crown away, and in his madness
> Not know what he had done till all was done.
> But who are we to say when all is done?
> Was ever an insect flying between two flowers
> Told less than we are told of what we are?

* THE FATE OF THE JURY. By EDGAR LEE MASTERS. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1929. $2.50.

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