

## The Library.

*War Pictures by British Artists.* I—War at Sea; II—Blitz; III—R.A.F.; IV—Army. (Oxford University Press. 1s. 3d. net each.)

IN reviewing these four books we are reviewing pictures, 194 in all, perfectly reproduced: pictures by artists whose work we know, or whose names we know, or whose names and work are new to us. Not to make invidious distinctions, and to conceal our ignorance, we will name a score, alphabetically: Ardizzone, Robert Austin Muirhead Bone, Richard Eurich, Ethel Gabain, Anthony Gross, Keith Henderson, Eric Kennington, Laura Knight, Henry Lamb, J. Mansbridge, Henry Moore, C. Orde, Ravilious, Rothenstein, Graham Sutherland, A. R. Thomson, and J. Worsley.

The books have introductions by, respectively, Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, J. B. Morton, H. E. Bates, and Colin Coote, and each book contains short notes on the pictures. But we brought our own receptive uninfluenced mind to the pictures and it is only because we afterwards found that the introducers had said our own best things before us, and said them better, that we shall quote them. Mr. Morton has left it to us to use the phrase: "the armies of the homeless" with a nearer approach to literalness than Arnold intended, but it is that phrase that he expands: "Never does a full-grown human being appear so ignoble as when he is asleep in an uncomfortable position. . . The sight of the sleepers in a shelter is not edifying, until it occurs to you that they are men and women in bivouac, and awaiting a battle. . . The people have no other weapon but an indomitable strength of character." Mr. Morton confines himself to the non-combatants, but he has involuntarily suggested to us that 'The Withdrawal from Dunkirk' in another book has the same theme.

Of the many portraits by Mr. Eric Kennington we should have said that they give us all that a good photograph could give, with the addition of an emphasis which is not exaggeration because it is interpretation. We find it said for us by Mr. Bates: "Kennington, whose pastels have remarkably penetrative strength, finds in the face of" one man this quality, in another that; and

Mr. Coote supplies our own corollary: "Our Army has not owed much to luck so far; but it has character; and that character is reflected in the faces of these leaders," and not in the leaders only, but in this Home Guard, in that Sergeant Wireless-Operator, in that Aircraftman, that Air Gunner; and not in the common man only, but in the uncommon woman, the girl Dispatch Rider, in Corporal J. W. M. Pearson. Sir Herbert Richmond says as much of the seamen, and adds: "Perhaps the head of Nelson's coxswain, calmly bundling under his arm the swords of the captains of the capture Spanish ships at St. Vincent, is a painting from life. . . We ask our war-artists of to-day to give us and our successors a visual record of the seamen themselves, of their living quarters, of their leisure, of the loading of a gun or the dropping of mines."

"Don't you wish you did?" Turner retorted on his critic who didn't see things in that way. "Thus things are in my pictorial sight. Trust me: I apprehend them so," Velasquez has been imagined as saying. Mr. Coote says it again: "the artist . . . records how events strike sensitive and receptive minds, stimulated by the unusual." Not all these pictures will persuade at once.

### CORRIGENDA.

At *ante* p. 284, c. 1, l. 35, for "Eastyn" read *Estin*; p. 304, c. 1, l. 7 from foot, for "Glecoma" read *Glechoma*; p. 316, c. 1, l. 8 from foot, for "Nicholson" read *Nicolson*.

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