

Cresswell aims at more than quotations: he is taking the texture of his verse from a past that has no associations with the country which supplies so much of his theme. This may explain, apart from any questions of technical control, why I find in Cresswell's verse a muffled effect which contrasts oddly with the resonance of his prose. For in the greater freedom of prose the archaisms can be drawn without strain into a living style.

I believe, too, that Mr. Curnow underestimates the influence of the depression on the younger poets of the thirties, although I know that many others agree with him. It would be a mistake, perhaps, to imagine that a close acquaintance with hard times should have led directly—as it did, admittedly, in Fairburn's "Dominion"—to a didactic statement of social conditions and antecedents. Could it not more credibly have fostered a new clearness of vision, opening the eyes of poets to spiritual questions that follow invariably upon any widespread loss of security?

Time is needed for an acceptance of standards, and this anthology will not therefore be placed at once in its predestined niche. Whatever controversies may arise from it, however, its function seems to me to be obvious and valuable. I think it is safe to say that it throws a light upon the landscapes of poetry in New Zealand, and that those who write verse in the next ten years will feel its influence. To a certain extent the influence can already be found at work within its pages. The youngest poet of them all, James K. Baxter, reveals in many stanzas his indebtedness to the others, though he also has something of his own which may take him later to an impressive achievement.

A last word should be said about the publishers. Those who count the number of poets in the anthology who have been sponsored at some time or other by the Caxton Press, and who pause to examine the technical excellence of the book which now brings them together, will find it easier to believe that Denis Glover and his associates have worked faithfully for New Zealand poetry.

ON THE RUN IN FRANCE

FAIR STOOD THE WIND FOR FRANCE:
A Novel by H. E. Bates. Michael Joseph, London; Whitcombe & Tombs, New Zealand and Australia.

THIS novel has already gone through two impressions in Britain, and is likely to do the same here. Its prospects are in fact more favourable here, since the New Zealand edition at 12/6 is better value than most English (war-time) books at a pound, and there is never much competition here in reasonably good novels. The subject is also a good one for New Zealand—the adventures of a crashed bomber crew on the run in occupied France. They are the lucky ones among us who have not had some reason during the last four or five years to be personally interested in such a situation. But it is staggering to read on the dust cover that the *Daily Telegraph* reviewer found it "the finest novel of the war"; that the *Observer* gave it a chance to "hold its own with any war novel written in the last five years"; and that Day Lewis described it for the Book Society as the "work of a true artist in fiction . . . capable of standing up to the reality and satisfying our imagination." All that is nonsense, and it is disturbing to find the reviewers of London circulating it. The book is about half good, and the other half is worse than a novelist of Bates'

reputation should ever have released in his own name. Fortunately the best part is the most important part—the picture of rural France under subjection, the impressions of the countryside, and the personal relations of four men, three of them mere boys, under the strain of flying, hiding, and escaping. There is love-making, too, of course, but it is not very real—with the exception of two moments of morbid jealousy which almost make it authentic. But the really interesting people are the farmer-miller, the village doctor, and the old grandmother who can remember three wars and insists that France was finished in the second.

WAR SURVEYS

PACIFIC STORY: A Survey of the Early History of the Third New Zealand Division (Army Board, Wellington).

GUADALCANAL TO NISSAN: With the Third New Zealand Division through the Solomons (Army Board, Wellington).

BATTLE FOR EGYPT: The Second New Zealand Division at El Alamein (Army Board, Wellington).

THE DIAMOND TRACK: From Egypt to Tunisia with the Second New Zealand Division (Army Board, Wellington).

NO writer of war history has had such a tough job as the author of the two first surveys in this group. He had to make a campaign interesting that never quite came off—and do that after everybody who took part in it was home with his own story; to induce readers to pursue an enemy who, they knew in advance, would never be brought to battle; to give a pattern and meaning to journeys that no one else had succeeded in fitting into a pattern, or making reasonably intelligible; to do justice to the men who did catch up with the enemy, and win respect for those who did not. He had to do all those things in about half as much space as the job called for, and yet he brings it off.

The other two surveys carry the Second Division from the Lebanon to Tunis, for we must not forget the Syrian interlude between the first and second Libyan campaigns. But there was of course no fighting in Syria. The Division had no sooner settled in there and begun to train than it was ordered back with all speed to Egypt, and it was then one campaign all the way to the Tunisian coast—a campaign of fluctuating fortunes, with Alamein overshadowing the earlier struggles and the great surrender in Tunisia (200,000 prisoners) making its dramatic end. The maps and diagrams are exceedingly good, and the narrative as good as it is reasonable to expect until all the facts can be told and independent judgments can be made.

THE WAR IN ONE VOLUME

OUT OF THE SHADOWS: The Story of the Second World War. By Everard Anson. A. H. & A. W. Reed, Wellington.

IT was a much too ambitious undertaking to try to get the whole war—land, sea, and air—into a single narrative of 125 pages. Still there are people who like others to do their reading and thinking for them, and there are undoubted advantages in having all the history one wants in a single volume. And the author gives them more than history: he gives them the "unfolding purpose" that provides men of Destiny as they are required, having no more difficulty with Stalin the sceptic than with Churchill and Roosevelt, believers. His purely military perspectives are now and then really illuminating, and his illustrations and maps are helped by his large pages and good paper. Certainly a remarkable six-shillings-worth for those who want it.



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