ART AND THE ARMY

By ADRIAN HILL, R.B.A., R.O.I. in *The Studio,* England, August, 1944

THE TRADITIONAL axiom that one soldier in hospital is one less effective member of his unit can be equally well applied to the one inarticulate or dumb soldier as one less effective member of his regiment. The significance of this latter dictum has been steadily growing during the last century and 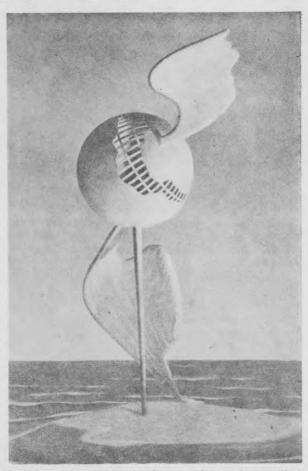since the end of the last war has made itself manifest by the creation of a department in the British Army known throughout its ranks as the A.E.C.

The history of the Army Educational Corps makes most interesting and instructive reading, but I am only concerned here with a fraction of its many activities, that which concerns the introduction of art education—*i.e.*, appreciation and tuition in its curriculum. And if I put art appreciation first, it is because I feel the Army authorities are growing increasingly aware of the valuable service it renders in opening the eyes and mind and mouth of the rank and file as well as of the officer class, to whom pictures have hitherto been a " closed book."

In peacetime adult art education has made enormous strides in our towns and cities all over the country, and now the same advantages can still be obtained while the erstwhile citizen is in battle-dress and his country in the throes of total war. That it was found possible to hold eight hundred lectures in the month of September, 1940,

when the battle of Britain was at its height says much for the cool-headed and long-sighted policy governing this scheme of education, while the fact that in August, 1941, the total number of lectures in all subjects had risen to nearly four thousand demonstrates the impressive curve that has risen steeply and which will without doubt continue to rise. Each month

John Armstrong. " Icarus." (London : Tate Gallery.) As a specimen of surrealism the general verdict was that it had " come off," having all the odd qualities of super-realism experienced in dreams. " Gives one a nice queer feeling."

17