

he could have had small chance in a rural constituency when a big centre of trade depression like Liverpool rejected Brougham, not only for Canning, but for a military nonentity, as second member, who had no better credentials than being a supporter of the policy which had implemented the town's unemployment." What can one make of "a remark which Landor soon had reason to recognise as pregnant of foresight"? Or take this as a description of young Milnes "Consumed with ambitious youth's egotistical appetite for appraisal of only those phenomena immediately useful to his ends . . ." This muddled style is the reflection of confused thought. We are, for instance, given two explanations of Landor's attitude towards his marriage: we are told both that Landor will be appreciated late, and that he will never be appreciated at all. And so on. Moreover, events are sometimes chronologically banded about, so that one does not quite know where one is.

In fairness it must be said that Mr. Elwin's book contains all the external facts that anyone can possibly need to know about Landor, and that the second part of the book is far better written, more swiftly, naturally and sensibly. Mr. Elwin says some good things as well as some trite ones, and his picture of the old, completely unworldly Landor is vivid and attractive. One can only wish that he had given as much time to the writing of the book as he did to the collection of his material; for if anyone really deserves a well-written biography it is that castigator of words, Walter Savage Landor.

BONAMY DOBRÉE.

## The Source of Health

**English Woodland.** By John Rodgers. (Batsford. 10s. 6d.)

**In the Heart of the Country.** By H. E. Bates. Illustrated by C. F. Tunnicliffe. (Country Life. 10s. 6d.)

**Nature Abounding.** Edited by E. L. Grant Watson. (Faber. 10s. 6d.)

The felling of trees in this country during the last war was so widespread that a Forestry Commission was set up after the Armistice to repair the damage. Acting on a policy largely dictated by commercial considerations, the Commission took too little account of the fundamental necessity for a balance between forestry and agriculture and so concentrated on plantings that would yield a quick cash return. As a result, thousands of acres of regimented conifers, alien to the tradition of our woodlands, began to disfigure the countryside. (In the year 1937-38 the Commission planted 21,000 acres of conifers as against 2,500 acres of broad-leaved trees.) Supported by Parliamentary Votes which were entirely inadequate, the Commission cannot be wholly blamed. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in twenty years the damage of the last war has not been repaired; and now, to worsen matters, a second war has intervened.

One of the significant changes resulting from the present war, however, is the growing realisation, in town and country, that the foundation of a nation's health and only true wealth is the land. Life is one and indivisible; and if, by a bankrupt policy of agriculture, we undermine the life of the rural areas, we at the same time undermine the life of the towns. Similarly, within the countryside

itself, this same law of the indivisibility of all life holds good: it is useless, for instance, ploughing up grass and wasteland and planting every available acre, if at the same time we destroy our woodlands and do nothing to restore the natural balance between crop and tree.

Mr. Rodgers's book is therefore welcome if only because it may open our minds to one of the most important aspects of the national heritage. He is well-informed in history, he seems to know all our woodlands and forests at first-hand, he gives plenty of facts and literary quotations, and he has some interesting things to say about woodland folk-lore. Indeed, there is only one important lack. Out of 132 pages Mr. Rodgers has been content to devote only five to the matter of afforestation. Thus a book which could have been a trumpet-call, inspiring its readers to do something by example and by insistence towards remedying the pitiable state into which our woodlands have fallen, remains little more than a fine Book of Trees. "For spiritual and mental health we need woodlands," are Mr. Rodgers's last words: we also need them for severely practical reasons; and unless peace brings with it a rural policy that includes intelligent afforestation, future generations will have little to thank us for.

No such disturbing thoughts will bother the reader of Mr. Bates's collection of country essays. "Perhaps the most striking thing about war," he says, "is its ultimate lack of effect on nature." And although soldiers, air-raids and refugees find a place in his persuasive descriptions, the emphasis is mainly on the rural scene. He writes of the Kentish countryside during the first two years of the war; here are the "Great Snow," cherry orchards and bluebells in spring, and a particularly vivid picture of those golden-weather days of the Battle of Britain when fish, lovers of silence, "rose and fed to a new and appalling sound." If the matter throughout these essays is fairly familiar, the manner is charming enough to arouse pleasure at the repetition; but it is Mr. Tunnicliffe's pictures that transform the book from one to borrow into one to buy.

In fact, Mr. Tunnicliffe has recently emerged as one of the very few country illustrators (Mr. T. Hennell is another) who really know the things they draw. Five of his decorations adorn Mr. Grant Watson's somewhat unusual anthology. Earth, air, fire and water are the divisions the editor has chosen; and his list of contributors includes several names not often found in nature anthologies. Particularly welcome are the extracts from the exact and sensitive work of Dr. Fraser Darling, whose name, incidentally, is wrongly spelled throughout the book.

C. HENRY WARREN.

## Fiction

**A Leaf in the Storm.** By Lin Yutang. (Heinemann. 10s. 6d.)

**Bird of the Wilderness.** By Vincent Sheehan. (Macmillan. 8s. 6d.)

**The Cage.** By Kathleen Bellamy. (Methuen. 7s. 6d.)

**God's Warrior.** By Patry Williams. (Faber and Faber. 9s. 6d.)

It might be thought that a novel dealing with the years 1937-38 of the present Japanese war against China, and written by a Chinaman would be desperate, angry and set to the speed of actualities; but Dr. Lin, who called his previous novel, of fifty years of mandarin