

AIRMEN IN FICTION

HOW SLEEP THE BRAVE, AND OTHER STORIES.
By FLYING OFFICER "X." Cape. 2s. 6d.

This second series of stories and sketches of the R.A.F. by Flying Officer "X." has familiar merits. There is one longish short story, which gives its title to the little volume, and there are five short sketches or character studies, all of them good pieces of writing. One may wonder, perhaps, whether the sort of war experiences the author writes about really provide an occasion for fiction—whether, that is, at the present stage there is not something to be said against making up (or writing up in the form of fiction) stories about the R.A.F. which do not originate in the writer's personal experience. The doubt may be sentimental, but it is still further stimulated by the style of first-person narrative which Flying Officer "X." frequently adopts. However, in "How Sleep the Brave," for instance, he writes with feeling and imagination about the ordeal of a Stirling bomber crew forced down in the sea on returning from a night raid over Germany in the depth of winter. It is the flight engineer who tells what happens, and the picture of him gripping the dead body of the radio operator with his knees in the rocking, ice-covered rubber dinghy stays in the mind. The portraits of the crew are vivid and alive, and the indications of the weather, though just a shade poeticized, carry apt dramatic suggestion.

The shorter pieces are sketches of a fighter pilot who lost an arm over Malta, of a Czech night fighter pilot, a Frenchman who flew his machine from North Africa to Gibraltar, and so on, and here again, although Flying Officer "X." is too obviously interpreting, as it were, for his sitter, so that he remains uncertain whether an incident lasted two days or four or whether the airman's friends were bakers or taxi-drivers, the effect is soberly telling.

more than twenty years of change and the pursuit of happiness. / lessly, with so protean a roman does she pursue happiness (she eludes her. Like time itself Gu be for ever on the wing.

In tripping fashion Mr. Bax progress from a youthful and fe in the last war to a dim and fa twilight of middle age on the eve progress is, of course, from one l the next, from the cold, sea-gree Craven of the F.O. to true but love with Kit Rohan, on to m the quite unlovable Joseph, to m (and almost a salon of her own) wi a rising light of Labour, on to finally to the unsavoury Zachs not to bed, but to solitude and side and self-realization at last, who sticks to a conversational through, insists that she is into she is honest, that she is charm as well as beautiful, and if it wer monotony of the reiterated arg sex and amorousness and anci with which he supports her he might almost believe she was all background of fashions of dif between the wars is sketched in ra though occasional short stretches as might be expected, are lively e Bax's men, even the fish-like Te never more than well-upholste upon which Guinivere can hang love.

THE MUSIC GOES R
By MARGERY MAIT
DAVIDSON