who write so glibly about this being a Holy War, and the orators who talk so much about going on no matter how long the War lasts and what it may mean, could see a case—to say nothing of 10 cases—of mustard gas in its early stages—could see the poor things burnt and blistered all over with great mustard-coloured suppurating blisters, with blind eyes—sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently—all sticky and stuck together, and always fighting for breath, with voices a mere whisper, saying that their throats are closing, and they know they will choke—And yet people persist in saying that God made the war."

"No more of God, King, and Country, that voracious trio!" she writes again, and she tells of those terrible days in March, 1918, when for the first time it occurred to her and others that we might lose the war. And, again, she tells of the extraordinary effect of Haig's famous order of April 11th containing that inspiring sentence:

"With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight on to the end."

"I can think of Haig only," she writes, "as the author of that Special Order, for after I had read it I knew that I should go on, whether I could or not."

Tragedy follows tragedy. Friend after friend falls, and at last, very near the end of the War, her beloved brother Edward is killed in Italy, a posthumous V.C.

To myself, one of the saddest and most significant parts is the account of her return to Oxford after the War. I have often wondered how anyone, man or woman, could endure to go back when so much had been seen and suffered.

"Obviously," she writes, "it wasn't a popular thing to have been close to the War: patriots, especially of the female variety, were as much discredited in 1919 as in 1914 they had been honoured."

I have myself noticed the utter indifference of people at home to any word about any war when it was over, and I have vowed never to mention war except when ordered. Vera Brittain noticed it still more, as was natural in the academic torpor of Oxford. One may suppose that she wrote this book as a protest against modern indifference—a Testament or Testimony of Youth—the Youth which was lost so lately by hundreds of thousands among our finest young men and women. "We will remember them," cried our poet, and I can only hope that this accurate and poignant picture of what the War really meant may help our present youth not to forget. HENRY W. NEVINSON.

Capek Fairy Tales

Fairy Tales. By Karel and Joseph Capek. Illustrated by Joseph Capek. Translated by M. and R. Weatherall. (Allen and Unwin. 5s.)

Of the ten excellently translated stories in *Fairy Tales*, nine are by Karel Capek, and the other, "one extra as a make-weight," by Joseph, who has also liberally adorned the text, as he did *The Gardener's Year*, with appropriately droll and saucy drawings. This alliance of talent is both unique and perfect: one can think of no one else quite like the Capek brothers in contemporary European literature. But as one picks up their *Fairy Tales* and begins to read, say, *The Long Police Tale* or *The Bandit's Tale*, one is horrified by a sudden thought. What if time could be reversed and *Fairy Tales* could be put into the hands of some little Edward and Angela, or even some little Karel and Joseph, of thirty or forty years ago? What if——? But the thought is too revolutionary. Nor perhaps would *Fairy Tales* stand much chance of being read: for there is little doubt that it would be locked up in Papa's bureau or even burnt, in extreme cases, in the kitchen range. And so little Angela and Edward or little Karel and Joseph must sit still, seen and not heard, legs dangling, on straight-backed mahogany chairs, with *Stepping Heavenward* on their laps if it is a week-day, and the illustrated Bible or *Sunday at Home* if it is Sunday. Papa is asleep, Mamma is nodding, the flies drone in fruitless attempts to escape from the hot window-pane behind the yellow Venetian blinds. The thick coarse paper of *Stepping Heavenward* or the thin India paper of the Bible make disastrous sounds as the pages are turned over. Oh! the boredom of it! Is it possible that the Capeks themselves have been through it? Did they also sit in that intolerable silence staring at the Czech equivalent of *Stepping Heavenward*? It seems more than likely. They may even have sat there and resolved, unconsciously, to write these *Fairy Tales*, so that future generations of children should not suffer as they themselves did.

To the modern child, no doubt, these tales will seem no more revolutionary than a railway train. But to those who were once little Angelas and Edwards they will seem startlingly fresh and alive and realistic, far removed from the "Once upon a time" tradition. Yet, analysing them, one observes that they are peopled with characters almost identical with those of Andersen: cats, kings, dogs, tramps, bandits, princesses, magicians, birds, and so on; there are few fairies; the everyday world is always very near even when it is not the setting for a tale; and the Capeks skip along the invisible line between heaven and earth, between realism and fantasy, with an agile genius, irresponsibly joyous. They never point morals; they never seek to draw the unwilling tear. Their style is slapstick, their stories are comics. The whole book, drawings and all, is full of a gorgeous gusto. The more one looks at it, indeed, the more sure one becomes that the parents of Angela and Edward would have burnt it.

But what of the children and the nieces and nephews of Angela and Edward? It is unsafe to prophesy. An age of speed-boats may scorn the delights of the mere printed word. The Capeks may have suffered and written in vain. In that case Edward and Angela can keep themselves awake on Christmas day with *The Tramp's Tale* and *The Postman's Tale* and the rest, and regain their vanished youth. H. E. BATES.

Divergent Road to Peace

War Unless. By Sisley Huddleston. (Gollancz. 7s.)
The Bloody Traffic. By A. Fenner Brockway. (Gollancz. 3s. 6d.)

WHY, in tackling the problem of war, do so many who deal with it in books and journalism begin by insisting that only one particular approach or cure can possibly be effective, and that all other proposals must be rejected out of hand?

A certain auditor, listening once to some debates on the outlawry of war between the representatives of various peace organizations, remarked: "Whether they will outlaw war is doubtful, for they are evidently much more concerned first to outlaw each other."

Mr. Sisley Huddleston, in the numbered points in which he himself summarizes his own book has as No. 11 this:

"Schemes for international armies and air forces are not only impracticable but are immoral."

So that's that. Not any particular scheme, note you, but all schemes for international forces are "immoral." It is a little sweeping in view of the fact that among those who have followed the Disarmament Debates for years, have year after year attended Geneva, sat for painful days through wearisome discussions; interviewed privately the delegates, given to the problem deep and careful and first-hand study, are some at least who believe that some form of international air force is the one means by which we shall prevent air-armament competition and secure the necessary co-operation for air disarmament. They do not at all like the idea of an international force; but they like the alternative still less, and have regretfully, as the result of their years of study, come to the conclusion that it may be the lesser of two evils; a desperate remedy for a desperate case. They may be quite wrong of course; but they have probably been at closer grips with that particular detail of the problem than Mr. Huddleston, whose book covers such a wide range, could have been; and if useful discussion is to continue at all proposals of that kind must not be simply outlawed by calling them "immoral." Mr. Huddleston is very scornful also of the Pacifist who is "content to work in little committees, and in the better-class hotels of Geneva, fussily and happily, for what he calls peace, namely, the preparation of resolutions. . . ."

Mr. Huddleston is particularly angry with these Pacifists for their "complacent optimism." This reviewer, who for thirty years has been in constant contact with Pacifists in half a dozen countries, ventures to doubt even the existence of such an animal in any numbers. Whatever the offences of the Pacifist he has certainly not, in any number, since the Peace treaties, closed his eyes to the danger of war. In season and out of season the Pacifist organizations have been proclaiming to all who would listen, the deadly dangers of war which encompass us. Mr. Huddleston is angry at the public indifference to the injustices of the Versailles Treaties. Is he not aware that for long the only organized protest against those terms came from the despised Pacifists and their