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book, and we also learn that William Joyce now calls himself Herr Fröhlich (misspelt Frölich in the text), or the Joyous One. Their German colleagues despise and ignore them.

Excellent observation and reporting—in the American style, of course—with the reader left to draw his own conclusions. (Will our A.R.P. authorities, by the way, please note—p. 39—the use made in Germany of luminous paint?)

BERNARD FOLEY.

The Secret of Military Success

The Strategy of Indirect Approach. By Liddell Hart. (Faber and Faber. 12s. 6d.)

THOSE who read Captain Liddell Hart's *The Decisive Wars of History* will require no commendation of this new and enlarged edition. The additions consist of extensions to one important chapter and three new chapters. The original book was one of the author's best, and its concern to select from historic battles the strategy that led to victory won wide approval. Moreover the setting of these battles in a new light endowed them with fresh interest which was little if at all weakened by the impression that the author was at times drawing rather heavily upon the specious. The same interest and also the same suspicion of the specious attaches to his new chapter on the Byzantine campaigns of Belisarius and Narses. In a sense, of course, this thesis of indirect approach is a truism. No one but an imbecile runs his head against his opponent's strongest sector if he can avoid it; and for the possibility that this may be the only thing (or the wisest thing) to do, on occasion, Captain Liddell Hart finds ready accommodation. Surprise may render an attack upon the strong point easier than the indirect approach.

One of the other new chapters is a study of the "Concentrated Essence of Strategy," but the most popular will be the last, on "Hitler's Strategy." The greater part of this chapter will be readily accepted, though at times Captain Liddell Hart is prone to fall back upon a tendency to economise his thought by the use of obscure language. Thus, I find, "He has given the strategy of indirect approach a new extension, logistically and psychologically, both in the field and in the forum," a mere stringing together of words. Apart from this much of the chapter is fresh and stimulating. It is useful, for instance, to be reminded that it was Lenin who enunciated the axiom "the soundest strategy in war is to postpone operations until the moral disintegration

of the enemy renders the delivery of the mortal blow both possible and easy"; and it has, as he suggests, a distinct family resemblance to Hitler's saying: "Our real wars will in fact all be fought before military operations begin." The success of the Hitlerian policy has been so obvious that there is little need to set against him the wraith of Clausewitz or the less attenuated Ludendorff.

It is the second part of this chapter that encourages criticism. He maintains that it was a "false move" to offer a guarantee to Poland and Rumania "without first securing any assurance from Russia"; and he suggests that these guarantees were bound to act as "provocations." He insists that Hitler had "far more respect for the power of modern defence than any of the Allied soldiers or statesmen." Whether the operative word is "real" I cannot say, but Hitler certainly rode through defences east as well as west.

He says that "the deliberate offensive on the Siegfried Line" made no impression in spite of its "boosting." But, surely, we now know that no deliberate offensive was ever intended. When the first steps appeared to secure some slight success the general in command said he could not exploit it because that would involve straying too far from the Maginot defences! As for the "boosting," one of the best-known writers of the day was committing himself to the opinion—with which Captain Liddell Hart would apparently agree—that all we needed to do was check the onset of the Germans and show them how naughty and unprofitable it was for them to attack. And was it not a "head-on" assault that breached the line at Sedan? It does not appear to change the fact that it proved successful. The reader will at least find Captain Liddell Hart's subtlety sufficiently provocative and its interest sustained.

STRATEGICUS.

Talk About the Land

England and the Farmer. Edited by H. J. Massingham. (Batsford 10s. 6d.)

THE case against the agricultural system of today and for a new agricultural system of tomorrow has already been pungently stated in Lord Northbourne's *Look to the Land*. Much in *England and the Farmer*, notably Dr. Picton's essay on diet, is a repetition of the arguments in the earlier work, a fact which has no doubt led Mr. Massingham to suggest that the two books should be read together. Mr. Massingham has selected a good but not quite complete team, and Lord Lymington on *The Policy of Husbandry*, Sir Albert Howard on *Soil Fertility*, Mr. C. Henry Warren on *Corn*, Mr. Adrian Bell on *The Family Farm*, Mr. Rolf Gardiner on *Rural Reconstruction*, Dr. L. J. Picton on *Diet and Farming*, and Professor Sir George Stapledon on *The Reclamation of Grassland* state a case for the salvation of rural England which is excellent as far as it goes. But where is the farmer labourer, who might, after all, have something to say on the question of salvation? Or the country clergyman, reminded by Mr. Rolf Gardiner that "it is the inescapable duty of the churches both to teach worship and to instruct men as to the substance and structure of things?" Or the educationist, to talk of perhaps the most radical changes of all? Or the smallholder, whose small-unit system Mr. Massingham champions very ardently without giving it the honour of a separate chapter? Above all, perhaps, where is the farmer? Mr. Adrian Bell certainly writes on *The Family Farm*, but writing more as novelist than farmer gives an extremely unconvincing performance. Farming, as written after writer in this book is at pains to point out, is not an isolated problem; "without a healthy and fertile soil," says Lord Lymington, "there will be no health in the people"; "corn helps to keep the land healthy," says Mr. Warren, "and a healthy land is, in the long run, a healthy people"; "any system of agriculture which aspires to permanence," says Sir Albert Howard, "must see to it that the produce of the soil is sure to maintain the population at the highest pitch of efficiency"; lastly "perhaps the chief cause of our social weaknesses," says Sir George Stapledon, "lies in the very neglect of our land and of our agriculture."

In short, writer after writer in *England and the Farmer* repeats the same arguments. Mr. Massingham was deeply impressed by their "convergent arrival at an identical conclusion as to the means to be followed for the salvation of rural England," but this same identity of view robs the book, it seems to me, of some of its force. A little disagreement is good medicine. One gets a little tired, for example, of the argument that "we are not as our forefathers were," a fact for which those who remember *The Village Labourer*, for example, will probably thank God; one gets similarly tired of the argument that the farmer is the victim of conservative political-plutocrats, without anyone troubling to point out that farmers, as a class, usually vote for no one else; finally, one gets extra tired, remembering the magnificent wages and conditions of employment that have been a fairly consistent characteristic of English agriculture for at least the last hundred and fifty years, of the sentimental injustices of Mr. Massingham and the rather Teutonic ideologies of

DETERMINATION

The Country refuses to submit. The offensive spirit is strong. There is determination to overcome difficulties and to achieve great things. Success comes by everyone doing just a bit more than they thought they could.

This determination is reflected in many ways. In the direct prosecution of the war of course, but also in the helping hand stretched out to those who suffer both directly and indirectly because of it.

There are many who in spite of everything have fulfilled their determination to help those who look to the G.B.I. for help, by sending even quite small sums, thus refusing to admit that they cannot afford to do so. This army of helpers still needs recruits.

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Mr. Gardiner, both of whom would like to see, apparently, more dancing round the maypole. Again, the force of Dr. Picton's essay on diet, whose sense and value I would not question, would have been doubled by a word on the same subject from the wife of the farm-labourer, who might reasonably have asked how she is to learn dietetics, bake bread, cook like an angel on an out-worn stove, and generally improve her education while going out to work in order to turn the agricultural wage into a living wage. Again, the townsman may be surprised, hurt, and even angered, to find himself continually stigmatised throughout this book as part of a villainous urban gang operating "the specialised and centralised economic-mechanical system imposed by the town on the country." It does not seem to have occurred to anyone here that there might be enlightened townsmen who love and respect the country; or that there are ignorant countrymen who dislike the country and never do a thing to help its progress. It is good to end with a note on Sir George Stapledon's magnificently sensible contribution. In one sentence, "this country is no longer the workshop of the world; after the war it will no longer be the workshop of the British Empire," and in the amplification of it, too long to quote here, it seems to me that he presents the germ of the revolution of tomorrow.

H. E. BATES.

A Clap for Tinkerbell

Eight for Immortality. By Richard Church. (Dent. 6s.)

THE title of this book reveals how much is expected of English poets. It also reveals how little use we can find for our living minor writers. For to hustle them into immortality is a polite kind of murder, though sanctioned by custom, for we prefer our poets dead. However, Mr. Church's title is misleading, for his conversational little essays on eight living, or near-living, poets (Davies, de la Mare, Frost, Yeats, Blunden, Sackville-West, Eliot, Graves) are personal rather than critical appreciations.

Mr. Church is a generous friend, and his reminiscences of W. H. Davies, who always gave young Richard Church an egg for his tea because he thought he needed it, have a spark of that gospel quality that makes Volland's life of Cézanne, for example, a masterpiece. But Mr. Church is no critic, and I question if any of the younger critics against whom Mr. Church so hotly seeks to defend his friend Edmund Blunden have more roundly, or unjustly, damned that poet than does such defence as this. "Blunden has never indulged in . . . indiscretions. I doubt if he even knows of the existence of work by his contemporaries. His literary interests stopped short with the death of Charles Lamb. After that, for him, it is darkness, except for the illumination of his own candle."

Georgian poets are characteristically on the defensive, and Mr. Church is at pains to show what harmless creatures his immortals are. Only Mr. Eliot is allowed to have waged war. Poets, to believe Mr. Church, are innocent, nervous creatures, living in the country like elves, and, like these fellow-immortals, would seem to have dwindled in stature to the dimensions of suburban garden figurines from their heroic and bloodthirsty origins. Thus we

have Edmund Blunden "like a startled mouse," Robert Frost "the genius of shyness," Miss Sackville-West "suffers from a personal timidity," and Robert Graves (most unmanly) is "innocent."

Mr. Church believes in his fairies, and his writing is well-intended and devoid of malice or conceit. Where harmlessness and an eminently readable style are wished, this book will not be banned. But as criticism it is very thin porridge.

KATHLEEN RAINE.

More About the R.A.F.

The Battle of Britain. By J. M. Spaight. (Geoffrey Bles. 10s. 6d.)
Winged Words. Our Airmen Speak for Themselves. (Heinemann. 8s.)

R.A.F. Occasions. By H. G. (Cresset Press. 8s. 6d.)
Fighter Command. By A. B. Austin. (Gollancz. 8s. 6d.)
British Fighter Planes. By C. G. Grey. (Faber and Faber. 5s.)

It is, I suppose, inevitable that so many books should be published about the Royal Air Force; and also inevitable that so few of them should be of permanent value, since hardly anyone who has anything important to say on the subject at first hand is at the present moment in a position to say it in public print. Here are five more books, all published within the space of a fortnight. They are not the only books published within that time, nor by any means the worst. But it is difficult to feel that if four out of the five books had not been published anyone but the authors would really have been the poorer.

The exception is Mr. Austin's *Fighter Command*, which is a vivid and detailed record of the work of Fighter Command from the beginning of the war until the abandonment by the Germans of daylight raiding on any extensive scale last November. Mr. Austin is a journalist who was attached to Fighter Command at the outbreak of war in order to organise the dissemination of news about the air-war over Great Britain to newspapers and broadcasting systems. He saw the great battle in which the Germans attempted to crush our fighter defence from a vantage point, and his book gives a systematic, informed and vivid account of all the stages of the prolonged operation in which the German ambition was defeated. The particular merit of the book is that it is not, as most previous books on the subject have been, merely a disconnected assortment of stories of heroism in the air, but that it analyses and explains the strategical problems that had to be faced by Fighter Command as a whole. It is one of the few books hitherto published that will be worth referring to when the history of the war in the air comes to be written.

Mr. Spaight covers, conscientiously and rather dryly, ground already many times traversed by countless leader-writers, military correspondents, and authors of books. He discusses the strategy of both sides at some length, but he does not, so far as I can recall, make any observations that can be called original. His book is an entirely respectable production, in the writing of which great care has obviously been taken. But I cannot see that it will add anything to the knowledge of anyone who has read at all widely on the subjects which it discusses; to its misfortune, this category will presumably include anyone at all likely to read it.

Winged Words is a collection of broadcasts by members of the Royal Air Force. Although much of the material is of first-rate interest, it is a perfunctory, not to say slovenly, piece of book-making. Forty or fifty broadcasts are included, but there is no list of contents nor index, let alone an introduction to draw together the variegated threads of narrative. The broadcasts certainly justified themselves as broadcasts on the occasions when they were delivered, and many of them survive the test of print. But if they were to be reprinted—and it is debatable whether much is gained by having them reprinted as a collection at this stage of the war—they should have been paid the compliment of a little more ceremony in the details of their publication.

R.A.F. Occasions, though the work of one author, is almost equally disconnected. It consists of memoirs of the R.F.C. in the last war and impressions of the R.A.F. in this one. It is a slight production, possessing no merit more weighty than an unquestionable charm.

British Fighter Planes is more substantial. This is a useful book, which gives the technical and industrial history of our fighter aircraft of the past and the pedigree of most of our present ones, with sections on armament and aero-engines, and notes on American fighter aircraft. The author's style is depressingly jaunty at times, but though experts may quarrel about some of his theories no one will dispute that he knows the facts on which he bases them. Readers who possess knowledge of the subject will be tantalised by the fact that Mr. Grey has not been able to make his survey up to date: it would perhaps have been better to have waited until it was permissible to include details of the newer types. But the book possesses undoubted value, apart from Mr. Austin's, it is the only one of the five which is likely to be found worth keeping.

DEREK VERSCHOYLE.

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