

A CHOICE OF KIPLING'S VERSE. Made by T. S. Eliot, with an essay on Rudyard Kipling. (Faber; 8s. 6d.)

That the war should cause a revival of interest in Kipling's work is not a matter for surprise; but it is, at first sight, surprising to find Mr. Eliot sponsoring such a revival. Beyond all question, he succeeds in his introductory essay in what he declares to be his principal object: to cause the reader 'to approach Kipling's verse with a fresh mind, and to regard it in a new light, and to read him as if for the first time'; and this is a cause for gratitude, even if one does not feel that his further point is wholly maintained.

Mr. Eliot's thesis is that Kipling did not intend to write poetry, but verse: there is poetry in his verse, 'but that is not what he is setting out to do.' The result of this is that, 'we are therefore inclined to dismiss the poems, by reference to poetic criteria which do not apply': 'I confess . . . that the critical tools which we are accustomed to use in analysing and criticising poetry do not seem to work.' But it is not made clear just what these criteria are which cannot be safely applied in the case of Kipling; and indeed there is an anxious note about this essay not found elsewhere in Mr. Eliot's criticism. Unquestionably, Kipling was a man of prodigious verbal dexterity, but we have the case of Mr. Auden to prove that this is not enough for the making of great verse. Mr. Eliot is not content to have Kipling judged 'solely by the standards of the "work of art,"' which are 'not meant to apply.' How then do we approach Kipling? In so far as his verse is the product of the creativity of man 'it has its own existence, apart from us; it was there before us and it will endure after us.' It is for ever made, and made well or ill; and that is the subject of artistic evaluation. Be it verse or poetry, it is designed to communicate, and criticism of it will bear both upon the experience communicated and the medium of communication. As Mr. Eliot has pointed out elsewhere, the first distinction to be practised in criticising poetry is that between the genuine and the sham. This involves an examination of language; and the result of Mr. Eliot's examination here is one from which it is easy to dissent—as in his comments upon the conclusion of *Danny Deever*. Nor is the position clarified when he institutes a somewhat complex comparison between Kipling and Dryden, while admitting that Kipling 'suffers in some respects from the comparison.' That 'in some respects' is an under-statement, and it would not be difficult to quote passages which would make it appear seriously so; but, judged by his best, to which he does not often attain, it seems to me that Kipling does not reach the level attained by Dryden very frequently indeed. For Kipling take the opening of *The Pro-Consuls*:

'The overfaithful sword returns the user
His heart's desire at price of his heart's blood.
The clamour of the arrogant accuser
Wastes that one hour we needed to make good';

and for Dryden, one of those passages quoted by Mr. Eliot in his *Homage* essay.

L.T.

LISTEN MANGAN. Poems by Ewart Milne. (Dublin, Sign of the Three Candles; 3s. 6d.)

These are poems of war and disaster; sometimes the flash of other men's battles seen from afar and reflected in a neutral sky, more often the struggle in the mind to be free from the platitudes that harden the heart. But the mood is always the same:

'We have waited and only hunger and war have answered,
Must we wait until night and the death roll over us?'

Yet here are invention and wit enough for half-a-dozen poets of the dessicated years between the two wars. The malady of the times has found a victim in Mr. Milne, but he is a victim who can follow his own fever:

'O mind soon shut upon the world,
O closing slowly mind, how can I hope
To bear the November of your sun.'

Under the occasional screech there is always a steady ground bass that will surely survive. Already there is evident a compassion that is almost unknown in present writing; and rarer still there is a gift to make us share it. A temporary unease, a haphazard choice of image and a failure to concentrate—all these would seem to be the conditions of a struggle that should make Mr. Milne much more than an adroit user of words. For that he is already.

I.E.

NOTICES

THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST. By Bernard Kelly, C.S.Sp. (Sheed & Ward; 5s.)

Father Kelly sets out to show in a non-technical way what the Gifts mean in the life of the ordinary Christian. Taking the idea of divine sonship as the key, he explains each Gift as God's means of helping his adopted children to overcome the difficulties they experience in living as members of his family. Although the analogy of human adoption is helpful, and is well worked out—at times laboriously—it is not entirely adequate. St. Thomas, whom the author professes to follow, teaches that the Gifts are necessary because of the imperfection inherent in Faith and Hope. It is not that habits of mind and conduct formed when we were mere dependents unfit us to live as God's children, but in this world we must live as children of a Father whom we do not fully know or possess. Our lives are governed by Faith in things unseen and Hope of what is not yet possessed. Because of these imperfections in the governing principles