

BEGIN HERE : A War-Time Essay. By Dorothy L. Sayers.
(Gollancz; 6s.)

BLACKFRIARS readers will have been prepared by *The Greatest Drama* and *Strong Meat* to expect much of this longer essay; and they will not be disappointed. There is all the vigour and the depth of the former books, and all their appositeness. *Begin Here* is a difficult book to review because there is such a multitude of things in the course of its 160 pages over which one would like to linger. Begin here and now to think, and will, and work, for the building of a sounder world; this is the theme. 'Otherwise, when the war is over, we shall find ourselves unprepared, and the aim we set out to achieve will remain exactly where we put it—far away in the future.' War can provide a great opportunity because it is 'the breaking-up of security and habit and the letting-in of energy upon the things that had become static and corrupt.' The root criticism of our civilisation is that it is causing men and women to become uncreative; we have degraded man from his full stature, his wholeness (theological man), by various stages of disruption: humanist man apart from God; rational man, the embodied intelligence; *homo sapiens*, the intelligent animal; the herd-man; psychological man, the response to environment; we are descended to the state at which a concept which reduces 'all history and all humanity to a mere expression in economic terms' can be 'generally accepted without protest.' There is little left of the image of God. The need then, primarily, is to discover 'a basis for our common life that shall not be purely economic'; to re-discover the creative man, the thinking man, the free and the creaturely man.

So the main lines of the argument run; and the innumerable valuable things to be met with on the way must be left for the reader to discover. It would indeed be difficult to estimate the good this book would do if all those who revel in the Wimsey stories were to read it—in the way Miss Sayers would have us do our reading.

One criticism must be offered. Miss Sayers accepts the theory that the Fall meant the emergence of self-consciousness, which is identified with the knowledge of good and evil. This view seems to take the strong meat out of doctrine in a way which one cannot help thinking uncharacteristic of the author.

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