

THE GOLDEN HORIZON. Edited by Cyril Connolly. (Weidenfeld and Nicolson; 25s.)

Already the forties have taken on the nostalgic air of an age that is gone. They were years of war and the disillusionment that followed after; but thanks largely to *Horizon* they were, too, a time when writers could feel that they had a right to be heard, and, despite every sort of difficulty, Mr Connolly saw to it that they were. If independent reviews are any sort of index of a national culture, then *Horizon* revealed much muddle of mind, it is true. But month by month it made open speech at least possible, and its editorial comments and its welcome to writers of such diversity of purpose gave one the sense of that tension which is the artist's opportunity. Its disappearance meant the end of an invigorating reminder that the creative writer is more than a luxury for times of peace; and its successors have still to reveal its sort of flair, and the literary distinction with which it was presented.

Mr Connolly's six-hundred-page selection omits his own 'Comments' (already republished in *Ideas and Places*) as well as articles on science, modern painting and music. Many *Horizon* articles, too, have been reprinted elsewhere and so do not appear in the anthology. But there remains a substantial book, ranging from the 'History of the War' (containing such admirable pieces of documentation as J. MacLaren-Ross's 'This Mortal Coil' and Alan Moorehead's 'Belsen') by way of 'Entertainments' (such as Antonia White's 'Moment of Truth') and 'Glimpses of Greatness' (including wonderfully evocative memoirs, such as Rose Macaulay on Virginia Woolf and Denton Welch on Sickert) to 'A Prospect of Literature' (with critical essays of the quality of Gerald Brenan's astringent 'Short Life of St John of the Cross'). And there is the poetry, which most of all reflects *Horizon's* special claim to have been a sensitive interpreter of its time.

Later generations who may ask: 'What were they thinking about then?' will fail to find the whole answer in *The Golden Horizon*. There is no Churchillian prose, nor are there wizard-prang jokes or complaints about queues. But they will find an astonishingly faithful picture of much of that time's pain and bewilderment; and something, too, of the artist's integrity which outlasts war and peace alike—the lovely sureness of Dylan Thomas's 'Refusal to mourn the death, by fire, of a child in London':

*After the first death, there is no other.*

I.E.