

## RECENT VERSE

By Wilfrid Gibson

Perhaps there has never been another period in which so much 'prentice-work in verse found its way into print, and the natural anxiety of the young in these precarious times to achieve publication is quite understandable.

A good deal of fumbling, inarticulate, and incoherent stuff is included in **More Poems from the Forces** (Routledge, pp. 324, 8s. 6d.), but, on the whole, the volume is remarkable for the amount of good work it contains. In reading it I listed some twenty writers whose work called for special appreciation, but the limits of space only allow me even to mention one or two of these. Henry Reed's poems were my most exciting discovery, and they, together with the profoundly moving pieces by Emanuel Litvinoff and Laurence Whistler, poets whose work I was already familiar with, would give distinction to any anthology. Some of Mr. John Pudney's terse and telling Air Force lyrics are, of course, included, and in **South of Forty** (Lane, pp. 31, 2s. 6d.) we have yet another series of these brief but ably executed flights.

Miss E. M. Almedingen, in **Out of Seir** (Lane, pp. 32, 3s. 6d.) and Mr. William Soutar in **But the Earth Abideth** (Dakers, pp. 62, 5s.) are more ambitious. They have each attempted, and with no little success, to give a philosophic interpretation of the contemporary crisis. Miss Almedingen's version is the more eloquent and sensuous of the two, but both poems suffer from an excess of verbiage and much unnecessary repetition of their thesis. As Mr. Lawrence Durrell has warningly labelled his first collection of verse **A Private Country** (Faber, pp. 76, 6s.), the trespassing reviewer can hardly grumble when he finds himself involved in a thicket of unintelligibility and must, I presume, be content to express his gratitude for the occasional gleams of illumination that penetrate the prevailing obscurity.

Mr. Geoffrey Grigson is seldom obscure, but in the trifling effusions contained in **Under the Cliff** (Routledge, pp. 44, 5s.) he exploits most of the other already outmoded tricks of the verse-writers of the thirties. Yet in "The Children" and "Green Glass" he has managed to produce real poems. Mr. R. C. Ormerod is a new-comer who expressly reacts against recent literary tendencies; but though his **Ferns in the Waste** (Macmillan, pp. 36, 4s. 6d.) is eloquent and explicit enough, this first volume contains little else than somewhat superficial poetical exercises. **Poems by Rowyer Nichols** (Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 67, 7s. 6d.) is a posthumous collection of the accomplished verses of a cultured amateur in the traditional manner.