

LUCK ON THE WING

By Charles Hanson Towne

THERE is still a prejudice against war books. Coningsby Dawson recently wrote, and wisely, that it was a crime for publishers to feel this prejudice, and keep from the public the very stories that would prove most valuable—authentic records of men who, busy at the perilous game of fighting, were too occupied to sit down and write until the great game was done.

Major Elmer Haslett has written, in "Luck on the Wing", just the kind of book we need, now that we all have some perspective—though little, I admit—on the war. It is full of the fire and fervor of youth, good-natured, natural—a splendid picture of the fighting airman and the life he led behind, over, and beyond the lines. There is no affectation here, no strain-

ing for dramatic effects; yet one senses the drama of the tale in every line, and I defy anyone to pick it up without finishing it. The best thing one can say of a book is that it is fine to read in bed—as I read this. I forgot the hour, and my lamp remained burning for most of the night. I simply couldn't put the volume down.

The author records at the very outset how he preferred the clean air to the rat-haunted trenches, and it was that human desire to escape from the muddy, disagreeable ground that made him become a flying man. I am glad he left the infantry, for if he hadn't we would not have had this volume—one of the best the war has brought forth.

His opening anecdote of how he flaunted himself in the face of seven Hun ships, without knowing they were the enemy, is enchantingly told. There is no vainglory, only a delicious appreciation of the situation after he came back to earth and was greeted for his heroism by the enthusiastic French. And he was sport enough to blow to a glorious dinner that night, with red wine and champagne!

The book reads more like a novel than the record of a warrior. There is an engaging chapter on a certain girl called Eileen, and here again Major Haslett is not afraid to confess that the joke is decidedly on him. Indeed, all through his story he accents this point. A happy writer he is, and there should be other work from his gifted pen.

I have said it is a fine book to read in bed; I can go even further and add that it is also a corking book to read aloud. Get it, and read it to someone.

Luck on the Wing. By Elmer Haslett. E. P. Dutton and Co.