

Remarque on Himself

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I hear from Erich Maria Remarque, the thirty-one-years-old author of »All Quiet on the Western Front,« that he has no intention of replying to the numerous attacks and calumnies that have been made upon him by those German Junkers who dislike his book for its anti-war tendencies.

Among other libels they have accused him – falsely of course – of having never been a soldier, of having stolen his manuscripts from dead comrades, and of having written his book to the order of the Entente!

A Modest Author

Remarque considers that replying to personal attacks is a proof of injured vanity and injured self-esteem. Self-esteem, however, can only be permitted to an author who has completed his life's work.

For himself, he considers that it would be ridiculous for him to claim to be a good author »because of a single book.«

These remarks have a special interest for me, because when I met Remarque in Berlin some five months ago he seemed obsessed with the fear that he might never be able to write another book.

This dread of being labelled »a one-book author« haunts many writers. Obviously, Remarque himself has not yet overcome it. Indeed, he is almost too modest about his talents. Excessive modesty, however, is not a common fault among authors, and when it is sincere, as in Remarque's case, it is rather attractive.