

BLETCHLEYPARK

The Canal at Simpson

Outside another joyous day
Of golden sunshine and warm sleepy airs
Passes all but unheeded while the brow
Sweat-beaded, furrow-lined is bent upon
The latest problem, till the beating brain
Worn out with ill-success can think no more.

How pleasant then, when evening cools the sky
To wander easefully along the side,
Of this deserted waterway, to feel
The quiet strength of waters deep, to smell
Wafting of scent from flowers and to hear
The rustling of the dry dead grass, the shrill
Buzzing of gnats a-jostling in the air
And now and then the plops of feeding fish,
Or sparrow flurrying from the hedgerow to see
The timid moorhen scurrying from the bank
Breaking the water's magic surface till
At length she struggles into heavy flight
And voices her protest in jarring notes.
The dragon-fly gliding on rigid wing
This way and that along his hunting-ground
The fat black slugs in search of food or love
And tiny looping caterpillars that cross
Vast spaces twixt the blooms of ungrown fruits
Of patient blackberries; sometimes to watch

The jerky flutterings of clumsy moths,
And solemn stare of moist skinned squatting frogs;
To mark as night falls in the western sky
(Once gold and pink, now purple, blue and grey)
The coldening hues of sunset then to turn
One's steps for home through the dewed meadow grass
Where cattle lie and chew with sleepy eyes,
Unfurrowed brows, and large soft luscious mouths
In easy rhythmic motion where from afar
The plaintive calls of lambs, soon reassured
By low-pitched soothing, baas of ewes, are heard,
And distant cooings of smooth-throated doves;

So rested and refreshed in soul to lie
In dreamless slumber till a new day dawns.

James Wyllie, Bletchley Park 1942 - 1945