

BOOK REVIEWS

MORE RHYME THAN REASON

(1) *A RHYMER'S SKETCH BOOK.*
(2) *IDYLLS OF AN IDLER.* Both by James H. Elliott. Waikato and King Country Press, Hamilton.

TIME was when poetry was an ascent into the higher realities (Wordsworth) or an escape into sentimentality (T. Moore). Tennyson blended both the ascent and the sentimentality. J. H. Elliott attempts to do so, but his efforts are not always successful. For three or four lines he keeps in step and then stumbles.

"Rhymes—Rhymes—Rhymes,
Through my attic they scamper along,
As high in the beltry, the chimies
Peel out their incessant ding-dong;
Beating their notes on my brain, in demand
To fashion them into a song."

Sometimes Mr. Elliott fashions, but quite often he fumbles.

Samuel Butler was of opinion that
"One for sense and one for rhyme,
Is quite sufficient at one time."

Mr. Elliott does not always bother to maintain that not very exacting proportion, but if there is such a thing as honest-to-goodness sentimentality, he has it. Here are the two last verses of "Ave Maria."

"The Crown to the stand called its witness,
A man with the marks of estate
Who came, with a wrong to be righted,
A duty to serve—and the fate
Of the prisoner hung on a question.
But ere it was answered, there flowed
Through a window, the breath of an organ
And borne on its pinions—an ode.
A hush, on the actors lighted
A voice led prayer, as it rolled
Towards Heaven its Ave Maria,
And gripped in that mystical hold,
The Courthouse changed to the Chapel,
The sinners bent in their pews,
And an Angel of Mercy recorded
The answer—"I do not accuse."

KIWIS WITH VOICES

SING AS WE GO. By John E. Reed. Illustrated. A. H. & A. W. Reed.

THE official history of the Kiwi Concert Party has still to be written. This is an informal and racy one, but it has the merit of being honest and unpretentious. Mr. Reed arrived in the

Middle East in 1940 attached to an infantry battalion, which later took him to the fighting in Greece. On his return to Egypt he was transferred to the New Zealand Entertainment Unit, and joined the chorus of the Kiwi Concert Party. The next two years found him entertaining in Egypt, Syria, Malta and Palestine. Back in New Zealand on a furlough tour, Mr. Reed found a demand for an account of the unit's activities. He knew the story, and has now written it. But although his is a personal account, seen from the inside, Mr. Reed has been careful not to obtrude himself. He makes it plain that Army Entertainment Units don't live in luxury, nor are they travelling civilian companies. The orchestra erects the marquee, the chorus is the stage crew, and it is not a signal for temperament when the desert turns their make-up into sandpaper or plays tricks with the curtains. Mr. Reed has chosen a good title, but singing is only part of the story. He has much more to tell us, and tells it well.

SEX IN PRINT

MEETING AND MATING: The Mental and Physical Aspects of Love and Marriage. By Joan and Bruce Cochran. A. H. & A. W. Reed. 10/-.

SEX in cold print can easily be ridiculous, and the authors of this book have not entirely escaped that danger. But they have almost escaped it, and that, in such a field, is a real achievement. An acuter sense of the ludicrous might have saved them from one or two absurdities—take Page 88, for example—but if nothing may be written about sex at which someone may laugh a good deal of useful information will remain undisclosed. It is the first New Zealand book on the subject that can really rank as a book, and it contains just about everything that a wholesome New Zealander requires to know. It is a book of courage, of delicacy, of high-mindedness, and will assuredly and deservedly sell freely, even at 10/- a copy. But it is necessary to speak plainly. The authors' purpose is not birth control, but sex expression (as distinct from irresponsible indulgence). In

spite of their earnest and even religious attitude, their aim is to teach people—preferably but not necessarily married—how to yield to their sex impulses without incurring the natural consequences. They quote Eric Gill. It would be interesting to know if they are aware of his horrible phrase for such unnaturalness.



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a class, but we don't want to put our hands in our pockets to make smaller classes possible. But the mass-instruction is mitigated as much as possible, and there is very little regimentation. Each pupil fits into the necessary routine; there is no coercive control, no fear of punishment."

"Well, you seem to have all the answers. But I raise one more question. How long has it taken this teacher to get this degree of control?"

"No doubt she has been half a lifetime learning her difficult business; that of exercising a necessary authority while hardly seeming to exercise it at all, that of keeping everything and everybody in line while allowing each pupil a maximum of self-direction."

A Dog on a Chain

"You think modern teachers actually achieve that?"

"Some don't, of course, but beyond any question the best of them do. Instead of doing docilely what they are told, their pupils do willingly what they are asked. Instead of being made to behave, they behave of their own accord."

"But that is not progress—it's a revolution."

"Call it what you like."

"It is too good to be true."

"You can easily find out for yourself."

"Children are not made that way."

"What way?"

"To enjoy school."

"What do you think they enjoy?"

"Idleness and excitement."

"Like a dog on a chain?"

"What is?"

"The combination of idleness and excitement. It is impossible. You may have one or the other, but not both at once."

"You mean that a dog on the chain is idle, and a dog off the chain happy?"

"Exactly."

"And the same with school children?"

"Precisely the same. Restraint is unnecessary when they are interested. Interest is restraint."

"Even with dogs?"

"Well, I am a teacher and not a dog-trainer, but I have been told that the first step in teaching a dog tricks is to get him to look at you. Discipline begins with interest."

—RRR.