

misses his effect, which could have been deeply tragic, but instead hardly causes the lift of an eyebrow, the last dénouement falling particularly flat. Even if he were more concerned with Gregory Dawson, the narrator, in whose reveries most of the action takes place, and the actual fate of his youthful ambition to write, he does not achieve more than a sketch of a commonplace mind, supported by a sturdy cynicism and a gift for robust phraseology.

"It is the bright day brings forth the adder," says the title page, and Mr. Priestley's own particular little snake in the grass does dart its head out of his pocket only once: I mean his obsession with events getting out of their right place in the time sequence. There is an eccentric lady who has the gift of second sight. She uses it, but how this helps the development of the story I cannot tell.

In *Bright Day*, J. B. Priestley paints brilliant scenes, everything in which is perfect, the people and what they say and what they think. But the effect of the whole is more trivial than that of the parts. There is a failure of integration somewhere, and the novel ends leaving us grateful for some things, but fundamentally sent empty away.

Among these good things are some shrewd and forcible comments on the modern film industry, and like the hero, we are all "tired of seeing a wonderful medium, with which you could do almost anything, bitched up by money-lenders and salesmen and second-rate solicitors on the make." No names, no packdrill.

IMPERIAL THEME

NEW ZEALAND AT WAR. By Kenneth R. Hancock. A. H. & A. W. Reed.

THIS covers in one volume the entire history of New Zealand's effort in the war. The author has succeeded in summarising in a little over three hundred pages a vast amount of material. The three Services are treated separately, RNZAF achievements being related with some attention to individual prowess which, in the nature of things, was not possible in the accounts of the work of the Navy and the Army. There is also a section on the Home Front, and here Mr. Hancock has found space to deal with such topics as the reluctance of some members of the furlough drafts to return overseas while Grade one men remained in civil life in New Zealand, or the treatment of conscientious objectors. A useful feature is that each section has its separate index.

Although Mr. Hancock has not altogether sunk to the earth under the prodigious weight of so many unwieldy facts, this compilation is not uniformly easy to read, and here the soggy typography does little to help him. But in a work of this character the essential achievement is in the ground covered. Mr. Hancock does not himself embark on any critical assessment of operations; he does, however, quote Churchill or Montgomery or Admiral Vian. *New Zealand at War* gives some idea of the war as it affected New Zealand and of the men who served and how they bore themselves.

—David Hall.

ARCHITECTURE

PLANNING 1 (An occasional publication), 2/6.

THIS magazine which aims to set architecture in its social context is the voice of a vigorous group of young

Aucklanders, but is valid and important for the whole of New Zealand.

In the near future, this country will have to build the equivalent of a dozen new towns, and we have had up to now no serious criticism of architecture as a part of the total environment in which people live. If, for example, there is any governing idea which takes notice of the whole nature of man in the minds of those who are now filling the Hutt Valley with houses, it is not yet apparent.

Even so rudimentary an idea as the street is unknown in New Zealand—the natural assumption that houses, shops, church, school and offices when seen together should present, in spite of their differences, a closely integrated pattern. There is no art, no aspect of human culture in which this land has so much to learn as that treated in this review.

Planning 1 gets to work on this state of affairs, but of course it does not get very far. It takes six pages to have a good swipe at the design for Wellington Cathedral, a negative article which is the most heated in the issue. A. R. D. Fairburn in an introduction expects that "its contributors will at times talk a certain amount of nonsense." In this number the nonsense is confined mainly to typography, proving that architects are about as wise in a printing shop as you would expect.

And there, of course, is the snag. If the architect is to blossom into a planner of everything in which we live, move and have our being, then we must show evidence of understanding a great deal more than the theories of functional building. Mumford has said recently in England that it is easy to build ideal towns, but it is more difficult to make people like living in them.

For that it is necessary for planners to be humble before other people's habits, preferences, and knowledge. It is necessary to have so wide a sympathy that they can persuade our chaotic cities and citizens into better courses. But these qualities are not often found in young people on a crusade.

—H.W.

A TASTY DISH

THE MANATEE. By Nancy Bruff. Golden Bough Publishing Co., Melbourne.

THE publishers announce with the Australian edition of this American novel, apparently thinking it a recommendation, that it is to be filmed. It is straight Hollywood now. The principal character is what followers of serials call a "baddy," a monster of lust and cruelty, but just the same he is allowed to turn into a "goody" at the end. There is an engaging transparency about the way the ingredients are put into this novel: with 2lb. of violence mix 2lb. of shredded youthful fixation, add 1 quart of rum and water, simmer gently and add slowly 1lb. of comic relief, chopped up small, and 1 dozen seductions when near to boiling point; cook for 250 pages and serve quickly in heat-proof scallops. The book's setting is among the whalers of Nantucket Island in the first half of last century, and the period atmosphere is supplied by giving the characters names like Jabez and Piety.

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