LIFE AND THE LEGEND

By C. E. Vulliamy, Michael

YRON is a subject "made" for the biographer. But have he be convicted. the biographers been made for Byron? From Trelawny to Nicholson and Quennell, they have wavered, making up their minds somewhat arbitrarily about the central "facts" (still only opinions), distracting the reader with much that is picturesque, highly-coloured, and extraordinary. Some have simpered; others have snarled. Each according to his great commandments are, to hate your lights has exploited the marvellously eccentric English "milord," who existed apparently to territy spinsters at home and to convince Latins abroad that hypocritical England can, every now and then, produce, and unanimously reject, a wholly natural man. Byron is a "gift" to the biographer, but a Greek gift,

Among the biographers of Byron C. E. Vulliamy must be accorded a distinguished place, because of his fairness, his balance, and his common sense. For him Byron is neither fool nor knave, nor something nasty in the woodpile. He draws out the essential improbability of the incest story. Where all is so nebu- abandoned England for Italy and Italy be completely exculpated; still less can

Byron, a great hater of cant, was eccentric to the point of madness. He did not seek women, but many women sought him. He usually got on well with their husbands, particularly in Italy, where the custom of the country favoured gentlemanly agreements in these matters. Macaulay's definition of Byronism as "a system in which the two neighbour and love your neighbour's wife" is only half true.

Mr. Vulliamy himself offers a sounder definition of Byronism as "the assertion of the individual in his own right, ignoring completely any social or religious context." Again he writes of the Byronic philosophy as made up of four elements, "revolt, individualism, romantic expressionism, and a constant emphasis on emotional values." Byron succeeded to his title unexpectedly after an unhappy childhood, ran through a lot of money, made an inappropriate marriage, loved his children born in or out of wedlock,

lous, so contradictory, Byron cannot ever for Greece, helped the Greek revolt with money and his own presence, died nobly, wrote some masterfully colloquial poetry. Mr. Villiamy succeeds in giving us a full picture of a human being neither an angel nor a monster, and places Byron firmly in his social and historical context.

> Mr. Vulliamy's own style is pungent and vigorous, and his side-judgments have sometimes an almost Johnsonian absoluteness: "The minds of women do not operate in accordance with an intelligible system, and it would be foolish to apply to their dealings the usual standards of logic and honour. But at least they have motives."

—David Hall

DIFFERING LANDSCAPES

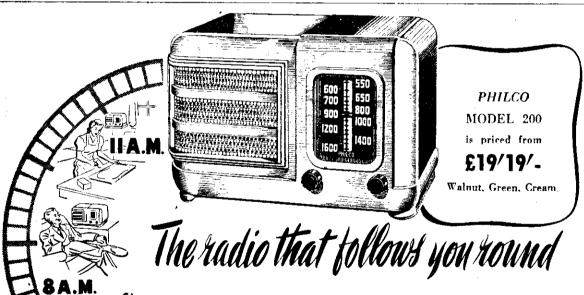
LITERATURE AND LIFE: ADDRESSES TO THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION. George G. Harrap and Co., London.

THIS is the sort of book one expects from the English Association. It is about literature in some form, or its connection with life. It is by persons who know their subjects and can write, Given to small select audiences, these

LORD BYRON "A gift to the biographer, but a Greek gift"

papers deserved a wider circulation, which the Association provides by assembling them here. The book may be likened to a day's walk through widely differing landscapes. Let us imagine that on this walk there are pleasant water-meadows where one can rest under trees. There are parish

(continued on next page)



PHILCO
Famous for Quality the World Over

All round the clock . . all round the house . . . PHILCO'S little plastic beauty is your brightest companion ever. It gets vou out of bed with a song, and keeps you company in the kitchen. It entertains with soft dinner music, then gives your choice of favourite programmes all evening long. It does all these things because it is light and portable. And because it's powerful enough not to need an aerial for all ordinary listening Plus the fact that it has superb life-like tonal quality seldom heard in such a compact radio. In short-hecause it's a PHILCO Superheterodyne built for high performance and low price—built as only the world's sales-leaders in radio could build it.

PH.348





those weaning worries



ANKORIA

BABY FOOD

When Mother can't feed baby from birch—or when normal weaning-time birth—or when normal weaning-time comes . it's time to buy your first supply of Ankoria. Baby will like Ankoria from the very first bottle . . and thrive on it too, because Ankoria Is the complete, balanced food containing all the health-building elements, Ankoria is at your Chemists in the full 16 oz. and 2½ lb. tins.

FREE! BABY BOOK - in a hurry! Send for Free Baby Book, with feeding tables, to N.Z. Co-operative Dairy Co. Ltd., Auckland. Books despatched "air maji" if expressly requested.