

feeling for contemporary tastes. He has been assiduous in collecting, packaging, and labelling anthologies on the higher middle brow level. There is nothing obscure or high flown about his judgments, when he makes judgments, but his writing is easy and elliptical enough to convey, rather flatteringly, that he knows his readers are almost as familiar with his subject as he is.

This album covers a century, beginning in the eighteen-forties, when the middle class was still struggling to establish itself, and *Punch* was a radical paper, "conducted by chartists, deists, atheists, anarchists and socialists, to a man," and ending in our own forties. The hundred years of technological development have seen *Punch* become staid and man flippantly fearful. The pace of the change in society accelerated immensely in the last two decades. It's a long way from Keene to Acanthus, but though the elapsed time may be less, the spiritual division between Beer-bohm's flapper of 1929 and Giles's chunky, primitive survivals of World War II is immeasurably greater.

Leonard Russell shows us these things without pushing himself forward, and shows them within the covers of a satisfyingly produced and colourfully decorated book.

NO LASTING PEACE

A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY. By Laurence Sterne. Introduction by John Cowper Powys. Illustrated by Brian Robb. (Macdonald Illustrated Classics. 8/6).

"WHEN man is at peace with man, how much lighter than a feather is the heaviest of metals in his hand! He pulls out his purse, and holding it airily and uncompressed, looks round him, as if he sought for an object to share it with . . . In doing this, I felt every vessel in my frame dilate, the arteries beat all cheerily together, and every power which sustained life, performed it with so little friction, that 't would have confounded the most physical precieuse in France; with all her materialism, she could scarce have called me a machine."

So Laurence Sterne describes one of his brief moments of peace; the peace he pursued in physical journeys over Europe, and inward, spiritual journeys through himself; never finding it for long because he did not realise that abiding peace is not to be found by a man whose centre is himself. Tuberculosis, the physical product of his conflict, pursued him, heightened his sensibility, as it has done for so many writers, and burnt him up quickly with a bright flame. He left this elusive, delightfully constructed, intricate, fundamentally unsatisfying book, full of signs of the power in the man that never found its true release.

—G. le F.Y.

THE WRITER HIMSELF

WRITERS ON WRITING. Selected and Introduced by Walter Allen. Phoenix House. New Zealand price, 19/3.

MR. ALLEN is an English novelist who has obviously put himself to a lot of trouble selecting and arranging critical observations by nearly 70 writers. He has divided the book into two main parts, one for the poets and one for the novelists; he gives us over 250 pages; and his unpretentious introduction explains the principles that have guided his selection. (With the aid of quotations from Professor Coomaraswamy he also explains why no pre-Renaissance writer is quoted.) The result is the sort of commonplace-book which most writers



THE FOUR BOOKS to be reviewed in the ZB Book Review session at 9.15 p.m. on Sunday, March 20, will be "Forever to Remain," by E. V. Timms; "The Singing Room," by Norman Berrow; "The Meaning of Marxism," by G. D. H. Cole; and "Sir Apirana Ngata and Maori Culture," by Eric Ramsden. The photograph above shows Frank A. Simpson, who will review "The Singing Room"

compile for themselves less elaborately—and much more haphazardly I'm afraid. An advantage of Mr. Allen's arrangement, for example, is that immediately after a theory lifted from Wordsworth's preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, you find a criticism of it from Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*.

With all proper respect for Professor Coomaraswamy, however, it may be questioned whether Mr. Allen has been altogether wise in limiting his selection. His first poet is Spenser, and if it wasn't for the time limitation one's mind would probably tend to think of Horace. (His first novelist is Fielding—which is satisfactory at first sight, until one thinks of Cervantes.) But apart from the time limitation, it is inevitable that nobody will be completely satisfied by the selection. There is nothing from Hawthorne, Melville, Hopkins, Turgenev, Cocteau, just to mention a few names; what there is from Dryden, Fielding, Smollett, Goethe, Tolstoy, Gide, Proust, is not to my mind altogether satisfactorily chosen—and in any case we don't get enough of them; and there is a distinct oversupply from Henry James's prefaces. (On at least one point I can put Mr. Allen right. He says that Maupassant's preface to *Pierre et Jean*, so important for the naturalist writer, does not appear to have been previously translated—but it appeared quite a number of years ago in a Maupassant series published by Knopf, and translated by Ernest Boyd.) Nevertheless, there are selections that, in my experience, are distinctly hard to come by—such as Poe's fascinating (and probably wholly fallacious) account of how he wrote *The Raven*. And taken all round the book should strongly appeal to the intelligent general reader. It is certainly a handy one for the busy literary journalist. We should all be grateful to Mr. Allen. —Frank Sargeson



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