

a colony should not be founded. This book does little to correct Wakefield's view. The Swan River settlers were ill chosen; the land, which was not surveyed in advance, was sold or granted in haphazard fashion. As a result, the colony, which formed the nucleus of what to-day is the State of Western Australia, barely survived its first few years of existence. Treated with extreme parsimony by the Imperial Government, it was frequently left for long periods without supplies, and whether its inhabitants enjoyed qualified abundance or sank to famine level depended upon the uncertain arrival of supply ships. Once or twice the settlers were reduced to the verge of starvation, while on one rare occasion they were able to boast possession of every necessity with the single exception of fish sauce.

The colony owed its survival very largely to the capability and exertions of its first governor, Sir James Stirling, the one outstanding figure in the book. Indeed, Mr. Uren never seems quite certain whether he is writing a history or a biography. Nor is he apt in his choice of what to select and what to reject from the mass of material at his disposal. He appears, in fact, to have surrendered to a sense of compulsion which forbade him to omit many trivial details that could well be dispensed with. In his anxiety to inform us exactly on every point, he falls into the sin of repetition. On five separate occasions, for instance, he tells us, directly or indirectly, that Drummond, the official agriculturalist, was without salary.

The early history of the founding of British colonies consists very largely of correspondence between enthusiasts eager to settle the new world and officials of the Colonial Office, anxious that nothing shall be done whatever. This play of hopeful suggestion and discouraging reply, conjures up a vision of active, ambitious, well-meaning men suffering agonies of frustration on the one hand, and, on the other, of comfortable secretaries penning dull effusions in ponderous officialese to be submitted for some minister's signature. The vision is not a pleasant one; the actual process is unedifying, and its narration should be reduced to a minimum. In *Land Looking West*, Mr. Uren has allowed the preliminary correspondence to monopolise a large part of his first seven chapters.

Apart from these shortcomings, the author's research has obviously been thorough and conscientious. If he has failed to produce a work that will be read for its own intrinsic literary or historical merit, he has at least written a reliable and definitive handbook for people with a special interest in Western Australia.

—R. M. Burdon

GOOD STORIES

FOUR COUNTRIES. By William Plomer, Jonathan Cape. English price, 10/6.

WILLIAM PLOMER'S skill in the short story form, characterised by a clear, detached vision and an absence of distracting technical devices, is at its best in this selection chosen from the many stories he has published during the past twenty years. Moreover, the inclusion of "The Night Before the War," which originally appeared in *Penguin New Writing*, reveals that Mr. Plomer has sometimes concealed his identity behind the pseudonym Robert Pagan.

In the introduction the author states his case for the dramatic story which

illuminates a conflict or crisis in the lives of people, as opposed to the impressionistic sketch. And most of the stories in *Four Countries* are built about tensions arising from frictions of class or race. In "The Wedding Guest" a woman who had risen in Edwardian society and who had come down again, recalls a grotesque memory to the disadvantage of her social betters. "Ula Masondo" expresses the tragic predicament of African natives following the impact of Westernism and the destruction of tribal life. "A Piece of Good Luck," an ambitious and highly successful long story, traces the history of an awkward, bashful Japanese village girl who goes alone to work in Tokyo. In the stories of Greece the natives, sensuous and seemingly corrupt, emerge from their encounters with Nordic visitors superior in vitality and uninhibited grace.

William Plomer has shared in the life of peoples in the exotic countries about which he writes. His stories are expressions of rich experience, and not of the superficial interest of a tourist. Like his confessed masters, De Maupassant and Ivan Bunin (author of "The Gentleman from San Francisco"), he succeeds in establishing passion and meaning within the limits of the short story.

—John Reece Cole

THE MAORI PEOPLE

THE MAORI PEOPLE AND US. by Norman Smith, the Maori Purposes Fund Board. A. H. and A. W. Reed. Wellington, 15/-.
THE MAORI TOHUNGA. By Johannes C. Andersen, Thos. Avery and Sons Ltd., New Plymouth.

The Maori People and Us is an honest and courageous book written with a strong sense of purpose, that purpose being to bring about a better understanding of the position and problems of the Maori people through fuller knowledge of Maori-pakeha relations during the past century. Norman Smith is an experienced official with a background of thirty years' work in Maori
(continued on next page)



BBC photograph
PROFESSOR ARNOLD TOYNBEE, whose work as an historian will be discussed in the ZB Book Review session on July 31. D. C. Somervell's abridgment of the "Study of History" will be reviewed by Professor F. L. W. Wood. "Civilisation on Trial" will be reviewed by R. M. Burdon, and Toynbee's own voice will be heard in a recording. The session will also include a review of J. C. Beaglehole's "Exploration of the Pacific," by W. T. G. Airey. The session will be chaired by Dr. Peter Munz, of Wellington.



Q: I am forty and I am fat, and I feel well all the time. Why should I take steps to reduce?

A: Because you are straining your heart and blood vessels, running the risk of getting diabetes or gall-bladder disease. In brief, because you are shortening your life.

When you do reduce, follow your doctor's instructions.

ISSUED BY THE NEW ZEALAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

Some Notable Non-fiction

THE FREEDOM OF NECESSITY, J. D. Bernal, F.R.S., 23/3 posted. Essays on the application of scientific principle to the development of civilisation by the brilliant scientist, an outstanding leader of modern thought.

THE ATOMIC AGE, 10/- posted. The most significant event of our age is discussed in all its implications by a group of world-famed authorities, including Bertrand Russell and Professors Oliphant and Blackett.

A MAN CALLED WHITE, Walter White, 20/6 posted. The inspiring autobiography of a great man, white—but yet a negro, in which is pictured the terrible extent of negro oppression in the U.S.A.

EXPERIMENT IN THE FILM, edited by Roger Manvell, 18/6 posted. A collection of essays by the leading experts of all countries dealing with the great role of experiment in developing the newest of the arts.

WELLINGTON CO-OPERATIVE BOOK SOCIETY LIMITED.

MODERN BOOKS 48A MANNERS STREET, WELLINGTON, C.I., N.Z.