

BOOK REVIEWS (Cont'd.)

(continued from previous page)

by being paralleled with that of Gilles de Rais, brilliant Marshal of France, who fought with her, protected her and then forsook her to seek the Devil. The lives of both are amply documented, Joan's particularly so. Francis Winwar's researches have given a book that must have been as absorbing to write as it is to read. The subject, of course, will always provoke argument. Her interpretation of Joan is the generally accepted one of the illiterate peasant girl inspired, guided, warned and, in the brief hour of her abjuration, forsaken by her Voices. The portrait lives, from the quiet days of Domrémy, through the military miracles, to her humiliation, trial and death.

Until their crowning of the ingrate Charles, Gilles rides in glory with her, but he cannot decide whether Joan is indeed La Pucelle or a Limb of the Fiend. It is a corollary of the age, no less than an indictment of the man, that this deeply religious aesthete of murder, living for the joys of luxurious excesses and the exquisite tortures of penance, should have believed there is no sin so vile it cannot be expiated. Gilles's portrait is not as superbly convincing as that of the maid whose exalted vision shook the entire feudal age.

The author suggests the probable explanation when she describes the depositions at his trial: "records of such bestial callousness that the mind, incredulous, refuses to accept them." The hand she says, is numb; it is also, very occasionally, turgid.

The two protagonists, one of God and the Devil, one of God, move against an authentically drawn background, France war-ravaged and famine-racked. The bibliography and the illustrations are good.

—C.M.B.

FOR THE ALL-SEEING EYE

ROOF BOSSES IN MEDIEVAL CHURCHES.
by C. J. P. Cave. Cambridge University Press. English price, 35/-.

HIGH up in the roofs of medieval churches, where the unaided eye is often unable to see them, are thousands of carved figures which the old craftsmen executed with the same care and thoroughness as they bestowed on the more accessible work which everyone could see. Beginning with an interest in the quire of Winchester Cathedral, Mr. Cave studied roof bosses in other places, and realised that telephotography might reveal unsuspected glories. The result was a collection of over eight thousand telephotographs, mostly of roof bosses. This book contains a represen-

tative selection of these, including some from Europe. There are seven introductory chapters of explanation, 367 photographs, and two appendices, one on particular churches, and the other on photographic methods. The work is splendidly produced.

—J.M.B.

MIDDLE WEST

TIME WILL DARKEN IT, by William Maxwell. Faber and Faber. English price, 12/6.

WILLIAM MAXWELL'S novel is an American one, the year being 1912, and the scene a small prairie town. The general tone of the story is somewhat curious for a modern writer, particularly in view of the fact that Mr. Maxwell is one of the editors of the *New Yorker*. It is not unlike that of *David Harum*, if one allows for some shift in time and place—though with the difference that Mr. Maxwell is not to be taken in by the mere surfaces of things. He painstakingly documents the prosperous mid-western middle-class ritual of the period, but at the same time makes the reader feel the unhappy tensions, family and social, that continually tended to subvert it. For good measure he also traces some of the undercurrents of that equally mysterious, though probably much less imbecile ritual, that is related to the dark beginnings of the life of men upon the earth. The past, in Mr. Maxwell's view, despite the

authority of Henry Ford, is not bunk—and this view, it should be noted, lines up with what appears to be a new or re-discovered tendency in American fiction. In a recent story, for example, Miss Eudora Welty attempts, in American terms, to recreate the story of Danae being visited by the god.

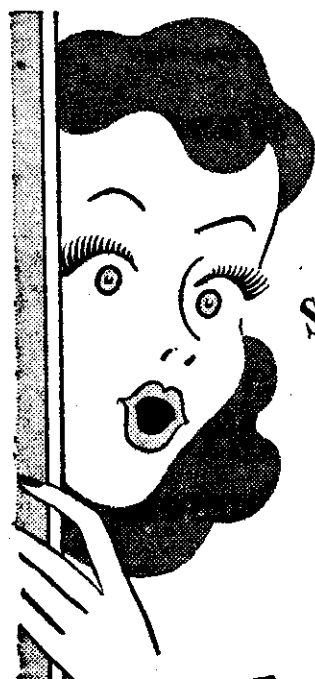
Taken in its entirety *Time Will Darken It* is an interesting novel, smoothly and competently written as one would expect from an editor of the *New Yorker*; but it is dull in parts, and the author's comments are sometimes naive—suggesting a contrast with the stories of Sherwood Anderson, whose naive dealing with similar material was always the right sort. Mr. Maxwell's is very often the wrong sort.

—F.S.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE Children's Gift Book (Odhams Press, London, through Whitcombe and Tombs, 8/6) is in a somewhat old-fashioned tradition; but there are stories by Elizabeth Bowen as well as by Enid Blyton; and the mixture, although a little odd, is interesting.

BALZAC's story *The Fatal Skin* is based on a legend; but in the mind of the master the fantasy becomes a blend of irony, realism and tragedy. The book has now been issued in the attractive format of the Novel Library (Hamish Hamilton, English price 6/-).



SLOW? SLOW? Who said SLOW?

"Somebody told me electrical Cooking was slow. Well it isn't—not with a Neeco Electric Range."

These fast Neeco elements quickly reach the required temperatures and stay there with the smallest possible current consumption. Neeco speed means lower electricity bills. And the Neeco is fast in another way. Those gleaming enamel surfaces are quick to clean as a china plate.

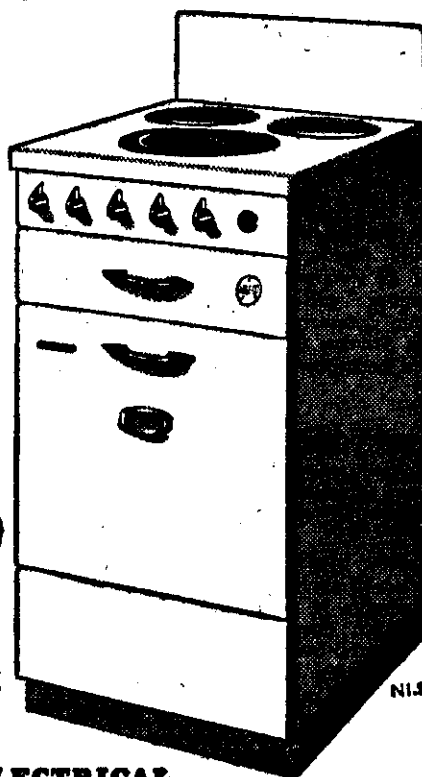
"Slow but sure! You're kidding with that old saying. Neeco's changed that to FAST and SURE. No guesswork! Perfect cooking results always."

NEECO

Electric Ranges

THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL
AND ENGINEERING COMPANY LIMITED

AUCKLAND, WELLINGTON, CHRISTCHURCH, DUNEDIN, HAMILTON, WANGANUI, HASTINGS.



CATHEDRAL

ELECTRIC DOOR CHIMES

BRING TONE TO YOUR HOME

THE IDEAL GIFT
RECOMMENDED BY
AUNT DAISY

Designed in translucent cream and walnut plastic with gleaming brass or chromium tubes.

Two lovely resonant notes for the front door and one for the back in Brass.

Price 23/7/6. Chromium 23/17/6.

EVERY HOME SHOULD HAVE ONE

stocked by
ALL LEADING ELECTRICAL,
FURNISHING AND HARDWARE
STORES

The New Scientific rat killer that KILLS AT A TOUCH



Sprinkle RANTU around rat holes and runways... the rat picks up the dust, licks his feet and dies within 12 or 48 hours, usually outdoors. 100% effective.

This special preparation of Alpha Naphthyl Thiourea is now available at all stores in 3oz tins or larger sizes.



Distributors: T. A. MACALISTER LTD.,
12 Albert St., Auckland.