

BOOKS

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an eccentric himself, always feeling he must play a part, being driven to disgust at himself by something higher which cannot be too well expressed by his pen, and forcing him to jump from one thing to another, from gardens to Frank Buchman, from prima donnas to pacifism—in all a queer mixture of affectation and sincerity, like the book itself, from which a most excellent, if unintentional, portrait of Nichols emerges, clearer, indeed, than his own photographic frontispiece. —B.L.C.

HUMAN SACRIFICE

MIST ON THE WATERS, by F. L. Green; Michael Joseph, 9/6.

FINGAL and Pelancey found a fifteen-year-old letter and blackmailed Malloy, Belfast representative of the Seventh Heaven Footwear Ltd. They got some money, but Fingal went back for more. This was too much for Malloy, who was paying them with money embezzled from his firm. He shot himself. The news got round, Fingal's mother was suspicious; so was Pelancey's girl. Malloy's ex-mistress, whose letter had been used, thought something was

going on. The young assistant in Pelancey's business overheard more than he liked. Fingal and Pelancey started to fall apart at their weakest seams. They were both overcome with guilt; and guilt was the only thing that sustained their frail loyalty to each other. Gradually they saw that life would become impossible for them unless they found expiation, but expiation could only come from Malloy, and he was dead. They wished for death, the primitive, tribal absolution; death came to them, and in their last moments they were closer to peace than they had been since they took Malloy's embezzled money. Mr. Green, in masterful control of his characters and medium, is content to show us what is wrong. Limiting himself to that, he has written a most competent novel. —G. leF. Y.

AUSTRALIAN REALISM

YOU CAN'T SEE ROUND CORNERS, by Jon Cleary; Eyre and Spottiswoode. English price, 8/6.

FRANKIE MCCOY, warped product of the back streets of a large city, and at war with humanity, is something of an Australian Studs Lonigan. At twenty-one Frankie "knew all the answers and was out to beat the game." Called up for military service which he has tried

to dodge, he deserts and finally commits robbery, rape and murder.

You Can't See Round Corners, which won a second prize of £1,000 in a Sydney Morning Herald literary competition, is a competently written novel. The prose occasionally lapses into journalese, but is on the whole as deadpan and inflectionless as most Australian and New Zealand voices; what it loses in subtlety, it makes up for in vigour and down-to-earth honesty. Setting up as a small-time bookie, Frankie passes in his bleak surroundings from sheila to sheila to an inevitable violent death; for the pattern of "social realism" can be as standardised as that of the Western and the Who-dun-it.

—J.R.C.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ICEDROME, by Frank Tilsley (Eyre and Spottiswoode, English price, 10/6), is a competent, realistic, tear-jerking, commonplace novel about the rivalry of little girls to become dazzling star skaters on London's indoor ice. Frank Tilsley portrays vulgarity and partakes of it. The book is entertaining so far as it goes, especially if you can bear the glamourising of skating—equivalent for instance (at a slightly lower level),

to the romanticising of the circus in Dame Laura Knight's pictures. —D.H.

WHY have Christians hated and persecuted one another? Why do good churchmen, who should be armed in spirit against the ills of the world, become neurotic? What can be done to overcome the fear which often warps the religious mind? Oscar Pfister, a pastor of Zürich, tries to answer these questions in *Christianity and Fear* (translated by W. H. Johnstone; George Allen and Unwin. English price, 30/-). He believes that fear or dread, a pervasive mood in society, is brought about mainly by loss of love. "The deepest essence of human nature demands love," he writes, "and without it the individual and mankind as a whole lapse into misery, disease, wickedness and cruelty. . . ." The thesis receives support from a historical study of Christianity, and the ideas throughout are based on depth psychology. This book will be challenged by the orthodox, but its scholarship entitles it to respectful attention.

THE curious reader may study 18 paintings by Winston Churchill, reproduced in colour, in a slender book published by Odhams Press, London. *Painting as a Pastime* (through Whitcombe and Tombs, 10/6) takes its title from an introductory essay which has been reprinted from Mr. Churchill's *Thoughts and Addresses*.



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