

BOOKS

(continued from page 17)

the capital at the top of Lyttelton harbour. In his account of the Britomart and L'Aube at Akaroa. Mr. Reed leans too far towards the old "race" version of Hobson's action, and later quotes without comment the misleading inscription about Captain Stanley in Christchurch Cathedral. He should have stated Hobson's exact purpose in despatching the Britomart. His references to Edward Gibbon Wakefield suffer from his trying to deal with an involved subject in a short space. He omits two important facts of the villainous abduction—one against Wakefield, and the only one in his favour, that the marriage was one in name only. He says nothing about Wakefield's intrigues as a member of the New Zealand Parliament, and is not quite fair to Grey in his references to the suspension of the first constitution.

However, this is a useful book about foundation-laying. The many sketches (some of them admirable) are by "Pat Fenton," E. S. Hope, and the author, or are taken from old books. There are good maps and a four-page up-to-date bibliography.

—A.M.

SCIENCE AND SCIENTISTS

CONCERNING SCIENCE, by Sherwood Taylor; McDonald. English Price, 6/.

THIS is an outline of the influence of science on life and thought which leads to a study of the limitations of science. The book is really an inquiry into what is important in man and to man. We all agree that science is moving further and further from "common-sense" and that it does not seek ultimate conclusions. Indeed, few scientists would join with the author in believing such ultimate conclusions to be possible. Sherwood Taylor's analysis of our scientific civilisation reveals our increasing interdependence and shows how key minorities, be they nuclear physicists or

wharf-labourers, attain to power. This part of the work, together with his opinions on the responsibility of the scientist for the uses to which his work is put, may well prove the most interesting reading to the non-scientist.

The book deals at length with emotional and religious experience. One must agree that science is only one branch of mental activity and that the emotional life is as real as any other. Science, however, is not concerned with these, but with sense impressions. Apparently Sherwood Taylor is capable of that self-surrender which makes possible the ecstasy of the mystic. Many scientists find this impossible for them; others experience an exaltation centred on science itself.

—J.D.M.

TOO LONG A SUMMER

A SUMMER TO DECIDE, by Pamela Hansford Johnson; Michail Joseph. English Price, 10/6.

AN English critic writes on the dust jacket of Miss Hansford Johnson's "ability to load every rift with ore." I have not found gold so easily; true, some grains can be sifted out by the dreary process of washing all the mud at the bottom of the river of many words, enough perhaps to show what that kindly critic meant. The novelist has a certain briskness and penetration, but the length and the detail and the indecision as to what she wants to do with all these bright and hopeful people get me down.

One can find a lot to say for a writer whose hero talks like this of the heroine: "When I was not with Ellen I longed for her, and the moment I saw her the longing died." At other times the choice of terms is less apt: "Both she and Ellen were living on the raw, fretted edges of their nerves." The indecisions of Claud are deliberately contrived, but they do not make him more interesting or less tiresome. The detail of this book is often excellent and the interaction of the characters usually magnificent; but the writer, painting indecision, seems to share it, and desperately adds page to page. The general picture of a rather faded post-war London with its lack of comfort or dignity is a substantial achievement. Miss Hansford Johnson is, I think, in the top flight of good middlebrow novelists.

—David Hall

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CANTERBURY LAMBS 3, published by the Canterbury University College Literary Club.

CONSPICUOUS 1949, published by the Auckland University College Literary Club.

TWELVEMONTH, published by the Otago University Students' Association.

Student publications are generally more noticeable for the quality of their verse than their prose, but *Canterbury Lambs 3* contains three short stories (by Bill Pearson, G. leF. Young, and V. J. Wilson), and two poems (by James K. Baxter and Pat Wilson) which are unusually fluent and mature in feeling for a university journal. None of these names is of course entirely new, nor may they all be bona fide students, but the fact that they can continue to appear in such publications promises well for the future. *Conspicuous 1949* is "academic" in purpose, and contains essays on "French Conceptions of Goethe," "The New Zealand Short Story," "The Troilus and Cressida Legend," and "A Doctrine of Grace." *Twelvemonth* is described as Otago University's attempt at a "literary journal," and contains articles, short stories, verse and photographs.



LEARIE CONSTANTINE, whose "Cricketer's Cricket" will be reviewed by A. H. Carman in the ZB Book Review session on December 11. Mr. Carman will also review "Rugger, the Man's Game," by E. H. D. Sewell, and other books for review the same night are: "The Story of a Maori Chief," by R. T. Kohere (Eric Ramsden); "Murder Most Royal," by Jean Plaidy (Nelle Scanlan); and "Today's Short Stories," edited by John Pudney (Les Edwards). The chairman will be W. S. Wauchop.



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