

of Florence, and 188 between Rimini and the Serio. These are shattering figures. The rather splendid picture appears, however, of an infantry battalion well and at times outstandingly led, capably officered and of so high a morale that, confident of its own efficiency and of the outcome of the struggle, it could afford to regard disaster as a battle honour.

—L.S.H.

LOVE IN OLD AGE

THE GULF OF YEARS, Love Letters from John Ruskin to Kathleen Olander; Allen and Unwin. English price 9 6.

I SUPPOSE a book like this is evidence that the Victorians are coming back. Ruskin was a giant figure in his time, pontificating on purity and literature and the Things Worth Seeing in the Palazzo Vecchio and along the Grand Canal. English tourists to Italy ploughed through *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* as pre-requisite required reading, and carried with them *The Stones of Venice* as their portable text-book. But though he was a considerable don in his time, all in all he was a horrid fellow. The recent publication of *The Order of Release*, the story of his incredible marriage and its almost as incredible conclusion (husband goes back to mother, the reverse of the usual procedure) has not shown Ruskin in any pleasant light, and more recent defences by his supporters have done little to make him a palatable figure.

The present volume continues, in my opinion, the presentation of Ruskin as a horrid old man, though apparently the editors think of the incident it enshrines as rather a touching love affair. In 1887 Ruskin, who was then getting on to seventy, met a young art student (still under twenty) copying Turner in the National Gallery. He was so pleased with her work he offered to tutor her, and both she and her parents were equally thrilled at the attention of the great man. From then for about a year he sent her a series of letters, which are reprinted in this volume. They begin with incredibly elementary art instruction (bring a well-hinged two-foot rule, compasses, pen, pencil and a measuring tape!), but within a few weeks he is signing himself "Ever your loving J.R.," and the girl has become My Darling Kathleen and Kathleen Dear. A few more weeks and he is proposing marriage, and passionate letters fly to and fro. But alas, it could never be. Father and Mother put a stop to the young lady. Ruskin's sister fenced in the old dotard, who had by then fallen into one of the recurring fits of madness of his later years. And the book concludes with Kathleen's last visit, Ruskin lost to the world behind an unapproachable French window, she kissing her hand to him from the garden.

This sort of story can be played either as a sardonic comedy or a tragedy of horrors, *Midsummer Night's Dream* or *The Cenci*. Played as *Romeo and Juliet* it is revolting.

—I.A.G.

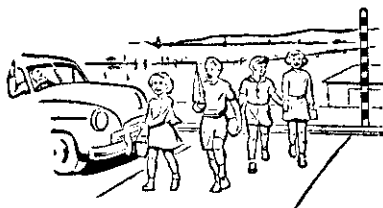
DRAMA UNDER THE GUM TREE

TOWARDS AN AUSTRALIAN DRAMA, by Leslie Rees; Angus and Robertson. Australian price 18/-.

THIS history of the native Australian drama arrives shortly after our one professional company, the New Zealand Players, added to its repertory *Ned Kelly*, a play by the New Zealander Douglas Stewart, the brightest star in the present firmament of Australian playwrights. The book's general interest lies in the fact that the two countries encounter similar difficulties in creating

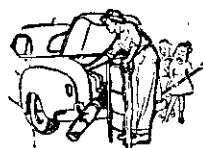
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SAFE DRIVING OVER THE HOLIDAYS



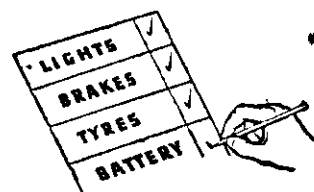
IS A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY!

—BEFORE YOU START

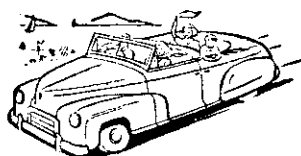


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