

(Carlyle's view), as a social revolution-ary stifled but not silenced by poverty and piety. Each represents the natural attempt of men to simplify a complex phenomenon in accordance with their own wishes and prejudices. But as Professor Ferguson points out in his brief and vigorous introduction there were several factors in Burns's environment which made it unusually difficult for him to reach equilibrium in his life and in his art. The social position of a peasant farmer in 18th Century Scotland was rigidly determined. Thus Burns throughout his life was obliged to show assiduous respect to men and women who were intellectually vastly his inferiors. His very livelihood, and the survival of his family, depended on it. He writes to one patron:

"Sir.—The language of Gratitude has been so prostituted by servile adulation and designing flattery, that I know not how to express myself when I would acknowledge the receipt of your last letter . . ."

Such language, from a man who could handle language like a rapier or a flail, betrays the fundamental falseness of his position. His letters show more plainly than his poems how much of his egalitarianism, his touchy self-esteem, and even his addiction to the cult of sensibility, sprang from the deep humiliation of being forced to flatter. In his letters to Agnes McLehose and Mrs. Dunlop, deference and sensibility are the keynote—partly, one feels, an artificial emphasis, but partly an expression of his natural impulse. It is, however, in the autobiographical sketch sent to Dr. John Moore, and in the letters written to relatives or to friends with whom no social barrier existed, that Burns's prose expression gains its full balance—pungent, concrete, large in reach, and immensely vital. One ends by regarding Burns not only as a great poet and a gifted raconteur, but also as no mean philosopher.

—James K. Baxter

## ARCHITECTURAL EXUBERANCE

**ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE SINCE THE REGENCY**, by H. S. Goodhart-Rendel; Constable, English price 25/-.

MR. GOODHART-RENDEL guides the general reader of his book through the exuberant achievements of architecture in Victorian, Edwardian, and more recent times with the same purposeful tenacity with which Baedeker took the tourist through Europe. The difficulty is the same; we are not familiar with what is described. The author, an architect himself, comments on work that will be unknown to most of his readers outside those who have interested themselves in first-hand study of the subject in England. This fault could be remedied by more illustrations, although what there is has been well selected.

But the book is detailed, and seeks no refuge in generalisations which condemn whole epochs and attempt to look

FOUR books of somewhat diverse character will occupy the critics of ZB Book

Review on February

21. The books, and reviewers, are as follows: "Come, My Beloved," by Pearl Buck (Nelle Scanlan); "Singer and Accompanist," by Gerald Moore (L. C. M. Saunders); "Beyond This Place," by A. J. Cronin (R. T. Robertson); and "The Devil Rides Outside," by John Howard Griffin (J. C. Reid).



A. J. Cronin

for merit and demerit in fashion. It is refreshing to find such an impartial attitude of discrimination between what is good and bad in its own right in what the author himself calls the architectural "all that to which many people wish to say an impatient goodbye." There is no doubt that this dogmatic point of view must be modified in practice, especially in New Zealand, where we are continually faced with the need for extending old buildings. There must be many who feel worried about the completion of the House of Parliament or the extension of the Canterbury Museum. There is much argument between supporters of traditional uniformity and the modernists. Can we achieve harmony between the two outlooks and in the buildings themselves?

Mr. Goodhart-Rendel observes that "in buildings made for the service of man architecture begins where utilitarianism leaves off, endowing practical contrivance with aesthetic significance." "Utilitarianism," "functionalism" have been fighting words for many years now, but it is not always realised that they have just as subjective a meaning as, say, "beauty." I was interested to see in the paper recently an architect's drawing supporting a contention that the new Wellington Inter-island Wharf should be equipped in a manner more pleasing to the eye than is proposed in the replicas of cargo sheds being erected. It is surely utilitarian and functional to please the passengers.

—Walter Brookes

## AH VIRTUE! VIRTUE!

**A TIME TO LAUGH**, by Laurence Thompson; Andre Deutsch, English price 8/6. **A SINGLE PILGRIM**, by Norman Lewis; Jonathan Cape, English price 12/6. **MR. PYE**, by Mervyn Peake; Heinemann, English price 12/6. **BEYOND THIS PLACE**, by A. J. Cronin; Angus and Robertson, Australian price 16/-.

THE first of these novels is a skilful comedy about the uproarious adventures in the British Army in Libya of the softest of a Sudanese family. The hero, Gadein, a seraphic innocent, comes out unscathed at the end and we rejoice to see virtue triumph, especially as we had so much fun first seeing virtue kicked around.

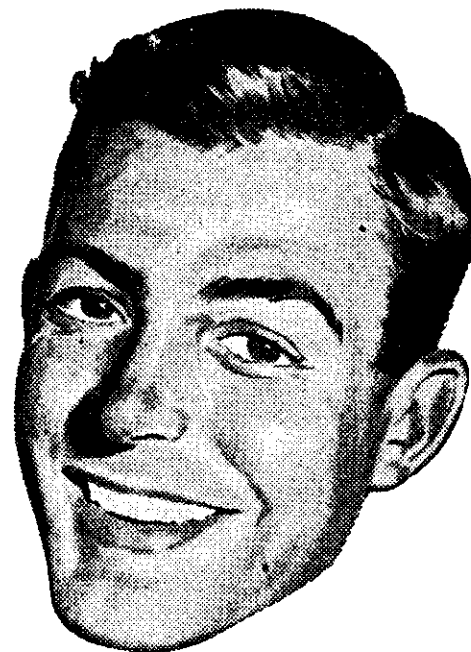
Norman Lewis in *A Single Pilgrim* displays the knowledge of South-East Asia one might have expected of so celebrated a traveller. This is another novel about a virtuous man beset by all sorts of trials—Crane, the middle-aged local manager of a British company exporting teak from Thailand. The tragic ending would have excited more compassion if Norman Lewis were better equipped to create living people rather than a skilful and interesting picture of a whole changing social order.

Mr. Pye is a modern saint determined to convert to goodness the small Channel Island of Sark. He is overtaken by an unwanted testimonial to his success in the form of a pair of wings; getting rid of these by a judicious embracing of badness, he grows horns instead, and with the final painful triumph of virtue, is re-equipped as an angel. This is unabashed fantasy supported by a lively wit and some elegant drawings by the author.

Cronin's novel is inevitably a tear-jerker in a big way. The son of an unjustly condemned murderer proves his father's innocence; virtue triumphs but the hero loses touch with the heroine. It is good Cronin and is the fourth leg of a quartet which, however dissimilar otherwise, are alike in achieving what their author set out to achieve, all good of their kind—no mean feat these days.

—David Hall

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