

wrote Shakespeare's plays was not a collection of minor Elizabethan playwrights but (strange as it may seem) plain William Shakespeare. Relics of that controversy are still to be seen in this volume and they wear an old-fashioned air.

The major portion of the book is concerned with Shakespeare's imagery, a topic that has received a great deal of attention since the thirties. Mr. Knight has attempted to bring his book up to date by adding a long prefatory note in which he defends his point of view and finally produces a two-page chart of "Shakespeare's various values and symbolic powers" which he offers (and I quote his own words) as "a simple chart devised to form a kind of *vade mecum* for the Shakespearian expert." All I can say is that, if *this* is the clue to Shakespeare, then I have never understood him and it is unlikely I ever shall. Which is a pity, since I have read every play written by Shakespeare several times, and many of them many times, and have even had the effrontery to lecture to students on the assumption that I understood what they were about. I doubt if I have read so much nonsense about Shakespeare as is contained in Mr. Knight's first and last chapters.

Between these two chapters, however, is a great deal of sympathetic and understanding interpretation of Shakespeare's imagery, though it is all rather long drawn out and laboured. The central thesis is simple enough and easily acceptable, that Shakespeare's meaning is not contained merely in the simple meanings of the words he writes but also in the magnificent imagery he uses. "Winter" to Shakespeare is not just winter, frost and cold noses. It is a poetic symbol. It is old age, it is death, it is the end of love, it is sorrow, it is human tragedy, as the context demands. Which is only another way of saying that Shakespeare is a poet.

Mr. Knight analyses in 300 pages the images associated with "Tempest" and makes a case for the tempest-theme as Shakespeare's dominant image. It is disorder, both public and private; it is the sea that separates lovers and child from parent; it is the force of evil that combats the brightness of human life. The whole thing is most plausible, until one remembers that with time, a copy of the complete plays, and a good card-index system plus a one-track mind, one

(continued on next page)

BOOKS scheduled for review in the ZB Book Review session on April 18 are as follows:

"The Legendary Mizners," by Alva Johnson (John Morris); "Social Insects," by O. W. Richards (E. G. Turbott); "Masterton's First Hundred Years," by A. G. Bagnall (Frank Simpson); "The Fight for the Ashes," by Peter West, and "Over to Rex Alston," by Rex Alston, reviewed by the Rev. E. O. Blamires (above).



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