

subject, writing with wit and a pleasant irony. This is a most readable book, and it makes a notable contribution to Australia's historical record.

—A.R.D.F.

HIC IACETS

THE OXFORD JUNIOR ENCYCLOPAEDIA.
Vol. V. *Great Lives*; volume editor Sheila Shannon; Oxford Press/Godfrey Cumberlege. English price 30.

"[T]HE inequity of oblivion," wrote old Sir Thomas Browne, "blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity." To the inequity of oblivion one might, perhaps, add the partiality of editors. In this most readable volume of the *Junior Encyclopaedia*, Sir Thomas who wrote some of the noblest English prose, and who still fills three columns of the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, is not mentioned. Nor, of course, is he alone in his oblivion. "The number of great men and women to be included has had to be confined to about 550," says a prefatory note. "This means that many well-known people do not appear at all. The choice of whom to include is, therefore, bound to be to some extent a personal one."

The difficulty of selecting five hundred names from the history of 5000 years, the general good sense of the selection, the succinctness and, above all, the essential readability of the entries all tend to inhibit criticism. But they can't quite stifle it, and there is likely to be more argument about the contents of this volume than about any or all of the others in the series.

Some of the omissions are, indeed, difficult to understand—especially when considered alongside some of the entries. Three columns for William Morris seems over-enthusiastic when Dostoevski gets less than two, and Oscar Wilde is not mentioned at all. The inclusion of Stubbs and the omission of Landseer is no doubt a matter of taste (perhaps of good taste), but is either more important than Zola, or Proust, or (to get back to natural history) than, say, Buffon? Military and naval entries raise similar queries. No admirals since Nelson's time seem to have been thought worthy of mention, though Farragut, Mahan, Togo, Fisher, Jellicoe, Beatty, and Tirpitz all shaped history. John Paul Jones, too, is out, and Cochrane, and even van Tromp (though de Ruyter gets over a column). Kitchener is in, but Foch has been passed over. Montrose (long regarded on the Continent as *le grand Montrose*) is well-served by two columns of good writing, but Turenne and Condé, with whom the Marquis has been compared, do not even get a head-word.

Among the historians, as distinct from the makers of history, Gibbon is, surprisingly, given only a head-word.

THREE books, instead of the usual four or more, will fill the ZB Book Review session on April 25, but the author of one of them—Arthur Bryant, the English essayist and historian—will be heard in a recorded talk. The books are: "Man of Two Worlds," by J. F. Cody (reviewer, Dr. G. H. Scholefield); "The Story of England," by Arthur Bryant (J. B. Owen); and "The Viking of Van Diemen's Land," by Frank Clune and T. R. Stephenson (F. S. Shaw).



Arthur Bryant

while Macaulay has more than a column and a half. Renan is not mentioned. Painters and sculptors are, on the whole, well served. Music, too, has been handled skilfully, though it is perhaps a little unusual to encounter such a categorical statement as "Mozart (was) the greatest musical genius the world has ever known."

Science and exploration are strongly represented and Rutherford receives due attention, but there seems to be some doubt whether Linnaeus's Christian name is Karl or Carl. It is interesting to notice that space has been found for Samuel Marsden and Edward Gibbon Wakefield. *Great Lives* is, in fact, not only a good reference book, but a good book to read—and to argue about.

—J.M.

A WOMAN'S LOVE POETRY

THE RIDDLE OF EMILY DICKINSON. by Rebecca Patterson; Victor Gollancz, English price 21.

[T]HE poetry of Emily Dickinson pivots upon the sense of separation from some beloved person. Some critics have thought this person was God; others, an imaginary idol; others again, the Reverend Charles Wadsworth, who was for a time her literary mentor. Mrs. Patterson offers an alternative argument—that Emily Dickinson's love poetry was written to and about a woman friend, Kate Anthon; and one can scarcely disagree with her conclusion, for it is psychologically sound and supported by a wealth of detail.

She argues thus: "... A woman might conceivably write love poems to an imaginary man (it is probable that many do), and she might sometimes, but not habitually, imagine the love affair from the viewpoint of the man involved. But no woman ever wrote poems describing a love affair between herself and an imaginary woman. Only the strong compulsion of truth would dictate poems so opposed to convention." Her thesis will carry no weight against the invincible prejudice of readers who do not allow that a respectable poet could be a sexual invert; but it seems authentic and highly reasonable.

The weakness of the book lies not in its main theme but in the author's method of approach. Too much space is devoted to the emotional history of Kate Anthon after her relationship with Emily Dickinson had terminated; and not enough to the sequence and symbolism of the poems which justify inquiry. In the last resort the true riddle of Emily Dickinson is the always insoluble one of the origin of great poetry. Mrs. Patterson's book sheds light only on some of the accompanying circumstances of Emily Dickinson's creative development, and exemplifies a fundamental weakness of the biographical approach to literature—the neglect of aesthetic in favour of psychological values.

—James K. Baxter

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

WHICH DOCTOR, by Edward Candy; Victor Gollancz, English price 10/6. **MURDER MOST FAMILIAR,** by Marjorie Bremner; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 10/6. **SILENCE AFTER DINNER,** by Clifford Witting; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 10/6. **SO YOUNG TO DIE,** by Gregory Tree; Victor Gollancz, English price 10/6. **THE PASSIONATE VICTIMS,** by Lange Lewis; the Bodley Head, English price 9/6.

TWO of these stories belong to a class of "detectives," apparently increasing, in which the identity and methods of the murderer matter much less than

(continued on next page)



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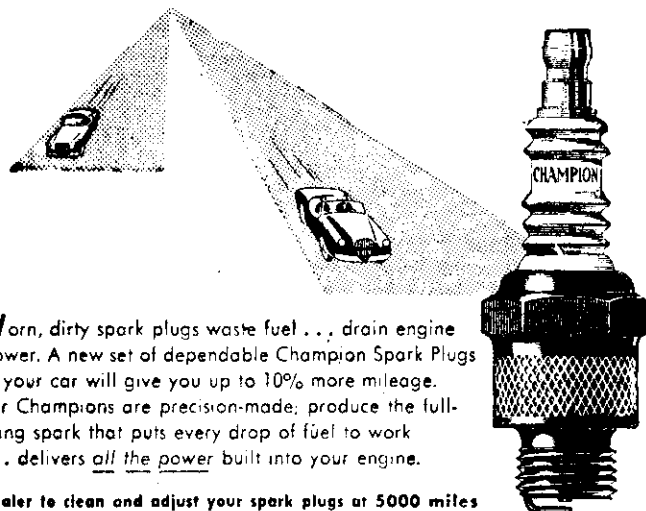
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