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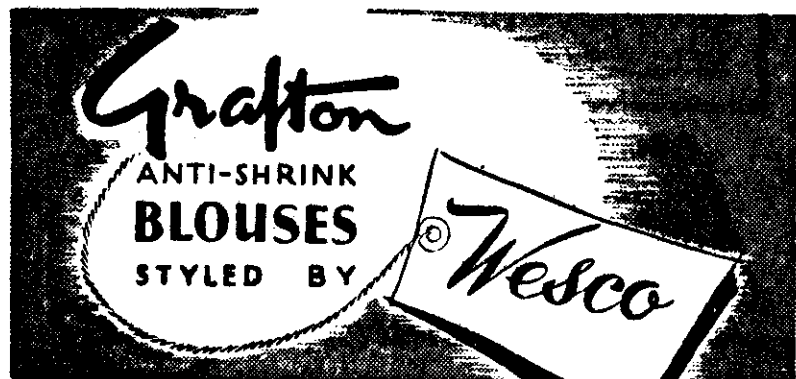
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128/5/54



BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

hair-raising in any other context, seem here almost dull: since she herself in spite of her impressionable age, is not at all changed by them: though something like a year passes, she does not develop. This is what I call dullness.

A *Bed of Roses*, by that same William Sansom who earlier delighted us with *The Body* and other sensitive works, is a book so ugly in conception and execution that I, for one, could hardly finish it. A weak masochistic heroine, a brutal stupid hero, much drinking, wenching, bull-fighting and man fighting—all conducted wholly without style—no, Mr. Sansom, those who truly admire your gift can only hope that you will soon forget this horrid work, and return, in your own time, to the graces that once were yours.

—Sarah Campion

SONGS FROM THE MIND

FOUR METAPHYSICAL POETS, by Joan Bennett: Cambridge University Press, English price 15/-.

THIS is the second edition of Mrs. Bennett's book on Donne, Herbert, Vaughan and Crashaw—a thorough, sober, workmanlike evaluation of four poets who bring to greatly varying themes something of a common method. The main characteristics of this method Mrs. Bennett defines in her introduction: "Metaphysical poetry usually comprises an analysis as well as a correlation of emotions. . . . Because of this analytic habit, the metaphysical poets preferred to use words which call the mind into play, rather than those that appeal to the senses or evoke an emotional response through memory. . . . It would not be wide of the mark to describe metaphysical poetry as poetry written by men for whom the light of day is God's shadow."

Her own criticism has, like the poetry she discusses, the virtues of conciseness and discrimination. She quotes lavishly but always with relevance. John Donne is perhaps too great a fish to be contained in any critical net; but her treatment of the three companion poets is frequently illuminating. In particular her analysis of the unconscious sadistic component in Crashaw's religious poetry will bear close scrutiny; and her judicious biographical asides in discussing the poetry of Herbert. All in all, an able book, a model of balanced criticism; but for that very reason, a careful adzing of familiar ground, not (as,

for example, in Edith Sitwell's essay on Pope) a simultaneous revelation of the springs of action in the critic's mind.

—James K. Baxter

THE LATER WORDSWORTH

THE EGOTISTICAL SUBLIME, by John Jones; Chatto and Windus, English price 16/-.

WORDSWORTH has been fortunate in his critics. The most recent of a long line of scholars to examine his work is concerned mainly to show that the poetry of the final, Christian phase should not be dismissed as lightly as it has been in the past. Mr. Jones has a sympathetic understanding of Wordsworth's mind. He emphasises its literalness and masculinity, and goes deeply into the poet's conception of nature. His work is seen in three phases: "There is the poetry of solitude and relationship. There is the poetry of indecision, of glances behind and before . . . and then . . . there is the offering of a baptised imagination."

The movement from youth to old age is followed with constant reference to the text. Mr. Jones makes no extravagant claims for the later years, but he invites a new appraisal. "There is no *Tempest* lying unregarded in this late work, or even such poetry as would reverse the universal judgment that the best is early. Even so, it has been grossly underestimated. . . . The final privacy of greatness in style has escaped notice. Wordsworth was not silenced by the music of Christianity, nor stifled by Victorian morals. He was profoundly changed." Mr. Jones makes out a strong case. And it seems no accident that, like other critics who have spent much time with Wordsworth, he writes good prose.

—H.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

JUGENIE GRANDET, by Honoré de Balzac; the Folio Society, English price 18/-. Eight soft-ground etchings by Dodie Masterman add distinction to this edition of Balzac's famous novel.

FARMER'S MUM, by Mildred Hawker; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 10/6. A light-hearted and very conversational novel about a city woman on an English farm.

THE STRANGER BESIDE ME, by Mabel Seeley; Shakespeare Head Press, Australian price 16/-. The stranger in this novel is the little-known partner in a difficult marriage.

SEVENTY TRUE STORIES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR; Odhams Press, through Whitcombe and Tombs, N.Z. price 13/6. War narratives selected from entries in a competition organised by the English Sunday newspaper *The People*.

WINTERSET

TAKE little heed of a world
That is nothing but paper and paste,
Remembering now that you are
Less than a falling star
Falling without haste.

Money and women and the curling wave
Rise but to fall away;
For the cowardly or pretended brave
There's nothing to lose and nothing to save
At the end of day.

What more is there to say or do
Once you have done it all;
What more to hope for or to rue
In a world where the gunman claims his due
Though tides run tall.

—Denis Glover