



## Oh for some Optrex

Eye-strain can spoil your good looks. Keep your eyes clean, healthy and sparkling with a regular Optrex eye-bath.

Price 4/6. Triple size 8/-.  
Optrex (Overseas) Ltd., 17 Wadsworth Road,  
Perivale, Middlesex, England. 4.4

## BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

Rachel Ferguson's *Sea Front*, which describes in loving, convoluted and somewhat tiresome detail the appearance, smells, sounds and inhabitants of a small seaside resort. If one were passionately interested in spas, one might find it worthwhile to plough through page after page of Miss Ferguson's monkey-clever ball games with words: if one isn't, one might well let it alone.

Finally, a horse of a far milder character and colour: an ingenuous, naive, slightly flatfooted story of that highly-complicated character Charles Dickens, and the Women In His Life. This is Hebe Elms's *Consider These Women*: and, when you have considered them, I think you will agree that the great man emerges no greater from the well-meaning pen of Miss Elms. I found this book, in contrast to *Sea Front*, eminently readable; but must confess that the impression left on my mind, a week or so later, is fuzzy rather than sharp.

—Sarah Campion

### CHEERS FOR A FAITH

*UP-HILL ALL THE WAY. A Third Cheer for Democracy.* by Mary Agnes Hamilton; Jonathan Cape. English price 12/6.

THIS is the autobiography of a woman who has long been known through her novels and biographies, as well as her work in politics. Mary Hamilton is

the daughter of a Glasgow professor. She went to Cambridge, was a pacifist in the first war but was heart and soul in the second, fought several elections for Labour, and held a parliamentary under-secretaryship, has worked with Americans and visited America, and has had lengthy and varied experience as a civil servant. From all this and more she draws material for a probing and honest chronicle, and towards no one is she more honest than herself. About public men, of whom we meet many, she writes shrewdly and fairly. She gives Ramsay MacDonald full marks for keeping Communism out of the British Labour Party after the first war, but on his faults of disposition she is devastating.

The searching comments on the Left are written by one who is, presumably, still a member of the Labour Party. She notes the intellectual woolliness among her associates of the old Independent Labour Party, who "had never thought about production," and were liable to develop "a perilous sense of moral superiority." Some persons, she says, become Communists from a sense of guilt in belonging to the bourgeoisie, but she herself regards the middle class as "nearer than any other to living the civilised life that could be made available to all." I would like to shake hands with her on her exposure of the cant about the "bourgeoisie." The title of her chapter on the shock caused by

Russia's betrayal of the West is significant—"The Insane Root." Against despairers in life and letters she advances the ideal of thinking "nobly of the soul." So she calls for not two cheers for democracy, as a famous contemporary novelist has proposed, but three. I rise to ask for a similar compliment to this heartening book.

—A.M.

### THE AWAKENING BEAR

*EAST-WEST PASSAGE.* by Dorothy Brewster; Allen and Unwin. English price 21/-.

THIS is a good book. It traces in gratifying detail the discovery of Russia and Russian literature by the English-speaking world and its effect on English and American literary practice or modes of thought. The course of these relations has been haunted by a persisting irony. It is not only in our own day that Russia has been a prime menace to our peace of mind, though "it was not until she began to be feared that Russia came to be known." Events like the Crimean War advertised Russian authors.

Dorothy Brewster shows the strength of the influence of Turgenev. "Katherine Mansfield's work was the main channel through which the Chekhov influence flowed." Criticism of the Russians has often been as much political as aesthetic, and this is perhaps inevitable as Russian authors acknowledged a "social consciousness" theory of writing long before 1917. Nineteenth Century Russian fiction scrutinised social conditions because the rigorous censorship of the Czar's autocracy prevented them being described more directly.

Full of fresh and interesting material, this is a work of patient erudition by a writer who is also endowed with critical insight and a pleasant wit. She makes hay of the pretentious or the entrenched, from the "fortress of the Slav soul" to the vagaries of Congressional investigators. In 1938 Senator McCarran challenged another Senator determined to save America from Red propaganda in the theatre in these words: "There are those who for ever use the bugbear of Communism to scare someone in order that they may themselves rise up and thus be held up as champions against the so-called danger of Communism." Dorothy Brewster comments: "This is an interesting prophecy of the Senator's own later and highly successful career." Let me hasten to add that she is not herself a "red"; it is just that she cannot resist a good wisecrack.

—David Hall

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*THE PLAYER'S LIBRARY*; second supplement to the catalogue of the library of the British Drama League; Faber and Faber, English price 21/-.

*STANLEY BALDWIN*, by D. C. Somervell; Faber and Faber, English price 8/6. An examination of some features of a biography of Baldwin by G. M. Young. A book—even a short one—in answer to another book is not a very satisfactory critical method.

*MY AMAZON ADVENTURE*, by Sebastian Snow; Odhams Press, through Whitcombe and Tombs, 18/9. The story of a young man's hazardous journey of 3500 miles from the high Andes of Peru to the mouth of the Amazon.

*READINGS FROM DICKENS*, by Emlyn Williams; Folio Society, English price 15/-. The famous adaptations, including *Bleak House*, as given in a two and a half-hour solo performance. There is a remarkable photograph of Dickens, taken in 1859.

announcing

ENVERDAIM

## Wonderful news for mothers

A new raincoat era begins. Kiddies' Rainsters make history with the miracle fabric ENVERDAIM—miracle because (1) it is weather-proof but 'breathes' (2) it is warm to touch (3) it is virtually odourless (4) it hangs softly, and does not stiffen with age (5) it costs less. You wouldn't want to put your kiddies in anything less than miraculous ENVERDAIM—now would you? If you can't remember ENVERDAIM, just remember that now, more than ever, it must be a Rainster.

Rainster

