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BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

1805 a gradual, permanent and profound change is evident in Wordsworth's view of society and of himself. From intuitive pantheism he progresses, not to a Christian vision of God immanent in His creation, but to stoic moralism-"Every great Poet is a Teacher: I wish either to be considered as a Teacher, or nothing. . ." Wordsworth was indeed at all times a man of acute moral feeling. At the age of thirty-four he wrote to De Quincey, then at Oxford: ". . . I am anxious to hear . . . above all, that you have not been seduced into unworthy pleasures or pursuits. . . I need not say to you that there is not true dignity but in virtue and temperance. and, let me add, chastity. . . words might come well from the pen of a Bishop; but scarcely from an older writer to a young literary acquaintance.

Wordsworth's positive counsels are over-tame. His scathing exhortation of Coleridge in 1808 seems the voice of one folded in the coils of the Cold Dragon who observes the danger of another in the gullet of the Hot Dragon, but not, alas, his own. The estrangement from Coleridge deprived Wordsworth of an irreplaceable literary collaborator. Thenceforward he enters a private winter, with no profound literary companionship, excepting that of his The relation between William and Dorothy Wordsworth has been often extolled. I hazard the view that its exclusive nature, beyond all other factors, led to the impotence of his genius and her own eventual mental collapse. At least, his letters offer ground for this conjecture. ---James K. Baxter

ORGANISED ESCAPES

RENDEZ-VOUS 127, The Diary of Madame Anne Brusselmans, M.B.E., transcribed by Denis Hornsey, D.F.C.; Ernest Benn, N.Z. price 12 6.

MADAME BRUSSELMANS was the last link in Belgium of the Comète line, an underground escape organisation which was responsible for the safe return of some 180 airmen shot down over Europe during the war. On several occasions she was the only link: "Why is it always the others and never me that gets caught?" she wrote in her diary in August, 1944. No doubt she was lucky, but luck without resource. wit, and daring would not have saved her from the Gestapo. She took elaborate precautions to see that she was not followed, gave none of the other agents her name or her address (although, according to her diary, a few visited her flat), planned carefully each small detail

of her movements or of an alibi, and always had her story ready in case of trouble.

Indeed, it seems hard to understand that a woman always so careful should have been so foolish as to keep a diary, even though it was well hidden. In some of her rambling entries in the last months before liberation can be seen the nervous strain of four years of alarms and tensions and sleepless nights: the strain of keeping up the appearance to family and friends that all was as usual in the Brusselmans' affairs. Flight-Lieutenant Hornsey, himself an escaper with the Comète's aid, links the diary entries and occasionally expands them by explaining what happened to the airmen who passed through her hands. I for one would have liked more detail about the work of her organisation, but Hornsey hasn't supplied it.

---W.A.G.

WAKING US UP?

NIGHTMARES, by Bertrand Russell; The Bodley Head. English price 9 6.

I AM reminded of the famous story about Einstein, who played the violin at a refugee charity concert. "Although he played well, he did not justify his international reputation..." wrote a young reporter. Russell is always lucid, and always interesting; but as a short story writer he just isn't.

Nightmares is in the genre of Candide and Gulliver. There the similarity, the felicity (and even, surprisingly, the topicality) stop short. Heavy moralising and ham humour turn the good man into a promising contributor for a Cappicade of the political '30s. Eisenhower's and Stalin's nightmares become Bellamy re-dished: Utopia don't come that easy, as an old Socialist once said about conversion.

But, of course, Russell knows all this. He has been amusing himself, and once or twice we are amused, too. One nods in agreement, and then just nods. A bedside book, without a doubt.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CORNER OF THE MOON, by Sheila Steen; Victor Gollancz, English price 13/6. The story of a journey down the valley of the Dordogne, told by a sensitive and intelligent observer.

NEW titles in the Home University Library of Modern Knowledge, issued by the Oxford University Press (English price 6/- each) are: British Public Finances, 1880-1952, by Ursula Hicks; Forestry, by H. G. Champion; and Local Government in England and Wales, by Sir John Maud and S. E. Finer (second edition).

COMING ROUND THE BEND

THE best way to deal with calamity is to keep it at harm's length.

TO admit your faults is not to correct them, but at least it anticipates your friends.

WORDS are good servants, but like bad masters they have to be put in their place.

I GOT a deep-freeze glance when I told him his was a veracious attitude. I think he thought I thought it a voracious one.

HOW many wives think their husbands married them not as a treasure but a treasurer?

MARCHING girls have added a new horror to matrimony. Many a poor shambling male will have to take his

with Denis Glover

orders from an ex-majorette. And inevitably some of them will be marching orders.

PEOPLE who are cheerful by themselves save the expense of going to perpetual parties.

A THING about Italians is that they make such successful Americans.

SENTIMENT should be simmered gently, not fried in olive oil,

WE were mildly astonished when a newcomer to these shores told us she was simply dying to taste our famous tuatara soup.

N.Z. LISTENER, NOVEMBER 5, 1954.