

massive genius to which Nature revealed herself like a bride. No doubt if Shakespeare's letters had been preserved for us, they would have turned out to consist mainly of flattering notes addressed to possible patrons, complaints of poverty, bald business references to plays performed. In fact, a letter is a one-sided conversation; and to write great, or even charming, letters requires a gift as special and rare as that of a great conversationalist. Perhaps one aspect of the gift is humility—a warm intense interest in the lives of others, a quick response to each new situation—but another aspect is pride, aesthetic pride, the settled conviction that one's vision of the world is the real world and one's opinion worth the reader's attention.

Byron's letters show this response and conviction; and so do those of Keats. In this full selection by Mr. Page the enormous richness and variety of Keats's imagery is shown at its source. Surely there never was a mind and heart so generously awake to every impression of the senses and subtle movement of another's spirit! Fortunately, Mr. Page preserves the words which Keats crossed out in his letters. One has the impression of seeing his thoughts take shape. "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" appears (with several emendations, made by Keats on the spot), sandwiched between Voltaire and an expedition to the North Pole, in a long letter to his brother George and wife. What did they make of it? To Fanny Keats, as Mr. Page remarks, he is the perfect elder brother. To his correspondence with John Hamilton Reynolds we owe what is perhaps the first coherent exposition before Rimbaud of Romantic aesthetic theory. Concerning Fanny Brawne, to whom Keats wrote little, a reader of those few intimate and tortured lines can best say nothing.

—James K. Baxter

#### A MILITANT FEMINIST

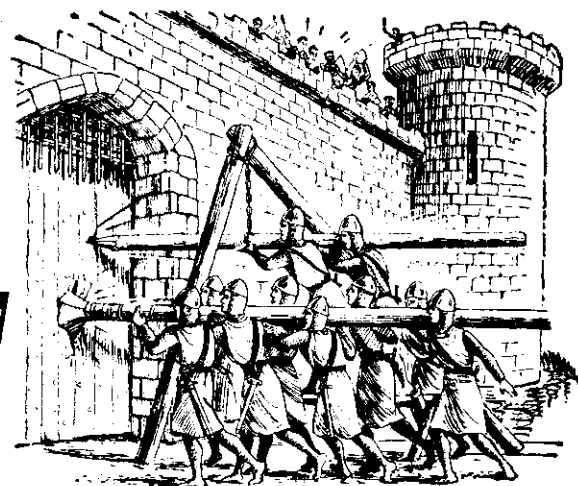
PORTRAIT OF JOSEPHINE BUTLER, by A. S. G. Butler; Faber and Faber, English price 21s.

JOSEPHINE BUTLER, married to an amiable Victorian scholar who loved his wife and liked his wine, was probably the most dynamic woman champion of a cause in an age which produced many such. Her great work was to oppose the state toleration and the commercialisation of prostitution. This she did with untiring energy and valour, outgeneralling statesmen, bureaucrats, military leaders, and wealthy racketeers with mobs of hired thugs. When she had got her way in England she invaded the Continent of Europe, and fought with even more spectacular daring, even if with less success. She found time, too, for philosophy, for writing, and for personal womanly help to those whose interests she had at heart. She was more of a feminist than a moralist; in her old age she would admire the charm of a prostitute who had rooms in the same house as she, but her wrath was aroused when this woman was forced to become part of the organisation of commercialised vice; she dared to sympathise with Oscar Wilde when he was deprived of his freedom. She took an interest in politics, too, and often wrote with clear insight: "For many years I have had a conviction that Russia must break up and pass away—but where? and into what?" (1902).

Mrs. Butler had, of course, a tide of social and economic change following. The emancipation of women had been written on the walls of the first factories of the industrial revolution. But she un-

(continued on next page)

## PAIRED FOR PUNCH



Battering-rams were ancient engines of war often paired for greater punch in assaulting gates and walls.

# SHELL

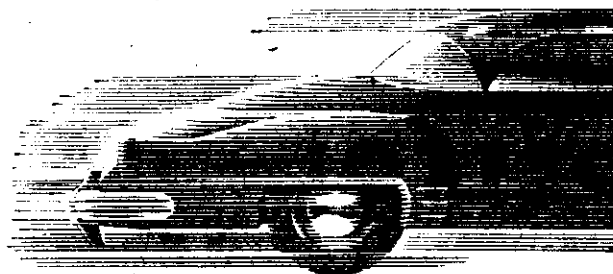
with exclusive Ignition Control Additive

and HIGHEST PERMISSIBLE OCTANE

You get *both* only in the  
**NEW**



*The most powerful  
petrol you've  
ever used!*



51.5