

BOOK SHOP

THREE reviewers are to discuss five books in the Book Shop programme on May 30. W. H. Graham is to talk about "Sea Wyf and Biscuit," by J. M. Scott; Margaret Davies is to review three novels—"Blind Date," by Leigh Howard, "First Train to Babylon," by Max Ehrlich, and "The Mind Worm," by C. M. Kornbluth—and Professor G. C. Garrett, of Christchurch, is to discuss "The Private Diaries of Stendhal," translated by Robert Sage.

away even in periods of classical or realist reaction. The golden age of German Romanticism lasted from the end of the 18th century to about 1830—Heine's *Buch der Lieder* was almost its swan-song. So these two new books are both useful auxiliaries to any student of the period: each, in its own way, has the virtues of a fresh approach to material grown rather shop-worn in the lecture-room.

Mr. Tymms, who is Reader in German in the University of London, is patient, methodical, seldom eloquent, but always acute in his examination of the growth of romantic ideas from the Enlightenment and the cult of the *Marchen*, through the theorising of Tieck and the Schlegels, and the notable practice of Novalis and Brentano, to Hein's *Atta Troll* and the end of the major romantic impulse. Goethe and Schiller do not appear in this book, except as influences; after an attempt to define the concept of "Romanticism" in German usage, and a most useful chapter on the social background of the period, Mr. Tymms puts the strangely assorted specimens of the avowedly and self-consciously Romantic writers under his microscope, one by one. He is not unsympathetic—in a notable revindication of Brentano he sets the posthumous *Marchen* in perspective as major works; he turns thumbs down only on Fouqué—but he studiously avoids the extravagant judgments of earlier critics. He has a few fashionable clichés: a favourite word of appreciation, for example, is "baroque." But he has read the philosophers, he does belated justice to the importance of Schelling; and he is drily amused by the psychological and amorous eccentricities of some of his subjects.

Heine, whose limpid songs with their bitter-sweet after-taste are so familiar to the merest beginner in German poetry, might seem a curious choice for a fastidious English (or Welsh) poet: but the Heine of the *Nordsee* cycle is a much bolder and freer versifier than the turner of so many neat, smooth and regrettably hackneyed stanzas. "Adventurous experiments in free rhythms, fresh and breezy." Mr. Tymms calls these poems: Mr. Watkins insists rather on their affinity to the unrhymed odes of Goethe. Certainly, his pellucid translation gives them a strange coolness and clarity: the German is often rougher, more uneven in texture. But these are very beautiful poems indeed, in English: and the German text is printed beside them for all to check, if so disposed.

—James Bertram

BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

LENIN AND HIS RIVALS, by Donald W. Treadgold; Methuen, English price 35/-.

[T is a commonplace that the flickering fires of the fluctuating present throw ever-changing patterns of light and shade on the past. The glare of events in Russia since 1917 distorts the pre-revolutionary period, highlighting

(continued on next page)

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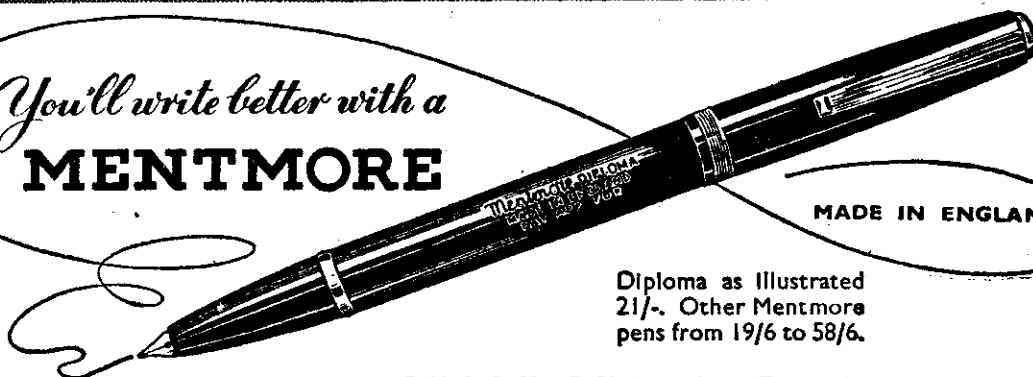
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