

on other peoples the benefits which they themselves have derived from the British way of life. And the text lives up to an able and courageous foreword. At the end of a long life Grigg pleaded with his fellow aristocrats to open their minds to the problem of Africa, to realise that for all their success in subduing their personal prejudices in racial matters, judgment was still obscured by an old faith persisting in new and subtle forms, the faith that the political system which suited the English would be found in the end to be equally valid for all mankind.

This book is eloquent and moving, save only on the tiresome occasions when the Old School Tie breaks briefly from an urbane control. It pleads that African solutions should be based on African realities, and specifically that self-government should be based on tribal structure, and freed from the "fetish" of Parliamentaryism. The way that this might function is worked out over part only of the field; and the doubt arises subtly as to whether Lord Altrincham's approach—broad, human and civilised as it is—has worked its way quite into the complex heart of black Africa. However, the book is charged with good will. It has a firm grip of concrete experience, and attacks with force part of that hard core of pre-conceptions which has made it hard for the English to understand other races. Sometimes it happens that only a conservative can fruitfully be radical, and maybe it would be ungracious to regret that Lord Altrincham was not more radical still.

It may be added that, though Samoa has been spared some of the toughest conundrums that vexed Lord Altrincham and his contemporaries, his experiences and reflections are very relevant for those wrestling with problems of Pacific island administration.

—F. L. W. Wood

THE WINTER OF TIME

A Chill in the Air, by Walter Clapham; Jonathan Cape, English price 13/6.
MR. HAMISH GLEAVE, by Richard Llewellyn; Michael Joseph, English price 12/6.
NO COWARD SOUL, by Noel Adeney; Hogarth Press, English price 13/6.
THE TREE OF MAN, by Patrick White; Eyre and Spottiswoode, English price 18/.

THE decay of character, like the decay of a class—or of a civilisation—is as a spectacle always mildly depressing. At the same time, while we wag our heads sagely and mutter "How deplorable!" we gain an enhanced pleasure from surviving ourselves. All four of these novels describe deterioration; all four are competent and each has its merit.

A Chill in the Air is largely the account of a friendship between a police sergeant in an English seaside town and an ex-serviceman who is declining into a spiv and finally into a criminal. A depraved teenager reminds us, perhaps too directly, of *Brighton Rock*, but this story is told with a wry matter-of-factness in which both sympathy and indignation are damped down and the soul left severely alone.

Richard Llewellyn's adroit translation into fiction of the Burgess and Maclean story builds up a clever picture of accumulated disgusts subverting the loyalty of a British Foreign Office official. Unfortunately, while the stage is set in every detail, the central drama—the mind change from loyalty to treason—is just jumped over and omitted. We understand how but not why it all happened.

No Coward Soul is ever so refined. An invalid English poet, greedy for money and affection, preys on those

BOOK SHOP

IN the Book Shop session on Wednesday, August 29, Robert Goodman, of Auckland, will open a discussion on Father Trevor Huddleston's book, "Naught for Your Comfort."

about him—and is himself preyed on by a vulgar woman. Intrigue, slander and selfishness are well portrayed in a novel of uncomfortable emotional truth.

At first sight Patrick White's fat book looks like yet another Saga of the Soil. It is the story of an Australian couple on a small farm. The early years have the most charm, and the action is more satisfying, too; at least I prefer to read about bush fires and floods rather than about the snobbish daughter ensnaring a suitable husband or the wanton son going sordidly to the bad. The growing old of this couple, innocent and self-frustrated, is described with great insight.

But the quality of *The Tree of Man* emerges as much as anything in brief flashes and asides, the pause for the philosophic chewing the cud of existence. Here is an old man in a dry month: "What went wrong? There was nothing, of course, that you could explain by methods of logic; only a leaf falling at dusk will disturb the reason without reason. Stan Parker went about the place on which he had led his life, by which he was consumed really. . ."

Patrick White shoots heavier metal than we always realise, and further.

—David Hall

NO CONFIDENCE

THE CONFESSIONS OF FELIX KRULL, *CONFIDENCE MAN*, by Thomas Mann; Secker and Warburg, English price 18/.

PERHAPS I came to Felix Krull a little jaded by the number of eulogies I had read about it; but however I came, I found myself disappointed. What Professor Erich Heller calls "the great German comic novel" stops being comic just half-way through.

Krull, the son of the bankrupt wine manufacturer, fighting his way up the social scale, is brilliant; as an ambitious liftboy he is superb. But Krull, the waiter by day, the smooth man-of-the-world by night, is merely amusing, and as the impostor-by-permission he verges on being dull. He's too slick, too secure in his deceptions. It's perfectly plain that he'll slip out of every jam with success, and as the danger of his being caught out dwindles, so does our interest.

To give him credit, I don't think Thomas Mann intended to do this to his readers. There are a couple of mentions of a period in jail (though where or for what reason we are not told) to suggest that the high road to deceit might not always have been smooth, but I think Mann, like his characters, yielded to the fascination of Krull the impostor and let him ride the high road unapprehended.

—Peter Cape

CHILDREN AND MOTHERS

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD, edited by Gerald Caplan; Tavistock Publications, English price 42/.

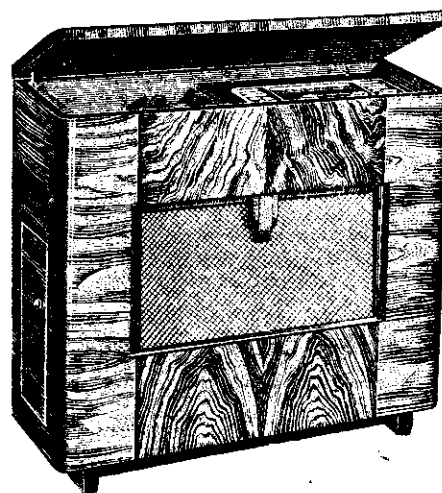
FOLLOWERS of the trail made by pioneers of mental health will welcome this progress report on the prevention and treatment of emotional disturbances in young children. The dearth of child psychiatry in New Zealand is deplored in the current issue of the New Zealand Medical Journal, and the volume under review should prove a

(continued on next page)



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