

the editor might unobtrusively have intervened to guide the reader by identifying persons referred to. The protector of aborigines mentioned (p. 53, for example) was George Clarke. Similarly, Williams's reference to a project for a settlement in the Hauraki Gulf, "to drain off some of the Chartist party from England, by which means preventing a revolution at home," refers, presumably, to one of the schemes of 1823-6, but the editor makes no comment. Obviously, he is more knowledgeable about American whalers than about New Zealand history.

But no more of this. We must be grateful for this volume, which at least provides the full text, not expurgated or abbreviated, like some unhappy local productions. It reminds us of a phase of our past which we rarely recall and is a worthy addition to the small number of scholarly works on New Zealand history.

NOVELIST HALF-FORGOTTEN

WILLIAM HALE WHITE (MARK RUTHERFORD), by Irvin Stock; Allen and Unwin, English price 25/-.

ONE by one the novelists of the Victorian period are coming under review and reputations, once considerable but in the intervening years diminished, are rising as a new generation of critics rediscover the solid worth of what was written a hundred years ago. Only Dickens, perhaps, has suffered no great vicissitudes. He has been read continuously for a century both by the older and critical reader, and by the young and merely voracious. He satisfies them all. Other reputations have been less steady and have fluctuated. Thackeray was up, then down, and is now up again; George Eliot first up, then down, and today there is a school of critics which considers her the major nineteenth century novelist; Trollope was up, then down (and out), but today he is once again a roaring success.

Many have not fluctuated. Their reading public has steadily declined. I doubt even if Hardy is today anything but a specialist's author. Meredith is certainly not popular. George Gissing? Edmund Gosse? Kingsley? The list of names which deserve a good entry in a literary history but which are not in great demand in the public libraries is considerable.

One of the downest and outest at the moment is William Hale White, the subject of this careful and appreciative study. Lionel Trilling in the Introduction says that since his books began to appear in 1880 his admirers have not been many, but they have been choice. With the final word I shall not quibble. But my own edition of his works is the seventh, and a bibliography of all his editions (and not just of his first editions) is the one major gap in Dr. Stock's study. It would, I am sure, have provided a firmer foothold for the historian of his reputation, which cannot be documented merely from a record of what important critics have said about him. Quite unimportant (but evidently appreciative) readers bought editions one to seven.

Parking Metres

COUNT YOUR CHICKENS WHILE YOU MAY

TO no avail I've counted sheep—
I find I cannot fall asleep,
For somewhere in my car, alas,
My son is stepping on the gas.
While daughter with nocturnal pep
Is busy gassing on the step.

—R.G.P.

BOOK SHOP

IN the Book Shop session on Wednesday, October 10, Alisan Drummond will review "The Painted Lathe," by Beatrice Kean Seymour, and "The Hand of the Wind," by Denys Jones. Ormond Wilson will discuss "Elections and Electors," by T. F. S. Ross. Professor L. G. Pocock will talk about "The Myth of Sisyphus," by Albert Camus; and Wynne Colgan will review Joan Evans's "The Endless Webb."

The size of a novelist's audience depends, I think, almost entirely on his ability to tell a story. His literary importance is only partially due to this skill. A good story-teller will always sell his hundreds of thousands, even though (like Somerset Maugham) he has little else to offer. The great novelist brings in addition an interpretation of life, a continuation of the moralising tradition that is implicit in the English novel. Mark Rutherford is not one of the major novelists. But *The Autobiography* and *The Deliverance* and the remarkable *Revolution in Tanner's Lane* are much nearer the themes and scope of the great novels than many facile yarns that have attained greater popularity. They have their minor but permanent place and will be remembered when a lot of slick story-telling is gone with the wind.

—Ian A. Gordon

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

RUSSIAN WIFE GOES WEST, by Tanya Matthews; Victor Gollancz, English price 16/-.

TANYA MATTHEWS was one of the rare "real post-revolutionary Russians" to be permitted to marry a foreigner and leave Russia in 1944. Her husband, Ronald Matthews, was Moscow correspondent of the *Daily Herald*. Western Europe, says Mrs. Matthews in *Russian Wife Goes West*, had always been officially presented as a nightmare. The reality, as she experienced it, is entertainingly described with a freshness of observation which mitigates the fragmentary nature of the book.

She became in great demand as a lecturer and broadcaster, for what she could tell people about ordinary daily life in her country. The error that practically everyone fell into when discussing Russia, she decided, was to use terms which meant one thing in the West and something totally different in the U.S.S.R. Such words as "democracy," "liberty" and "co-operation" were used in great earnest, and in very different senses by both sides. This misunderstanding went right down the scale to the question: "Are Russian women fond of gardening?" She had to explain that Russian women didn't know what gardening, in an Englishwoman's sense, meant.

Tanya Matthews was commissioned by several newspapers to interview some of the refugees and "defectors" from Russia, who lived in camps in Western Germany. Her tragi-comic account of this organised world of exiles, and the lack of imagination with which they were treated by Western officials, makes this part of the book an authoritative and moving document.

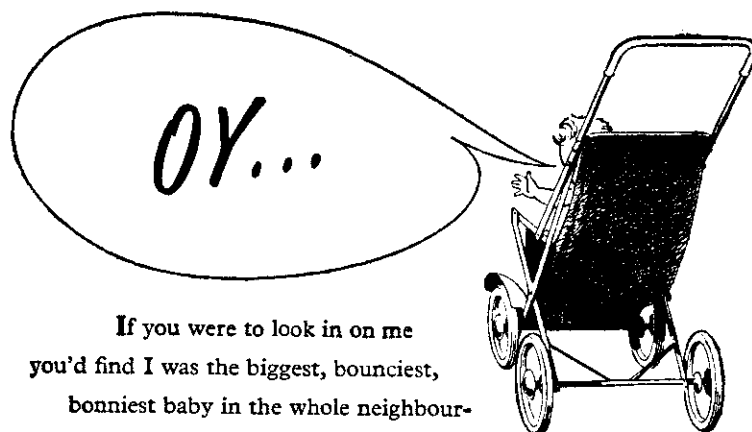
—C.

FACT IN FICTION

THE GALLOWS AND THE CROSS, by Bela Just; Victor Gollancz, English price 10/6.
EROICA, by Carl Pidoll; Methuen, English price 15/-.
MONMOUTH HARRY, by A. M. Maugham; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 15/-.

THESE three novels are founded on fact, two so closely as to be scarcely fiction at all, the third re-seeing history with the aid of Shakespeare.

(continued on next page)



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