

rancour, its lucid and practical moralising (we jib at the word—I wonder why?); and its illumination of the scope and meaning of Christian love. Each writer has a deep, practical concern with human problems. Each explores, in his own way, the holy paradox of Christian living undertaken by weak, ordinary men in the world we know. I personally have found the first and fourth books in the series the most interesting and original. Alexander Miller writes: "The difference between the Church and the world is not that God rules in the Church and does not rule in the world; the difference is that within the Church it is known under Whose governance we stand."

Edmond Cherbonnier goes out boldly to battle with Pelagian and Augustinian dragons on behalf of the inherent goodness of created human nature. It is not possible even to summarise the content of the series. But we have need of such writing, with its emphasis on freedom, moral choice, and its optimism founded on faith in God and chastened by a knowledge of human weakness.

—James K. Baxter

MODERN LOVE

THE PAIR OF THEM, by Dorothy Cowlin; Jonathan Cape, English price 15/-.
SUZANNA, by Isobel Strachey; Jonathan Cape, English price 13/6. *ADMIT ONE*, by Mairi MacInnes; Putnam, English price 13/6. *CABBAGE IN THE GRASS*, by Leopold Louth; Victor Gollancz, English price 12/6.

LOVE is the theme of the first three of these novels, love, that is, taken seriously; it is merely, like the rest of life, matter for comedy in the hands of Leopold Louth. All four books are worth reading.

Dorothy Cowlin, an accomplished minor practitioner, builds up a solid, real picture of the life of an English provincial school teacher. Romance, when it intrudes, has to toe the line and be as sensible and sedate as her heroine. Within its restricted scope, it is an excellent novel.

In *Suzanna* we move upwards in post-war English society to hob-nob with people who still ride to hounds but who, generally speaking, have to take jobs. Just as all the characters are poised uneasily between two worlds, the dying world of undermined status and the new world of making a career, so too the heroine cannot make up her mind between a suitable match and an entirely unsuitable flurry with an older man. When the choice is taken from her, she marries a shoddy Bohemian, endowed neither with status nor money, the ironical twist at the end almost redeeming a novel that—in spite of some flashes of originality—seemed to have passed out of the control of its author about half-way through.

Mairi MacInnes explores the friendship and rivalry of two young women. The nicer of them in the end behaves the worst—she relies on her intuition: that is, she does what she wants to do, with some damage to her friends. This novel has its own strength and distinction.

Cabbage in the Grass is a variegated modern cross between *Candide* and *Bouvard et Pecuchet*. It, too, has its scene in post-war England. The idealist hero comes of a long line of licensed eccentrics, and even when the licence is cancelled by the levelling intolerance of the welfare state, he goes gaily on his way, entangling himself and other people in an uproarious series of ridicu-

lous situations. The author is enough of a realist to make some of these seem far-fetched, but enough of a satirist to carry us with him most of the way. He rarely muffs his laughs.

—David Hall

TIME TO STAND AND STARE

STRANGER IN ITALY, by Herbert Kubly; Victor Gollancz, English price 18/-.

AMERICAN Fulbright professors in the pursuit of their missions fortunately have time to stand and stare as well as to rush about. Many, as we know, write books about the country visited. The author of this one was, I infer, a professor of literature in the University of Wisconsin. He visited Italy in 1950-51, and he completed this book in November, 1954—dates that are important in relation to his observations of conditions in the country. Mr. Kubly is recognised as a competent art critic and a skilful journalist; but apart from these professional qualifications he has some personal qualities which have contributed to the making of a most entertaining and instructive book. He combines a warm sympathy with impersonal objectivity; he is disarmingly friendly, sophisticated but without guile, yet not easily bluffed or deceived.

This book is not the usual travel story. You go with Kubly to various cities—Rome, Milan, Florence, Capri, Naples, Venice, and other places; you live with him and the friends he makes; you visit cathedrals and art galleries, and also poor streets and slums. All the time you are meeting people—the worthy and the not so worthy, the privileged and the not so privileged. Through what you see and hear you come to understand what makes Italians hate Americans, but want to live in America; what makes the common people look to Communism as their hope in the battle against poverty and the landlords.

Mr. Kubly's fine sense of humour pervades the book; his wit does not spare his countrymen—and women.

—L.J.W.

THE BREATHLESS YEARS

LIFE SINCE 1900, by Charles Furth; Allen and Unwin, English price 15/-.

IT is, of course, a truism to say that greater changes have been seen during the last half century than in any previous period of similar duration. Life since 1900, as applying to England alone, is in all conscience a vast enough subject to be dealt with in 167 pages, but Mr. Furth does not even confine himself to a study of social progress pure and simple. Although most of the very well chosen illustrations contained in this book depict the social scene, about three-quarters of the text is devoted to a summary of English, and to a lesser extent European political history which, necessarily, is highly condensed and baldly factual. Two short chapters at the beginning give a fascinating picture of life in the various sharply graduated ranks of Edwardian society. Another chapter, the next to the last, draws a comparison between domestic and social conditions of today and those existing fifty years ago. The intervening space is taken up with wars, slumps, diplomatic conflicts and other affairs of State. A historical handbook of our own times is certainly a useful thing to have about the house, but if only the author had followed more closely the course indicated by his title!

—R. M. Burdon



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