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BOOKS

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lighthouse keepers are involved in the emanations from another world—"The Thing," and a tanker is wrecked on their doorstep by a manifestation of the same power. Curious soap bubbles appear which are representations of the nuclear structure of the other world, and the book tells how a radio officer, saved from the tanker, succeeds in getting in touch with these strange entities. Alan Hackney's comic tale about an imaginary Middle East State starts in London with a drunken party and moves abroad in a similar state of hilarity. The author's invention animates a great number of odd characters, who possess a certain fantastic charm. There is Caroline, who starts by writing detective horrors about Dutch Gayboy and ends in a convent compiling the history of a converted slave girl—a prim English lady, Rita Riddell, who, instead of returning home from the East, is blown up in a bomb outrage and swept into the Sheriff's harem. A few English intellectual pretensions are cheerfully brought to earth on the way.

—J.M.T.

SHELLEY'S IDEAS

SHELLEY AT WORK, a Critical Inquiry, by Neville Rogers; Oxford, Clarendon Press, English price 35/-.

SINCE Mr Eliot patronised him, and Dr Leavis laid his dead hand on the *Ode to the West Wind*, Shelley's repu-

tation in England has slumped. Only in America has modern scholarship been seriously concerned with his development and the full implications of his major poetry. The American work has been valuable, but ponderous; one sighs for a latter-day Shelleyan as graceful and sensitive in appreciation as Professor Blunden. Mr Rogers—a London schoolmaster, aided by the Leverhulme Foundation to make a full exploration of the Shelley Notebooks now in the Bodleian—has not the Blunden touch; nor has he produced another *Road to Xanadu*. But those who can break through the barrage of methodology he lays down in the best American manner, will find in this conscientious study some rewarding interpretations and some really useful new material.

Mr Rogers works out a representative group of favourite Shelleyan images and symbols, then proceeds to examine some of the more important later poems in the light of first drafts, notebook memoranda, and correspondence in Shelley's developing thought. He demonstrates in formidable detail its Platonic underpinning from *Queen Mab* onwards; even more usefully, perhaps, he fully elucidates Shelley's debt to Wieland and Calderon. A final chapter on "Poetry and the Power of Mind" is disappointingly scrappy. But the main thesis—that Shelley is a genuinely philosophical poet whose symbols are linked into a coherent and impressive metaphysical system

—is firmly sustained. Rather unfairly, the common reader may be more grateful for clear reproductions of some of Shelley's fascinating little notebook sketches than for the pages of solemn commentary upon them.

—James Bertram

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE POETICAL WORKS OF JOHN KEATS, edited by H. W. Garrod; Oxford University Press, Geoffrey Cumberlege, English price 12/6. A new edition, replacing H. Buxton Forman's, which for many years has had its place among the Oxford Standard Authors.

MEMOIRS FROM THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD, by F. M. Dostoevsky, translated by Jessie Coulson; Oxford University Press, Geoffrey Cumberlege, English price 12/6. A new translation of the book in which Dostoevsky re-lived his experience as a political prisoner in Siberia.

WE WHO ADVENTURE, by L. B. Winter; Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, English price 21/-. An unassuming but lively account of yacht-cruising off Britain's northern coastline. There are many fine illustrations. An appendix dealing with the maintenance of auxiliary engines is useful.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, by Mary Cole; Allen & Unwin, English price 16/-. The "first authoritative, comprehensive account." fully documented.

Prom Audience Preferences

THE NZBS Concert Section has just completed its first sampling of Prom audience tastes, the thousands of papers that audiences at the last Prom season filled in have now been analysed, and the result shows an overwhelming preference for the established composers and for symphonies and concertos. Beethoven proved by far the most popular composer, with his Sixth Symphony (Pastoral) well above its rivals. The Egmont Overture was first choice in Christchurch, over the Saint-Saens Piano

Concerto No. 3, but second in Dunedin and Auckland to Haydn's Violin Concerto in C and Mozart's Violin Concerto in A respectively. In both Christchurch and Dunedin Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto was first choice and Tchaikovsky's Fantasy Overture, "Romeo and Juliet," second. But the latter was first (with Enesco's Roumanian Rhapsody second) in Wellington. Auckland preferred the Grieg Piano Concerto to the Mozart Symphony No. 35 (Haffner), but Christchurch liked the Dvorak Sym-

phony No. 5 (the New World) better than the Grieg.

In each city the composition of the programmes varied, but the reactions were surprisingly similar, with a preference for the known works. Many of the papers had comments, ranging from the dissatisfied to the enthusiastic, from flippant to serious. One notable feature was the number of comments praising the performers, especially the soloists, even when a work was well down in the order of preference, indicating that the choice was often more on the work than the performance.

Some comments were extremely brief—"Thoroughly enjoyed the whole programme"; "More Gershwin"; "Still no Handel." One person expressed pleasure at hearing a "stimulating modern work," and hoped to hear one at every concert, while another asked for two-thirds of every Orchestra programme to be the "happier, more melodious music" of the Proms. One listener pleaded for open windows, another complained of a badly-tuned piano, but most gave praise for fine performances and made suggestions for future programmes.

James Robertson's comment was that the results will be valuable as an indication of public demand. It was a great help to find that audiences were so interested, and the new conductor should benefit by the poll, which showed a high standard of taste.

Mr J. L. Hartstonge, of NZBS Concert Section, was a little diffident about drawing conclusions from what was at best only a representative sample of New Zealand audiences. "I am pleased," he said, "that a large proportion of the forms came from the younger section of the audience, because we are interested in their preferences, and they have shown evidence of a mature judgment. In Auckland, for example, the Mozart Violin Concerto came top against the less difficult Tchaikovsky and Handel and the modern *Facade Suite*.

"Many members of the audience went to a great deal of trouble to fill in the papers and return them, and we are very grateful for their co-operation," he said.



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