

ONE OF THE OLD SCHOOL

*EDUCATION? The master who taught it
To me didn't hold with the play-way.
On the seat of our trousers we caught it
If we ever attempted to stay away.*

*The look in his eye was a warning,
And his voice wasn't on the polite side.
When he got out of bed in the morning
He was skilled at avoiding the right side.*

*Our thoughts as he tore us to tatters
Were as mixed as the egg of the cure—
He was never a man to mince matters,
He preferred to reduce them to puree.*

—R.G.P.

of his development as a political figure, a clear parallel with the growth of American policy during the last four years. Similarly, the career of Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., Chief United States Delegate to the United Nations, reflects with startling clarity the revolution in American foreign policy from stubbornly defended isolation to dynamic participation in external affairs. The names of Walter Lippmann and Felix Frankfurter are less well known to the New Zealand public. Yet each of these almost institutional figures—the "philosopher-journalist" and the judicial radical—represents a vital current in the turbulent stream of American thought and behaviour.

Through These Men is sprinkled with apt quotations and spiced with the quizical wit characteristic of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, with which the author has been associated for many years. The fault, if any, lies in its scrupulous impartiality. It lacks bite. One cannot escape the feeling that, for all his interest in the larger drama, Mr Brown has never really left his comfortable seat on the aisle. Only towards the end of the book, when he deals with the tragic Oppenheimer affair, does he permit his detached liberalism to spill over into outraged partisanship. And only then, for me, did his characters actually come to life.

—Henry Walter

HUNGER?

MUST MEN STARVE? the Malthusian Controversy, by Jacob Oser; Jonathan Cape. English price 25/-.

WHAT is there about this topic that brings out the worst in authors? Men like Fairfield Osborne in *Our Plundered Planet* or William Vogt in *Road to Survival* become almost hysterical as they re-state the central theme of Malthus that population tends to out-run food supply, a theme which fell into disrepute when the New World and Australasia were pouring their new food into the maw of hungry Europe. Now men are asking anew "Will there be food for man's population increase," as people in these lands of supply begin to consume their surplus. The gross overstatement of the position by Osborne and Vogt does not necessarily mean that there is no case to answer. Oser in this book has some of the answers.

But not all. He frankly avows his trouble in his preface—he is prejudiced. It is easy to pick holes in authors like the two cited above, or to go back to what Malthus originally said and dissect it. Oser discusses known methods of increasing food production as they might feed hungry mouths. But what can one say of a man who writes: "There are 80 rivers in the world each of which discharges at least 10,000,000 acre-feet

annually into the oceans; altogether they discharge 12,000,000,000 acre-feet. If only half of this water were spread evenly over all the 2,300,000,000 acres of cultivated land of the world, it would provide 31 inches of water. But this might turn out to be quite difficult to accomplish . . ." Well, really! And later he points out that if cattle power were to be replaced by tractors in India, the food supply would be increased by 50 per cent. How long would it take and where

is the capital coming from? Oser doesn't answer.

When he comes to potential methods he is in the fascinating field of the future—the heat pump, the solar cooker, distilling sea water, soil-less farming, and so on. Even to a dam at Gibraltar which would lower the level of the Mediterranean 330 feet in 100 years and lay bare 90,000 square miles of new land. A lot of sound sense is mixed up with statements such as "trees will force the winds upward, and by cooling them will cause rain to fall," which is nonsense.

All this is an indication that the real core of the problem has escaped Oser completely. It is one purely of tempo. Can the changes in production methods be brought in rapidly enough to offset the growing-pains of population until higher living standards bring falling rates of increase? The author simply does not face it, lost in a flood of unsorted statistics.

There are answers to most of the arguments of the Neo-Malthusians. I'm afraid *Must Men Starve?* doesn't give them.

—D. W. McKenzie

SOCIAL PORTRAIT

ENGLISH PEOPLE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, by Dorothy Marshall; Longmans, Green and Co., English price 30/-.

A GREAT advance in mechanical invention during the second half of the 18th century brought about far-reaching changes in the social structure of England. Dorothy Marshall examines the scope and results of these changes in what she describes as a "background book." A selection of items from the mass of information provided may serve to give some idea of the vast range of subjects embraced by her inquiry. Boarding fees at Harrow in 1775 amounted to no more than £7. In spite of the elaborate class distinctions ruling in those days, the younger sons of gentlemen were often apprenticed to some trade. Apothecaries, whose original function had been merely the selling of drugs, were beginning to give medical advice as well. Sanitation, especially in large towns, was practically non-existent, and the emptying of householders' privies presented an apparently insoluble problem. The idleness of the poor was greatly deplored by the rich, who felt that "the provision of work-houses . . . would at once provide an opportunity for the industrious and deprive the lazy of an excuse." The ordinary working man's diet, the clothes he wore, his struggle to earn a living, made more difficult by progressive enclosures of common land, are discussed here with facts and figures to support each statement.

In this study no section of the community is allowed to steal the show.

(continued on next page)

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