

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD

DO NOUGHT WITHOUT A BISHOP. by Barbara Griffiths; Timaru Herald Co. Ltd.

BISHOP JULIUS has spoken of how, on first arriving in Canterbury, he listened to a eulogy of his predecessor which ended with the words, "Now he really was a bishop." The emphasis was not misplaced. Henry John Chitty Harper had established a reputation that might well intimidate a successor. Having persuaded a fellow tutor at Eton, George Augustus Selwyn by name, to renounce law in favour of the Church, Harper was himself persuaded by Selwyn many years later to accept the newly-established see of Christchurch. At the time of sailing for New Zealand, Harper was a married man with 14 children, but neither advancing age nor the cares of domesticity could check his tireless enterprise. "Always the vicar at heart," he explored his vast diocese to its farthest limits, travelling on horseback or on foot, to be greeted often enough with the words, "Well, my Lord, you are the first clergyman we have seen here." When he resigned in 1889 at the age of 85 the whole of his diocese was supplied with churches and parsonages; its clergy had grown in number from 10 to 60. A clan of nearly one hundred descendants mourned the bishop's death four years later.

There is nothing sensational about this story of a career of unbroken success which Mrs Griffiths tells in a quiet, restrained style suitable to its character. It has been her aim, I imagine, to present the bishop as a good rather than a great man, caring much for duty but little for ambition, and this is the impression she succeeds in conveying. Her documentary material has been used to good advantage, especially the letters of Charles Torlesse and Bishop Harper himself.

—R. M. Burdon

## A PAINFUL JOY

SELECTED POEMS, by Lawrence Durrell; Faber and Faber, English price 10/6.

YEATS and Thomas are dead. Eliot sleeps and Auden dozes. Edith Sitwell adds like Penelope another scene to her unfinished tapestry. George Barker sends us grim messages from the snakepit. In America Wallace Stevens, for lack of a better actor, wheels a barrow on stage, and the humourless, faceless schools applaud. At Cambridge young men write small documentary pieces about the street excavations observable from the library window; young women, metaphysically, dissect dead birds. In this depressing climate of poetic exhaustion, it is a painful joy—to criticise? rather to celebrate—the selected poems of Lawrence Durrell. This Englishman living in Greece demonstrates with each new group of published poems the controlled power one expects of a great surgeon, or athlete. Faults there may be in his work, as



BISHOP HARPER  
"Always the vicar at heart"

there are spots on the nylon fur of a sea-leopard—obscurities, sheer animal games, facts of private reference—but no other poet now writing in English possesses his power to lay bare, by chiselling a poem to the bone, the nuclear structure of experience—

Love on a leave-of-absence came,  
Unmoored the silence like a barge.  
Set free to float on lagging webs  
The swan-black wise unhindered night.  
(Bitter and pathless were the ways  
Of sleep to which such beauty led.)

This is a complete poem, "Niki," the shortest in the selection. We have seen many different Durrells flash out from the earlier poems—the friend of Greece, the lover complacent or deprived, the tightrope-walker above Niagara—and all of them seemed true in the moment of occurrence; but in his most recent poems he has come to his full strength, as a man too old to enter again the jaws of the social dragon, who speaks from a better and a worse place; as a husband and rejuvenator of the language. We can only regret his ascetic impulse which has made this new selection much too stripped; and in each fresh poem we rejoice.

—James K. Baxter

## A GLANCE AT PROUST

MARCEL PROUST AND DELIVERANCE FROM TIME, by Germaine Brée; Chatto and Windus, English price 21/-.

A GREAT number of books have already been written about this extraordinary genius and his exorbitant masterpiece *A La Recherche du temps perdu*, a work by which Paris in the years after World War I regained at a bound its literary pre-eminence (its artistic supremacy one conjectures has not been disputed in modern times). Proust carefully exposes the inner nerves of feeling as an epicure peels a peach. It is true that sometimes the emotion appears unimportant (just as in New Zealand the peaches have no flavour, being grown for appearance). In such case the skill in peeling has to be sufficient reward. Professor Brée's commentary is competent and the discussion on a high artistic level.

Why does not some commentator deal with Proust's year in the Army? Did the 74th Orleans Regiment ever have so unmilitary a soldier? Years later he himself—answering one of those amusing questionnaires: Your favourite character in fiction, favourite colour, etc.—replied to the query as to what was in his opinion the most extraordinary event in military history by saying, "My voluntary enlistment in the

(continued on next page)

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GOOD night once again and  
God bless you,

May happiness fill up its cup  
for you.

I'm sorry, though loudly we press  
you,

You won't let us stay and wash  
up for you.

I'm facing the world with a hearty  
Three cheers, for I'm feeling on  
top of it.

So thanks for a wonderful party—  
I've really enjoyed every drop  
of it.

—R.G.P.