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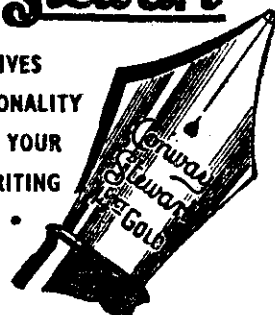


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BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

that the relinquishment of power is sometimes a way of keeping it. The "moral" of both these books is the same, the resilience and adaptability of democracy to meet new circumstances. To-day the United States has the heavier task. The great question now is how far the United States is ready for world leadership.

—David Hall

INTRODUCTION TO CHAUCER

THE POET CHAUCER, by Nevill Coghill.
Geoffrey Cumberlege. Oxford University Press. English price, 5/-.

THIS is a most welcome addition to the Home University Library, and may help (as Mr. Coghill's BBC programmes undoubtedly have done) to increase popular appreciation of "our greatest comic poet." Mr. Coghill's writing is always lively, and his medieval scholarship—though lightly worn—is such that no serious student of Chaucer can afford to neglect his book. Above all, he has the knack of making literary judgments in modern terms, so that he can use Uccello or Proust with equal facility to point back to his originals, and rekindle interest even in something as dusty as the *Tale of Melibee* by referring it to a bar-room argument. He is particularly good on Chaucer's *Troilus* and on *The Wife of Bath*, and by combining an outline of the poet's life with a study of the content and development of his work he is able to give at the end a balanced and reasonably convincing portrait of one whom he considers, with Shakespeare, as the most English of writers. This is not, of course, the full literary study that Chaucer deserves (and rather surprisingly has not yet received), but it is an admirable and stimulating introduction, and as such may be recommended without reserve.

—J.B.



THIS is E. J. Ward, of Christchurch, who will review Taylor Caldwell's novel "Melissa" in the ZB Book Review session next Sunday, January 29. The session will be chaired by J. C. Reid, and other books for review are "In Search of a Future," by Maurice Hindus (reviewer, Frank Haigh); "Clay Under Clover," by Thomas Skelton (A. R. D. Fairburn); and "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime," by Oscar Wilde (F. L. Combs).

N.Z. LISTENER, JANUARY 27, 1950.