

to 1950 her book is admirably comprehensive and will no doubt prove invaluable as a guide to original sources for students who specialise on some particular topic.

Part I traces the evolution of cottage industry towards industrial capitalism, and goes on to describe the new methods of transport brought into being by this transition. Since social and economic questions can never be entirely separated from politics, there are chapters on the struggle of the working classes to preserve themselves against the dominance and oppression of a system that augmented so rapidly as to grow beyond the control of scarcely comprehending statesmen. A final chapter in this section, entitled "The Age of the Middle Classes," deals with philosophy, art and literature as affected by the industrial revolution up to the year 1850. Parts 2 and 3—"The Rise of the Working Classes" and "A Century of Social Reform"—are planned on similar lines. An epilogue integrates the whole work and foreshadows the coming of a new age dependent for its welfare on what use shall be made of a new and stupendous source of power.

To read this book of 550 pages from cover to cover is a salutary labour, but one that wearies the mind; to have it on one's shelves for purposes of reference will be a comfort in time of uncertainty or failing memory. —R. M. Burdon

A WASTE OF TALENT

A *BROKEN ENGAGEMENT*, by Betty Askwith; Victor Gollancz. English price, 8/6.

LESLEY ARKWRIGHT, a young, attractive and efficient Director in the Ministry of Propaganda has three men in her life: an Oxford professor, married to an extraordinary Russian; a fellow worker who is anxious to seduce her; and Colin, an ex-Major and her junior at work, with whom she enters into the engagement which becomes—simply becomes—broken. The book describes Lesley's reactions. Minor characters are clearly drawn. Among them are Colin's



J. J. SAUNDERS, of Christchurch, who will chair the ZB Book Review session next Sunday evening, May 27. Books for review then are: "Ourselves Writ Large," by Alan Marshall, and "Taming of the North," by Hudson Fysh (reviewed by O. N. Gillespie); "Farthest West, Afoot and Afloat," by A. W. and A. H. Reed (Christopher Johnson); "Fantare in Blemont," by Marcel Aymé, and "Nothing Gross," by Derek Barton (Pat Lawlor); and "An Ulster Plantation," by Arthur J. Gray (C. R. H. Taylor)

mother, cleverly possessive, his step-brothers (one addicted to homosexuality and the other to normal living), and her friend Ann, illegitimate daughter of a Lord.

It seems a pity that an author who can sustain interest with this collection should not have devoted her considerable powers of characterisation and a gift for neat description and attractive quotations to a sturdier theme. The book cannot be recommended to those who object to abnormalities being treated as normalities, nor to those who prefer the orthodox in grammar and punctuation.

—C.M.B.

THEATRE HISTORY

THE ENGLISH STAGE, 1850-1950, by Lyn-ton Hudson; Harrap. English price, 10/6.

IN 1851 Charles Dickens described Sadlers Wells as a bear garden. The theatre of that time was, as Mr. Hudson reminds us, a "scene of semi-darkness and confusion." It survived "by the ill-paid works of hack playwrights, botchers and plagiarists." It had to contend with social ostracism and religious prejudice.

The hundred years which followed are traced for us here from the "Blood-on-the-breadknife" melodramas, to the "tea-cup-and-saucer" plays of Robertson, the plays of ideas, the spectacles and the thrillers, up to the present almost plotless iridescences of Fry and Bridie. We meet with one or two surprises. Oscar Wilde is diagnosed, not as an original, but as a copyist. The resemblance between *The Importance of Being Earnest* and a much less polished play by W. S. Gilbert (noted by Bernard Shaw but forgotten apparently by others) is shown in detail and is too remarkable to have been a coincidence.

The latter chapters on the more recent and on the current theatre change from more or less straight reconstruction into careful essays on present conditions and future promises. Some pronouncements might be argued — "*Glamorous Night* sounded the death-knell of the musical comedy comedian and the tap dancer" is perhaps too sweeping, but Mr. Hudson's knowledge and sympathy with the theatre allied to a really formidable job of research make this a very readable and informative book.

—Isobel Andrews

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

RALPH THOMSON'S illustrations give a delightful quality to four small books—*Sally*, *Horace*, *Archie* and *Monty* (Oxford Press, English price 1/-). They are animal studies which should appeal strongly to very young people.

WALTER OAKESHOTT, Headmaster of Winchester, found the nucleus of an anthology in prayers read before school. Passages used in *The Sword of the Spirit* (Faber and Faber, English price 8/6), are taken from the Bible and from a wide range of prose and verse. They are intended more particularly, according to the editor, for "those who are to be confirmed or have been recently confirmed."

PARIS, edited by Alan Houghton Brodrick (Hodder and Stoughton, English price 20/-), is the third volume in a series entitled "The People's France." It is an excellent guide, indispensable to travellers, and of deep interest to those who merely hope to visit the loveliest of cities. There are more than 170 illustrations, some of them superb.

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