

# THE GOOD PATCH

THIRTY YEARS WITH G.B.S., by Blanche Patch; Dymock's Book Arcade, Sydney. Price, 13. 5.

(Reviewed by David Hall)

**G**EORGE BERNARD SHAW, sage and licensed jester, has made a deeper impression as a personality on his time even than as a writer. His later plays—and many of his earlier—are Shavian first, drama or literature second. The humanity of his characters is always a little suspect. Often they are types, Shavian cleverness with puppet-strings moving their limbs, while the same insistent voice gravely says all the parts from somewhere in the wings. (Miss Patch mentions that Shaw read over all the parts in his plays to the assembled cast with great verve, and was virtually his own producer.) Thus Shaw may well be remembered, like Dr. Johnson, as greater than his works. Certainly he was one of those rare men whose character caught the imagination of their age, and every scrap or titbit of personal gossip about him has a breathless interest.

But these memoirs of his secretary, although unluckily they show us G.B.S. only in his later years, the last of them

years of what in a lesser mortal might be called senility, are rather more than gossip. They do present a real and lively portrait, sketched by an observer described by G.B.S. himself as "Shaw-proof," but who—in spite of a vein of iconoclasm—greatly admired Shaw and is certainly not disposed to allow others to criticise him. Her treatment of Lawrence of Arabia, who became a close friend of the Shaws, is the measure of this difference. Here was a person to whom Miss Patch might have been expected to succumb, but "Lawrence the author was rather like a prima donna for ever trilling her last farewell." Of Shaw himself ("public Shaw," not "private Shaw") she remarks, "He did have the knack of defying the conventions in principle and in practice bowing submissively to them." Shaw, in fact, was naturally well behaved: as Herrick wrote of himself, "His muse was jocund, but his life was chaste." This is perhaps Blanche Patch's main contribution to our knowledge of Shaw, the satisfying information that anyone who so challenged decorum and order in print could be so tame a lion at home.

Also we learn from her that Shaw, the paladin of underdogs—or, should we say, the inveterate challenger of top-



BBC photograph

## BLANCHE PATCH

"As resolute and detached as Shaw himself"

dogs—was not a good mixer and lacked the human touch, although he could maintain firmly close friendships with people who shared his interests. Miss Patch's tact and energy were devoted to protecting him from the intrusions of the outside world.

Blanche Patch herself should not—for all her conventionality—be underestimated. She is the type of Englishwoman, unemotional, reliable, gifted

with humour, whose very limitations become a major virtue and who play no mean part in carrying on the necessary work of the world. This book is competent, although it would have benefited from further revision to eliminate repetitions. Its casual asides reveal a person as resolute and detached as Shaw himself: "... for *The Apple Cart* found much favour with those in authority, appealing as it did to the feeling of importance which authority usually confers upon those who possess it."

One impression I had gained from other reviews of this book was completely refuted by reading it: Miss Patch does not diminish Shaw. Greater knowledge of the man, crotchets and all, and how he lived and worked will enhance whatever admiration we may already feel for his work or for the great Shavian public persona.

## ANGRY PSYCHOLOGIST

FREUD OR JUNG, by Edward Glover; Allen and Unwin. English price, 15/-.

**DR. GLOVER** attempts in this book to show that the dream of a psychology in which contributions from Freud and from Jung are harmoniously intermingled can never be more than a dream—the opposition between the two is too fundamental for any such reconciliation to be possible. He also attempts to persuade us to take Freud's side in this conflict. This is the work of an angry man, and I think Dr. Glover



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