

study of her years as a neglected wife, the book is not unsuccessful. It is detailed, certainly "educative," and shows courage in stopping short before the incidents which won Catherine historical notoriety, but seems to me to lack any real creative force.

Yet another cultist book about the Brontës, *Immortal Wheat* combines a romanticised fictional biography with often provocative accounts of the Brontës' novels. Miss Wallace has made somewhat debatable use of Fanny Ratchford's study of the Brontë juvenilia, but unfortunately has not also taken advantage of Elsie Harrison's work. She writes as a devotee, often in that hyperbolic style which characterises many admirers of the gifted sisters.

Ben Sowerby's imaginative autobiography of Peter Pinel, calculatedly plotless, tells of a search for inner security against the compulsion of the second self. The period, never explicitly stated, appears to be Victorian, and the style is skilfully unmodern. Undertones of insanity are suggested as the hero rejects "les autres" for his private universe. The novel is original, highly self-conscious and rather over-written, but often transmits a moving intensity of experience. I am not sure, however, that the "authentic unreality" commended in Siegfried Sassoon's preface compensates for a sense of morbid self-indulgence and an uncertain grip on real life. —J.C.R.

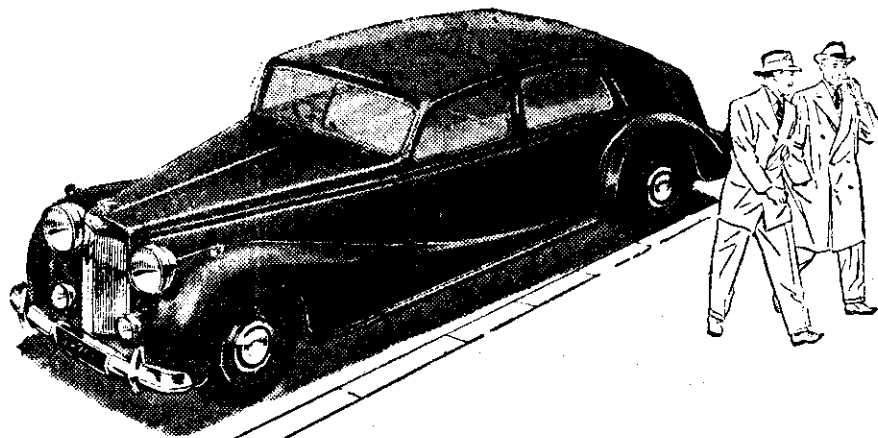
SMALL TOWN BOY MAKES GOOD

THE MAN OF INDEPENDENCE, by Jonathan Daniels; Gollancz, English price, 18/-.

THIS is a biography of President Truman. Truman has done an honest day's work all his life, whether as farmer, soldier, business man, county judge (an administrative, not judicial, local body post), senator and President. I say honest purposely, because his early links with the corrupt Pendergast machine in Kansas City failed to smear him. The reflection one draws from this straightforward and mildly tedious book is that Truman's appeal to the American people is based on his closeness to it—in experience and ability. He is the average man in the White House and re-warms the dreams of a million mothers that their son will grow up and one day be President. Truman's record as chairman of the Senate's Defence Programme Committee showed that he had above-average administrative ability and he owed his nomination as Vice-President to a recognition of this. To get back in 1948 was pure Harry Truman: the average man and the average voter had the laugh on the world. —David Hall

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THREE additions to Odham's Britain Illustrated series are *Pageant of London*, *Rural London* and *The English Lake District* (all 13/3, through Whitcombe and Tombs). The London scenes suffer a little from familiarity: they have been photographed so often that the camera seems to have nothing new to say. But the illustrations are linked together in a satisfying panorama, and in *The English Lake District* the rural views—with special attention to the Wordsworth country—are full of historic and literary suggestion. Another Odham's book, *100 Years in Pictures* (15/9), stands on its own. The photography is of a lower standard—inevitably, in the earlier scenes—and the treatment of history is sketchy. But there is always a fascination in old pictures, and some of the photographs in this book are full of drama.



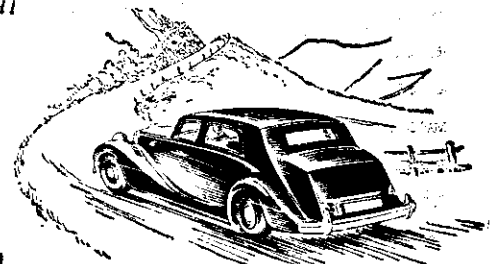
"Performance? It was simply incredible!"

- Mr. J: How did your first big trip in the new Sheerline go, Arthur? Good performance?
- Mr. B: Performance? It was simply incredible Jack. I had no idea automotive engineering had been advanced to such a high standard. Nor did I ever realise that a big car could be handled so effortlessly on winding, hilly roads. I just didn't know they were there!
- Mr. J: And what about the straight stretches?
- Mr. B: Well, they were so thrilling, I was wishing they'd never end. Seemed more like flying than motoring. All I could hear was the wind rushing past and the dashboard clock ticking.
- Mr. J: Now wait on old man. You don't expect me to believe that, do you?
- Mr. B: I'll take you for a spin in the country tomorrow and then you'll believe it. Yes, it's THE car as far as I'm concerned!

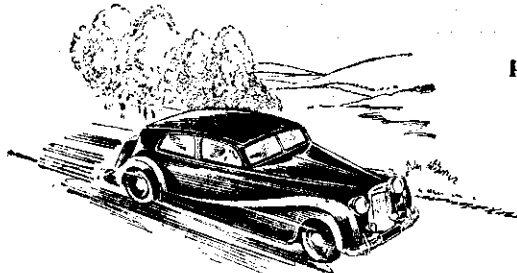
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"... straight stretches so thrilling, I was wishing they'd never end..."

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