

Book Reviews

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an honoured retired head-gardener with his own cottage and his memories. I am not sure what that extra quality is, but perhaps it is human kindness; it makes his book the kind to appeal to anyone growing old, especially a gardener.

Old Herbaceous is a short story of a long and happy life; *Dune Boy* is a short reminiscence of the long and happy boyhood of a naturalist who spent his school holidays in bliss with his grandparents on the shores of Lake Michigan. His life was divided into a kind of mental Arctic night and day, Edwin Teale says: the night was all the time when he crawled about at school in the city—the day was vacation time among the dunes, with Gramp, who always promised rewards of any silver dollars he found rollin' uphill, and Gram who said "we must keep evil-doers from doing evil; it isn't enough just to forgive them the evil they do." He helped on the farm and observed the wild life and collected things—the story of his collection of mouse-pelts and his attempt to market them is wildly funny—and trained himself solemnly in such qualities as persistence: he tangled a reel of silk and then spent hours and hours trying to unravel the tangle, giving up only when he had proved to his own satisfaction that he really had the desirable quality.

These two books, both illustrated with line drawings, are recommended for those with a leaning towards plant-life, whether cultivated or wild. —J.

"CONTAINMENT"

POLICY FOR THE WEST, by Barbara Ward; Allen and Unwin. English price, 12/6.

THIS book is an exposition of the policy of "containment"—an examination of ways and means by which Soviet encroachment may be arrested. Accepting the basic fact of Soviet hostility, Barbara Ward acknowledges the necessity for rearmament, while emphasising the truism that there can be no sound defence without economic stability. Her comparison of the relative strengths of East and West is, on the whole, encouraging. Containment need not entail financial ruin. The degree of mobilisation required by the democracies "probably lies at a level of about 15 per cent of their national incomes," while "at the height of the last war the United States was devoting 50 per cent of its resources to the war effort, Britain 60 per cent." The policy of containment may, of course, be put into execution more effectually by a Western Europe which has achieved some advance towards unity in the form of federation. Signs of such a movement have already become manifest.

In her final chapter the author propounds a question. "How have we in the West contrived so to dim our vision that we appear to have lost it? When was the initiative lost?" The answer—scarcely one to be expected from an economist—explains the lapse in terms of spiritual values. "The men who founded the Industrial Revolution and believed in unchanging and unaltering economic laws were introducing a god of economic determinism into one sector of their society. It was a savage but appropriate justice that led Marx to turn

economic determinism against them in their own industrial stronghold." Which all boils down to the repetition of an ancient belief that sooner or later one is punished for one's sins.

—R. M. Burdon

COCKSHIES AND ACTION

THE CLOWN, by E. J. Oliver; Jonathan Cape. English price, 10/6.

NO MUSIC FOR GENERALS, by Frederick Howard; Wingate. English price, 12/6.

THE WORLD CANNOT HEAR YOU, by Gwyn Thomas; Victor Gollancz. English price, 10/6.

THE tragedy at the heart of the comic is the preconception on which *The Clown* was built. This does not prevent its being a good novel. Tommy Seldon is a natural music-hall clown, but he marries an actress whose greatest role is Lady Macbeth and who in real life likes to act—but only to act—the part of Roxana. That's the hell of it.

Would the publisher please note—p. 120—that it is Polonius Tommy plays at the university, not Laertes as per dust jacket? Time was when the rushed reviewer needed to look no further than the blurb. But if its facts are unreliable, there's nothing for it but to read the books.

Frederick Howard throws a few good half-bricks at a number of well-chosen targets. He creates an excellent American political general who has to "plan operations against United States Senators as well as the Japanese" in a last-war eastern campaign and does it by any means to his hand, from phoney publicity to British and Australian lives. The latter-day British Empire, from the Fabian governor coaching leaders of the independence movement, to decent old General Hinch, winning battles by accident, gives some good targets for satire in a lively novel which provides both cockshies and action.

Gwyn Thomas illuminates the South Welsh scene with a spotlight changing from red to green all through a thronged and confused performance; there are flashes of blue, too, as sex must rear its ugly head, no matter where. The comedy verges always on farce. The idiom in which the novel is written, if wearisome, is also distinctive. The good fellowship of the Welsh group who sing and jibe on every page is well done; one feels the rest is mere sauce for the Saxon.

—David Hall

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, by K. C.

Wheare; Oxford Press; English price, 18/-. The second edition of a thoughtful study in federalism which may well become a standard work.

NEW books from Odhams Press, received through Whitcombe and Tombs, include: *Goering*, a full and careful biography by Willi Frischauer (15/9); *Journeys in England*, an anthology taken from seven centuries of writing, edited by Jack Simmons (18/9); the *Odhams Enquire Within* (15/9), more than 500 pages of references, starting with short biographies of the 20th Century and ending with poultry-keeping. There are also new titles in the "Britain Illustrated" series: *The Home Counties* (13/3), *English Inns* (15/9), *Shakespeare's Country* (15/9), *English Villages* (15/9), and *England* (20/-), a fine collection of photographs by Karl Gullers, with an introduction by Eric Linklater. *The Sawdust Ring* (17/-), by Rupert Croft-Cooke and W. S. Meadmore, is a different sort of book—a brisk account of circus life, fully illustrated.

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