

seen." Against digging Mr. King advances many arguments, one of them that weed seeds are brought to the surface to germinate. And don't dig your compost under; leave it on the surface to maintain an "organic skin." This is Nature's way.

—L.J.W.

PEOPLE AS SYMBOLS

LOST IN THE STARS. A Dramatisation of Alan Paton's novel. **CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY.** by Maxwell Anderson; Jonathan Cape and the Bodley Head. English price, 6/-.

A PLAY should always act better than it reads. As this reads very well, I can imagine a sympathetic production having a direct impact on a normally receptive audience. The reader here is at a disadvantage because this is a play of atmosphere rather than action, and the atmosphere depends a great deal on the work of chorus and solo singing. The book gives no hint of the quality of the music. Some of the lyrics on their own do not reach a very high standard, but if the music relates, as of course it should, to the mood of the verse, and is combined with good voices and effective lighting, it must add enormously to the general effect.

The play is written in a series of short scenes, some of them not more than two or three pages long, snatched on to the stage in between black-outs and quick curtains. From the point of view of construction, one wonders whether this technique would not detract a little from the play's dramatic possibilities, as there is no gradual working up to any one intense emotional climax. On the other hand, there is no time or room for boredom.

The theme is the colour question in Africa, with the under-privileged Negro on the one hand and the prejudiced white on the other. The people in the play can be regarded as symbols, slightly larger than life, or as individuals caught up in their own particular travail.

I would like to see this play produced here, but casting would be difficult. Most of the players are Negroes, and while make-up and inference might get the characters across visually, the fluid notes of the Negro voices, which even in reading one can hear booming



THE REV. P. O. C. EDWARDS, Chaplain of Christ's College, who will review "Undiscovered Ends," by Canon W. H. Elliot, in the ZB Book Review session on February 3. Other books and reviewers will be "The Beautiful is Vanished," by Taylor Caldwell (Edith Teague); "Vienna's Golden Years of Music," by Eduard Hanslick (Owen Jensen); and "Louis Pasteur, Free Lance of Science," by Rene J. Dubos (Dr. T. O. Garland)

N.Z. LISTENER, JANUARY 25, 1952.

through the pages, are a necessary adjunct to the proper presentation of the essential message of this sincere and earnest play.

—Isobel Andrews

AN INTERPRETER

FRENCH MUSIC. by Martin Cooper; Oxford University Press. English price, 21/-.

MARTIN COOPER, music critic of the Spectator, has an affectionate understanding of French civilisation which few Englishmen achieve. This book is a necessary attempt to interpret French music to English audiences who do not find it congenial. It is equally appropriate to New Zealand. Mr. Cooper knows the attitudes and assumptions of English audiences, and what has conditioned them. He knows, therefore, just what to explain about French music to make clear its quite different assumptions. He covers the fruitful period from 1869 to 1925, and gives a table correlating the music year by year with other French art. The writing is clear, though closely-packed with interlocking detail and alert interpretations. It is a book to own, to be kept handy for study of these composers as they come into the programmes. This kind of reference would be easier if the index had included compositions as well as the composers.

—D.F.T.

TIDY VILLAS

ENGAGEMENT IN BANGKOK. by F. Y. Thompson; Jonathan Cape. English price, 12/6.

BLANDINGS' WAY. by Eric Hodgins; Michael Joseph. English price, 10/6.

YOUNG MAN. by Kay Dick; Heinemann. Australian price, 13/6.

ONE would not want to camp for life in Salisbury Cathedral, nor for that matter in Castle Kafka or the Tolstoi palaces. The inn, the small house, even the hut, if architecturally less impressive, are still pleasant places for human habitation. In the world of the novel, then, how satisfying at times the brisk competently told story, not greatness, but serviceable narrative where the writer like a gentleman aims to please and not to overpower. *Engagement in Bangkok* is such a story. A young and simple fellow spends a year or so in Siam. His love affairs are pure stock (cool man in hot country), but his platonic encounters include some eccentric amusing characters of the type one meets too rarely outside detective fiction. F. Y. Thompson has an ear for dialogue and the background which he portrays is convincing.

Blandings' Way is a sequel to Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House, the American best-seller of 1947. Like its predecessor, on which it in no way depends, the new book is cheerfully funny, satire without a snarl. The sacred rites of the advertising religion are revealed and mocked, but the attitude of the author is affectionate and not really irreverent.

Young Man is a dull and rather pretentious book. Much of it reads like a parody of certain modern novelists.

—D.N.W.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I CHOSE JUSTICE. by Victor Kravchenko; Robert Hale; English price, 15/-.

This is Kravchenko's story of the trial resulting from his libel suit against the editors of the French Communist weekly, *Les Lettres Françaises*. **THE ST. LAWRENCE.** by Henry Beston; William Hodge; English price, 10/6. An historical-descriptive account of the country watered by a great river.

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