

are seeking the European life; something more than welfare hand-outs or the muddle of thought that is pidgin speech is necessary to guide them towards it, and he points to anthropological research as a means to discover what it may be. And as for general reading, the dust-cover can be believed: *Adam in Ochre* is a "vivid and adult Australian book."

—Gilbert Archey

TRADE OR PROFESSION

THE PRACTICE OF BOOKSELLING, by B. N. Langdon-Davies; Phoenix House. English price, 18s.

PERHAPS, with over one thousand new titles tumbling from the English presses each month, it ill becomes a bookseller to turn his hand to writing books instead of selling them. Yet books about bookselling are rare. J. G. Wilson's *The Business of Bookselling* is over 20 years old. Ruth Park Brown's *Bookshops—How to Run Them*, was published in 1929, is American and for English taste over emphasises salesmanship. ("Sell two books to the customer who comes in for one.") So there is room beside Sir Stanley Unwin's *The Truth About Publishing* for a companion volume on bookselling. Mr. Langdon-Davies, at 75, boldly undertakes to fill the vacancy. He did not come to book-selling itself until he had reached an age at which many men are about to retire. He had had a wide experience of jobs and people and he has something worthwhile to say on the sort of person a bookseller is, or should try to be; and of the bookseller's place in the community.

He takes what might be called the professional view of bookselling. A bookseller is not a mere merchandiser of the most recent best-sellers, with his eyes glued to the cash register and the balance-sheet. The good bookseller is an individualist who loves books, but who is not so completely in love as to forget that his livelihood depends on his ability to sell them. Trying to balance quality and sales ability is an impossible job, but it is one that the bookseller worth his salt tackles all the time.

In describing the ideal bookseller Mr. Davies speaks from his wise age and wide experience. In dealing in detail with the practical day to day side of bookselling he is less adequate. He tells us less than he should, and what he does say is not beyond dispute. We are, in fact, still waiting for the standard book on bookselling.

—R.P.

INSIDE MacARTHUR

THE RIDDLE OF MacARTHUR, by John Gunther; Hamish Hamilton. English price, 12/6.

AS a boy I remember a comic song, each verse of which ended with the line—"And yet you can't help liking him." This, I should explain, was funny because the "him" in question was a person of unpleasant ways and flagrant vices. Derogatory statements followed closely by assurances that the individual

concerned has, in reality, a lovable character—the pattern appears to have been copied by Mr. Gunther in his book, *The Riddle of MacArthur*. The impression conveyed is that of an ambitious, egotistical Caesar—one of the most dangerous of all God's creatures, a superb military commander with a disastrous propensity for meddling in high politics.

General MacArthur thinks "of himself and the Pope as the two leading representatives of Christianity in the world today." When the American Office of War Information proposed to drop leaflets printed with the slogan, "We will return," on Japanese-held areas, "MacArthur fought for months to keep it, 'I will return.'" In the Philippines he was caught unprepared by the Japanese on Pearl Harbour day, and he failed to anticipate Chinese intervention in Korea. In face of his own considerable body of evidence to the contrary, Mr. Gunther's periodical assurances that MacArthur is really a very great man are not entirely convincing. Indeed, I am not quite certain whether they are meant to be. Mr. Gunther may be consciously satirical or unconsciously naive. It scarcely matters which when the effect produced is the same in either case.

—R. M. Burdon

MOULTING PHOENIX

FIRE-BIRD, by Dallas Kenmare; James Barrie. English price, 7/6.

THIS short book attempts to interpret D. H. Lawrence's work in terms of the proposition that Lawrence was a poet and "the poet . . . is a human product different in kind, not degree only, from the average." Everything, even apparently bad poems, can be put up with because "Lawrence was a poet and a genius." The mystique of this approach evidently makes criticism irrelevant. I would agree with Miss Kenmare that Lawrence's poetry has been underestimated, but she leaves his technical achievement as a writer of pungent *vers libres* unassessed, contenting herself with such rhapsodical exclamations as "All so intensely perceived, experienced and poignantly expressed."

—David Hall

BETTER PIGS

PIG PRODUCTION, BREEDING AND MANAGEMENT, by C. P. McMeekan; Whitcombe and Tombs; 10/6.

CHESTERTON, I think it was, wrote something about St. George who stands for England. "Unless you give him bacon you mustn't give him beans." He can grow his own beans, but New Zealand must help to provide the bacon. Charles McMeekan in his way is a new St. George tilting at the Dragon of Indifference, just as Bruce Levy is in the matter of grassland production. "Though production (of bacon) increased tremendously during the depression years when butterfat prices were low, it began to decline as soon as prices for butterfat recovered to a level which did not necessitate full exploitation of the cash value of dairy by-products." To these

(continued on next page)



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