

at farmhouses to ask if they might pitch their tent for the night, waking early and brewing-up, seeing England from the true ground-level, make a big appeal to a ground-level reader. And when they come to Epsom and camp for Derby week they store up a special treat for every horse-minded reader—never have 20 pages of race-talk been better written or more pleasant to read.

—J.

LIFE WITH EACH OTHER

THE YELLOW STORM, by Lau Shaw; Victor Gollancz. English price, 15/.

ROBIN WASTRAW, by E. H. W. Meyerstein; Victor Gollancz. English price, 12/6.

ROSIE HOGARTH, by Alexander Baron; Jonathan Cape. English price, 10/6.

MEN AT WORK, by Winton Clewes; Michael Joseph. English price, 10/6.

THE four generations of Grandfather

Li's family in Lau Shaw's *Yellow Storm* had a major social problem on their hands. They were living together in their courtyard in the Street of Little Sheep Fold when the Japanese came to Peiping. They understood the meaning of family loyalty, and knew the value of a united front in the face of any action from other parts of the street. The invasion, though, forced on them a new and larger concept of their family life, that of themselves as part of a nation . . . it was not an easy idea to assimilate, and it took sacrifice and courage before they, and millions like them, were able to accept it.

Lau Shaw, who is a Chinese doctor in Peiping, writes vividly and with insight into Chinese ways of thinking and living. The *Yellow Storm* deserves a place among the best books on modern China.

Robin Wastraw is a book for anyone who can appreciate wit and gentle fantasy handled in prose with a poet's skill. E. H. W. Meyerstein has brought Robin as a boy, and later as a young man, into touch with a society of characters just near enough to reality to have a cutting edge, and yet not too near to let them lose their out-of-this-worldish charm. It's a pity that one can never hope to meet Aunt Barbara (whose chief skill is to make a black-currant pudding so that no fruit shows on the outside), or the donnish Swabb of the deliberately unambitious Sir Cecil Glynn of Broggards, or hope for an amorous encounter with Bertha Hoyer de Hoe. However, it is some consolation to know that they are available in Mr. Meyerstein's novel for a few hours' acquaintance at any time.

Rosie Hogarth, by Alexander Baron, is the story of a triangle of sorts. "Of sorts," because one side of the triangle is a dream; the other two are formed by the solid, down-to-earth Jack Agass, and his fiancée, Joyce Wakerell. Probably there are more men than care to admit it who carry about with them the memory of some early sweetheart, distant, remote, and yet remaining a perpetual possibility. That was what Rosie Hogarth had been to Jack Agass through the war years and afterwards during his exile in Asia Minor. One can feel only too strongly for Agass when he trades his dream of Rosie for the somewhat vinegary reality of Joyce. Perhaps, though, the story would have been better if Rosie did not appear, or even if she appeared differently to the way she does. The rarified air of intellectualism and Higher Politics is too far above the comfortable fug of Lamb Street for the force of the difference between the dream Rosie and the woman that Agass finally meets to be felt.

Winston Clewes in his *Men at Work* writes of people living together, not in

a family, but in a firm. Willerby Pressings was a modern, well-organised factory, run with the help of works councils and everything necessary for worker participation. Yet, for no apparent reason, the workers struck.

Oddly enough, this is not a story of Communist interference or union autocracy. It is a story of ordinary men and a tangle of circumstance. Clewes, who is organisation manager for a large English company, has had plenty of experience of the chain reaction of events which can start from the most trivial thing. His book has no particular moral to point; it only sets out the possibilities of human pettiness and irresponsibility.

—PIC

THREE POETS

KINDRED POINTS, by Henry Compton; Allen and Unwin. English price, 7/6.

NORFOLK ISLAND, by Merval Connelly; Illustrations by Gordon McAuslan; Pegasus Press, 12/6.

HOW SMOKE GETS INTO THE AIR, by Terence Heywood; Fortune Press. English price, 5/.

AS the title of Henry Compton's first book indicates, heaven and home appear as his two not at all irreconcilable loyalties—

Heart's desire and hand's delight
Guide an honest man aright.

There is too much of this unconvincing affirmation in the book, but other and deeper notes emerge, more particularly during the war period, and these occasionally produce something as good as this beginning of "On a Soldier Playing the Piano":

The Naafi much admires
The lucky, gifted man
Who, lacking thought or plan,
Incites these weary wires.

Unfortunately, and typically, these lines are followed by thirty more which talk all round the subject without adding anything worth while. However, poems such as "Love" (first stanza) and "In a Bombed City in Germany" confirm the impression of a genuine talent amid the chaff.

The first part of *Norfolk Island*, by Merval Connelly, is an account in rather formless verse of the history of the island; the second consists mainly of lyrics about its natural aspects. On the whole I find her work too diluted, but some of the lyrics in the second part are slightly less watered decoctions of the real thing. "Island Nocturne," for instance, through its lushness, does evoke a scene and a mood—

Mid-blue night, too good to waste when the
great creamy moon
Moves adagio behind the pinnacles of pines.
Such a quotation as
Then from the salty manger
Grab up the snarling darling

is likely to suggest that Terence Heywood's *How Smoke Gets Into the Air*, a verse sequence with a Swedish background, is more readable than in fact it is. It has some sharp phrases, but these with other less agreeable displays of recondite energy are used to hammer home lengthy "philosophical" observations of an uninteresting kind.

—Hubert Witheford

POLITICS AS FUN

THE LITTLE WORLD OF DON CAMILLO, by Giovanni Guareschi; Victor Gollancz. English price, 10/6.

THE village priest, Don Camillo, and the local Communist leader, Peppone, "somewhere in Italy," wrangle interminably in a series of episodes which rarely fail to be uproariously funny. The scales are a little weighted in favour of Don Camillo, perhaps naturally, for he has the benefit of the Lord's direct advice.

(continued on next page)

TAUREWA



Forest fires at Taurewa, Mangonui, Canterbury and scrub fires near Rotorua illustrate the extraordinary swiftness of the onset of fire danger, once strong wind and bright sunshine dry out the lush growth of grass and bracken fern resulting from a wet spring and early

summer.



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