



HOWARD SPRING, whose new book, "The Houses in Between," is to be reviewed by Nelle Scanlan in the ZB Book Review session on April 27. Four other new books will be discussed in the same programme: "The Red Tassel" by David Dodge, and "A Rough Shoot," by Geoffrey Household (Francis Jackson); "The Wooden Statue," by Dorothy Mackinder (Mrs. S. O'Leary); and "The Build-Up Boys" by Jeremy Kirk (John Morris)

momentous question: Can people ever be said to be truly at home when they can never quite decide whether it mightn't be an advantage to be somewhere else? But in the meantime there is the brick bungalow to camp in—and beneath its tiles love grows timid and fearful, faith and hope eventually become pinned to the ticket in Tatts, the children develop the nervous tensions that may never be resolved in a lifetime, and the adults either sleep the mental sleep from which there is no awakening, or suffer the emotional strangulation that is slow but sure, and as deadly as death. . . It is, I repeat, all there, all clearly rendered in language which, despite its simplicity of statement and rhythm, is the author's own special creation. From now on our literature is the richer, and the author, Janet Frame, becomes one more light to help diminish the vast region of darkness by which we are all surrounded.

—Frank Sargeson

FARMING AS AN ART

GREAT FARMERS, by James A. Scott Watson and May Elliott Hobbs; Faber and Faber, English price, 21/-.

AGRICULTURE, the oldest of the arts, has had recorders of its history and its romance since the times of the Romans. If most of the early story is lost, a good deal of the development of the last 200 years, in Britain at least, has been put on record in the journals of observant travellers, or preserved in scientific papers, or rescued by the student of history from obscure sources.

The title of the book under notice, which is a revised and enlarged edition of one first published in 1937 suggests a series of portraits of men who have left their impress on British farming, and indeed one would have welcomed such a volume. What in fact we have is a history of the art of farm-

ing in the last 150 years and of many of the services contributing thereto, told in the main through the doings of the leaders. It is on farming as an art and on farmers that the emphasis is chiefly laid. The chapter on Science and the Land gets only a dozen pages, and in them most space is given to men whose work was done last century. On the other hand, the organisations created by the farmers or that have grown up to meet their needs get more than 80 pages: a chapter on The Great Societies, with some account of agricultural education, one on the agricultural press, and one on Great Salesmen, in which the services to stud-breeders of men such as John Thornton, the auctioneer (once called a "herdbook in trousers"), get appreciative notice.

The story of the improvement of breeds of livestock that has made Britain the stud-farm of the world is adequately told in terms of the improvers and of animals such as Comet and the Duchesses, whose names are household words among breeders equally with those of Bates, Booth, Webb and the Cruickshanks.

There is a sufficient index and some excellent plates.

—L. J. Wild

DIFFERENT WORLDS

AFTER THE HOLIDAY, by Cledwyn Hughes; Phoenix House. English price, 8/6. A SEASON IN ENGLAND, by P. H. Newby; Jonathan Cape. English price, 10/6. A TALE OF HATE AND PITY, by Joshua Abdanath; Phoenix House. English price, 10/6. TIN SWORD, by Malcolm Stuart Boylan; Victor Gollancz. English price, 10/6. NIGHTRUNNERS OF BENGAL, by John Masters; Michael Joseph. English price, 12/6.

YOUNG Mrs. Elsie Price, who hates her husband's "sad breathing at night and the way he hung his trousers always by their braces from the peg behind the door," has to be careful because of her "gammy" heart. But she declares that some day she'll break bounds, "do some mad bad thing, enjoy myself, have my fling and die." She has her fling, with a young curate, while on holiday. After the Holiday is the story of the consequences. It confirms the good opinion of the work of Cledwyn Hughes I formed when I read The Civil Strangers. He creates sharp pictures of his characters and their environment and demonstrates better than any other writer I have read recently the power of the completely objective attitude. The last two scenes in which Elsie appears in this book are among the most moving I have read.

Mr. Newby tells a very different story and creates characters fairly remote from the everyday world of most of us. The first part of the book, set in Cairo, introduces two university lecturers, Tom Passmore (the principal character in the book) and Guy Nash, and Nash's unusual Greek wife Renee. When Guy, who has not told his family of his marriage, dies, the story moves to England to follow the impact of Passmore, and later Renee as well, on Guy's rather conservative yet oddly compelling parents, and the relationships between all of them. There isn't any doubt about Mr. Newby's ability to write, to create character, to tell an interesting story—and a story with some depth. But though I have much sympathy with his attitude, I can't say that

(continued on next page)

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PRELUDE—BY C. H. ABRAHALL

This book, based on the early life of the well-known pianist EILEEN JOYCE, has been filmed by Ealing Film Studios under the title WHEREVER SHE GOES. The film is expected shortly, and your Bookseller will be pleased to show you a copy of PRELUDE—ABRAHALL.

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