

closely skirt that pitfall into which so many tumble when attempting to explain something difficult to formulate intellectually, which can only be finally sensed emotionally, a delusive simplicity, the promotion of a sense of understanding which may well prove premature and inadequately based. One is all too apt to say to oneself after reading such an excellent little book: "Why, I know all the answers now about modern art. Nothing in it!" One would prefer the reader to be left with a sense of awe before his own ignorance.

But these cavils are rather ungenerous. Mr. Simpson ends with advice which shows that he does not willingly offer any easy road to the appreciation of art: "Experience of a work of art requires release of all tension, complete silence, and a mind bent easily and held receptively upon it." He talks intelligibly and uses no terms which he does not explain. He illustrates every point in his pilgrimage through art, from the caves of Altamira to tube shelters of Henry Moore, with precise references to one or other of the 32 plates. It is a pity that these are all monochrome, but it was a herculean feat to include so many illustrations in a book at this price. The publisher should be commended for this and also for offering us a book on an important educational topic which does not yet find a large enough place in the responsibilities of the University.

—David Hall

## TIMES AND PLACES

*THE GREAT ORDEAL*, by Johan Fabricus; Heinemann, Australian price, 9/6.

*TRUTH IN THE NIGHT*, by Michael MacLaverty; Jonathan Cape, English price, 12/6.

*THE SWAN*, by Marguerite Steen; Hart-Davis, English price, 12/6.

*BARBARY SHORE*, by Norman Mailer; Jonathan Cape, English price, 12/6.

*THE GREAT ORDEAL* by Johan Fabricus is another legend-turned-into-literature. It's the story of the making of a Javanese saint. Readable enough, though perhaps the atmosphere could have been heightened. At times it is doubtful whether one is reading about Javanese or about white people living in mud huts. However, the book may have suffered in its translation from the Dutch. Illustrations are by the author.

It's obvious to anyone who reads *Truth in the Night* that Michael MacLaverty knows his Ireland, and particularly the islands off the Irish coast. He has achieved a fine blend of character, situation and setting in this, his latest book, and has told a story of love, marriage and death in a way which is idiomatic without being artificial and human without being sentimental.

*The Swan*, by Marguerite Steen, is a curious piece of work. There's the air of a Georgian drawing-room about it, but the air of a drawing-room from the windows of which one sees, not an artificially classical pleasure, but a modern block of glass and concrete flats. In writing her romance of the early 19th century, Miss Steen has deliberately affected a Jane Austenish idiom, and even, for that matter, an Austenish subject: a woman in search of a husband. There, though, the resemblance ends. Miss Steen sees more deeply into the characters of Julia, the adolescent Pelham, and Miles (who seems to have been drawn direct from *Surtees*) than her literary forbears would have considered proper, or even decent.

Norman Mailer, as anyone who read *The Naked and the Dead* will remember,

is not a man to mince matters. His second novel, *Barbary Shore*, goes a long way to uphold the reputation he made with his first. In it he has shown his ability to write on two levels—the one of sound fiction, the other of intellectual exposition—at the same time, and to say something worth reading on both. *Barbary Shore* may seem to some to be an unwholesome nightmare, but if that is so it is because some parts of civilisation are already living in nightmare, and others (our own included) are in danger of drifting into unwholesomeness.

—PIC

## GERMANS

*FOLLOW MY LEADER*, by Louis Hagen; Allan Wingate, 15/-.

*ROAST PIGEON*, by James Cadell; McGibbon and Kee, English price, 10/6.

*FOLLOW MY LEADER* consists of nine case histories of pseudonymous inhabitants of post-war Germany. It is concerned with the problem how far they were implicated in the guilt of the Nazi Government. Various moderately interesting details of life in Germany emerge laboriously from its pages but it cannot be said to be particularly readable and certainly the author, or editor, when he comes to sum up his material finds himself with only platitudinous conclusions. The root of the trouble seems to lie in the method of putting down the stories of "representative" Germans as presented by themselves without making the necessary imaginative effort to get at the truth of their situations.

This becomes clear when the book is compared with James Cadell's novel *Roast Pigeon* which tells the story of a concentration camp victim who returns to wage a vendetta with two leading citizens of his town who had railroaded him to Dachau in 1941 and are now working their way back to political as well as economic power. ("Roast Pigeon" is the German idiom for the deceptively satisfactory situation which the man

(continued on next page)



"ON SAILING THE SEAS," an anthology of sea pieces by Hilaire Belloc (above), is to be reviewed by A. R. D. Fairburn in the ZB Book Review session on May 4. Other books for review the same evening include *"The Wilderness Journey"* by Peter Grieve (Lieut-Colonel O. A. Gillespie); *"The Journal of a Tour to Corsica"* by James Boswell (R. M. Burdon); *"Marion du Fresne at the Bay of Islands"* by Leslie G. Kelly, and *"He Konae Arouni"* by Reweti Te Kohere (Eric Ramsden)

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