

GUNPOWDER COKE

THAT great Elizabethan, Sir Edward Coke, was one of England's most celebrated judges and probably the greatest common lawyer of all time. Throughout his life he upheld the Common Law against the other judges of his time, against the Church and even against the Crown. He had the conduct of several of the great trials of his day. In 1600 he prosecuted Essex and Southampton for their abortive rebellion against the Queen, in 1603 he prosecuted Sir Walter Raleigh, and in 1605 the Gunpowder Plot conspirators. His greatest enemy was Sir Francis Bacon, who was his unsuccessful rival for the post of Attorney General, which Coke had won in 1593, and also, by a strange coincidence, for the hand of Lady Elizabeth Hatton, whom Coke married in 1598.

Coke was made Chief Justice in 1606, and entered immediately into the series of conflicts which eventually broke his career. King James, in an endeavour to destroy the supremacy of the common law which Coke upheld, decreed that he himself, as fountain of justice, could remove any cases he liked from the judges and try them himself. But Coke challenged him and in a few years gave his celebrated pronouncement that the King's proclamation cannot change the law. James and Bacon combined forces against Coke, and had him promoted upstairs to the King's Bench, a position of greater dignity but less power. Coke fell at last through his hatred of Egerton, the chancellor, in a dispute with the chancery over the chancellor's right to



SIR EDWARD COKE
He challenged the King

interfere with a common law court decision. In 1616 the Privy Council, inspired by Bacon, preferred three charges against him and he was dismissed. In the following year he was back in the Star Chamber, after a tempestuous episode involving the marriage of his 14 year old daughter against her will and against the wishes of his wife, supported by Bacon. He entered parliament, attacked Bacon, was imprisoned, released and formulated the Bill of Liberties which ultimately became the Bill of Rights. He died in 1634. Coke's story will be told in the BBC programme *Portrait of Sir Edward Coke*, to be broadcast from 2YA at 9.30 a.m. on Sunday, April 19.

BOOKS

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the natives are exploited. He makes the gloomy forecast that in the end there will be Chinese domination of the type already found on many other islands of the Tuamotu Group. "However long we wrestle with the problem" (of Raroia's future), Danielsson says sadly, "the conclusion is always the same: even if at some future time chance should enable us to return to Raroia, we shall never again find the same happy island."

—E.R.B.

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

TUSSELS WITH TIME, by Jules Romain, translated by Gerard Hopkins; Sidgwick and Jackson. English price, 13/6. *THE ESTATE IN ABRUZZI*, by Francesco Jovine, translated by Archibald Colquhoun; McGibbon and Kee. English price, 12/6.

JULES ROMAINS' *Tussles with Time* consists of one long and one short story about the supernatural. Perhaps "paranormal" would better convey his deliberately prosaic and systematic approach. The subtlety of Romain's ideas on these matters and the exactness with which they are stated are remarkable but no less so is his gift of story-telling. The first of the stories describes the narrator's efforts to account for the mysterious appearances of a "dead" friend; the second with the adventure of a survivor from the bombing of Rotterdam who discovers in New York a compulsion to shut himself away from the sky. They are both virtuoso performances and quite engrossing.

As much cannot be said for Francesco Jovine's *The Estate in Abruzzi*. It seems

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a competent example of an established type rather than an individual achievement. As the title suggests, the centre of the novel is a more or less derelict estate in the Abruzzi over which people of various classes come into generally disastrous contact with each other at the time of the rise of the Fascisti. I cannot say I found it very interesting although, as in many other post-war Italian novels and films, a conscientious realism did not exclude some poetic feeling.

—Hubert Witheford

HARD KNOCKS

IF A MAN BE MAD, by Harold Maine; Victor Gollancz. English price, 15/-.

THE autobiography of an alcoholic, this account of startling vicissitudes in and out of various United States mental hospitals does much to justify the author's self-pity. The treatment of mental disease seems a backward branch of American medicine, if these harrowing experiences may be accepted at face value. The moral seems to be that you produce the brutality Maine describes when you spare the taxpayers and try to treat insanity on the cheap. This is the seamy side of the American way of life and will find favour in the eyes of those who envy its prosperity.

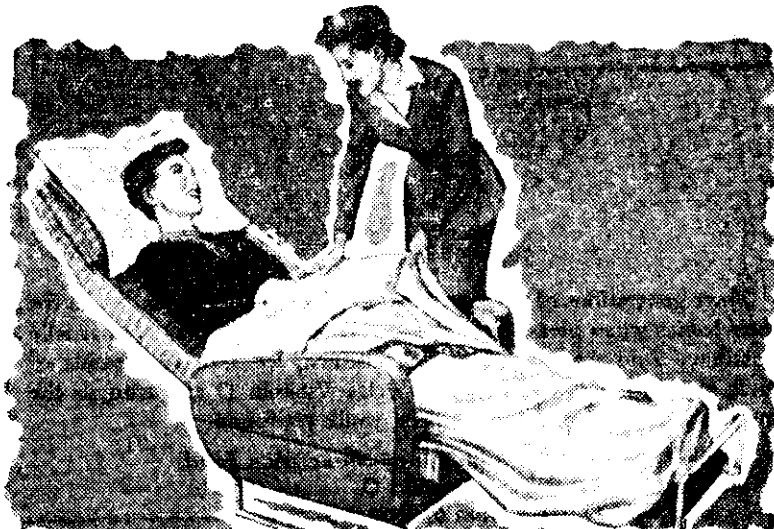
—David Hall

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ANCIENT EGYPT, by J. E. Manchip White; Allan Wingate, N.Z. price 26/3. An account of ancient Egyptian civilisation which the general reader will enjoy, yet which is meant "to serve as a clear and comprehensive introduction to Egyptology." Excellently illustrated.

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