

"ARROW IN THE BLUE," by Arthur

Koestler (below) will be reviewed by Randal Burdon in ZB Book Review on Sunday, June 7. Three other books take up the rest of the session: "Lore and History of the South Island Maori," by W. A. Taylor (reviewer, Dr. Roger Duff); "Taxation and Incentive," by Lady Rhys-Williams (A. J. Danks); and "I Was Stalin's Bodyguard," by Achmed Amba (O. N. Gillespie).



Battersea and a man ran out of a house and said, "I've got a very rare volume—*Mesmer's Prophecies*. Want it?" "Don't be funny," I said. But I got talking to the poor old blighter; he spoke beautifully, had a real education, Oxford and all that flappedoodle—or Exeter, anyway. He was living with his wife's daughter, a proper bitch. He could never get any money for fags or beer. In the end I gave him a couple of bob and he broke down and cried. Makes you think, doesn't it?

—David Hall

MAN IN LEATHER BREECHES

THE JOURNAL OF GEORGE FOX, edited by John L. Nickalls; Cambridge University Press. English price, 21s.

GEORGE FOX, founder of the Society of Friends, was born in Leicestershire in 1624. As William Penn writes in the preface to the first publication of his *Journal*, he was "an original, being no man's copy"; and his great courage and unshakeable faith will be apparent to any reader. In Cromwell's time religion was the source of fear, dispute and hatred which political opinion has now become. It is unfortunate that Fox's fervour and organising ability did not go to swell the main stream of Christian thought and action rather than add yet another denomination to churches multiplying by fission. But his emphasis on good works and his placing the inward light of the Holy Spirit before Scriptural authority were greatly beneficial. In the 17th Century, however, Quakerism was no synonym for respectability. Fox and his followers were imprisoned in the foulest dungeons, stoned, starved, beaten and persecuted; and this *Journal* is in the main the story of his sufferings and ministry.

The style (in parts modernised by the editor) is entirely plain and of an excellent clarity. Like Bunyan, Fox on occasion makes natural use of symbol and metaphor; and in his narrative the inward and outward events rub shoulders, as it were—

And there came one of his servants with a naked sword and run at me ere I was aware of him, and set it to my side, and there held it, and I looked up at him in his face and said to him, "Alack for thee, it's no more to me than a straw."

And lying at a Friend's house, I felt the evil spirit to work again to purpose, being always on my watch. I saw, as it were, a grim, black fellow, who was fettering of my legs with a cord, that I had much ado to preserve my feet from him.

Oliver Cromwell said farewell to Fox with tears in his eyes; but one would be somewhat afraid to meet him in the flesh, for he seemed to have the gift of seeing through stone walls and into the minds of men. The *Journal* of this extra-

ordinary man is a spiritual autobiography of unsurpassed interest.

—James K. Baxter

FLOWERS, GUNS, AND GHOSTS

A BLAZE OF ROSES, by Elleston Trevor; William Heinemann. English price, 12s. 6d. *THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN FLIES*, by Victor Canning; Hodder and Stoughton. English price, 10s. 6d. *THE FAST BUCK*, by James Hadley Chase; Robert Hale. English price, 10s. 6d. *GHOSTLY TALES TO BE TOLD*, edited by Basil Davenport; Faber and Faber. English price, 15s.

I GIVE Elleston Trevor's book first place because it is a thriller in which no one is killed or even assaulted, and it is written with distinction. The principal character in *A Blaze of Roses*, a subdued bachelor of 50, deliberately sets fire to the artificial flower factory in London where he works and tries to escape from the country. All the reader has to go upon is that he is in love with his ex-typist and tired of his job. Confessing to his crime and yet eluding the police, he experiences a series of minor but exciting adventures, during which he is helped by two women. The real truth of what led up to his extraordinary action is kept to the end and comes as a complete surprise to the reader.

I would not say *The House of the Seven Flies* was as good as *Panthers' Moon*, the only other book by Victor Canning I have read, but it is well above the average of this class. Germans seize Dutch treasure, the resistance movement shoots them up, and after the war an attempt by an Englishman in a motor-yacht to find the loot lands him in perilous adventure and in love. The yachting element will appeal forcefully to some readers, and the Dutch local colour and characterisation are good.

Someone, quoted on the dust jacket of James Hadley Chase's *The Fast Buck*, says he is "far and away the best writer of thrillers in the English language." If this is a fair sample of Chase (and I can't remember reading another), I couldn't be much further from agreeing. There is swift action, but I found the plot absurd, and the repeated killing by the "killer," plus other nasty things, sickening.

The special interest in *Ghostly Tales to be Told* is in the fact that these stories taken from "the great masters" have been "arranged for reading and telling aloud," and that the editor, Basil Davenport, not only writes an introduction on the art of such fireside telling, but says something about each item. The choice passes from Dickens, via Algernon Blackwood, Arthur Machen, Marion Crawford and W. W. Jacobs, to Alexander Woolcott. Admirers of W. W. Jacobs will not be surprised by the opinion of another editor in this field, that "The Monkey's Paw" is the best thing of its kind ever done. On this, the present editor comments that this kind of story belongs to all ages and countries. The range of the selection is indicated by a comparison with "The Yellow Wallpaper," written by Charlotte Gilman many years ago as a protest against the "rest cure" for nervous breakdown. This story, which the editor considers the most terrifying ever written, had an effect on mental hospital practice

—A.M.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

MAP OF AUCKLAND—City, Suburbs and North Shore, compiled and published by Whitcombe and Tombs; 3/6. This is a new edition, reset and enlarged, and with extended boundaries. Copious detail and a full index make it invaluable for reference.

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