

were completely subject to Hitler, and that it never occurred to them for one moment to question his most lunatic decisions or their fundamental morality. Not exactly pleasant reading.

—F. J. Foot

PAST AND PRESENT

A *KING RELUCTANT*, by Vaughan Wilkins; Jonathan Cape, English price, 12/6. AN *OAK FOR POSTERITY*, by Diana Buttenshaw; Hodder and Stoughton, English price, 10/6. *THE LONG FIDELITY*, by Kathleen Warren; Faber and Faber, English price, 12/6.

A *KING RELUCTANT* is likely to enchant readers who usually find historical novels heavy weather. It is not a book to go to for facts, because Mr. Wilkins has applied romantic imagination to three historical points—the central one being the fate of the heir to the French throne during the Revolution. In any case, historical detail and argument are kept to a minimum, and the characters have room to move and breathe. They are people who live, and who wake one's interest and sympathy at once. Mr. Wilkins writes with distinction, knows how to put a story together, and to build atmosphere, and he leaves one feeling tender towards the people he has created.

Easy to read and easy to forget, *An Oak for Posterity* tells of the social life of British officers and their wives in occupied Germany. A touch of romance and adventure is thrown in, together with information about living conditions. The characters are decent and smug. Technically the story moves well enough, the author having a practised hand with dialogue. There is no profundity here, but none seems attempted.

The attachment of a lonely child to a neighbouring household of colourful people is an appealing theme, though by no means new. In *The Long Fidelity* the bond is permanent. The little outsider grows up to become the almost disillusioned support of the decaying Bohemian family that had once seemed glamorous. In a quiet way this is an honest and tidy book, wrapped in an air of polite melancholy. —D.F.T.

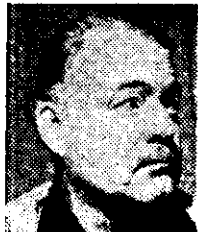
INTELLECTUAL FIDGETING

SELECTED POEMS, by Wallace Stevens; Faber and Faber, English price, 12/6.

THIS handsomely printed volume illustrates clearly the fact that while Faber have chosen their English poets mainly on merit, they have chosen their American poets solely on reputation. Not that Mr. Stevens's volume is dead wood from cover to cover, like the recently-published collection of the works of the redoubtable Robert Lowell; but one would much rather have seen Edna St. Vincent

(continued on next page)

"THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA," by Ernest Hemingway (below) is to be examined by Frank Sargeson in ZB Book Review on June 21. Three other books are to be reviewed. "The Crest of the Broken Wave," by James Barke, will be discussed by J. Wallace, and James Barke himself will be heard in a short recorded talk; Professor G. A. F. Knight will review "Salvation," by Sholem Asch; and "The Mountains Remain," by Hanama Tasaki, will be reviewed by Lieut.-Col. O. A. Gillespie.



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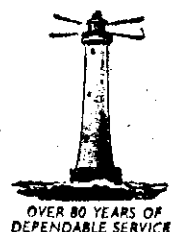
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