

book has not the insight of Bernano's *Diary of a Country Priest*, but Coccioli has set his sights on a different target, the delineation of Latin puritanism. The ending, with the voluntary sacrifice of Don Ardite's life to a German firing squad, does not sort with the rest of the novel; it puzzles the reader by clouding a clear issue with stale nationalism.

It's *Different for a Woman* turns a typical American small-town family inside out and shakes down a galaxy of brittle epigrams. The need to keep up such a standard of wisecracks must make American family life rather strenuous. Sally, approaching middle age and meeting for the first time her husband's old flame, was finding the going hard anyway. There is good comedy at a higher level than the verbal, but the latter harries the reader and distracts him from the book's merits.

Several parallel family groups in a Jamaican slum are dragged through a number of painful episodes by Roger Mais to endings all conscientiously unhappy. But in spite of a certain crudity and its exaggerated brutality, his novel does give us a feeling that, however much it is kicked around, human nature among Jamaican negroes still has its own dignity.

Neil Paterson's novel about the escape of a circus from Iron Curtain Czechoslovakia into Austria is no more than an inflated short story; big print and slick drawings scarcely make it worth the money. It has already been filmed.

—David Hall

## AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

*THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND, the Macmillan Brown lectures, delivered at Canterbury University College in July, 1952, by L. J. Wild; Whitcombe and Tombs, 3 6.*

AN adequate history of agricultural education in New Zealand has still to be written, but L. J. Wild's Macmillan Brown lectures give in 63 pages a neat and pungent outline of the story. Few people, indeed, are better qualified than Mr. Wild to do this, for he has been closely associated with the land and with agricultural education all his life; and his own original contribution as first headmaster of the Feilding Agricultural High School has left permanent evidence of his ability not only to grasp the essentials of the problems of agricultural education at the secondary school level but also to create a new and successful institution.

The story Mr. Wild tells is complex, and in many ways unhappy. It is essentially the story of a pioneering people trying to face the new problems of caring for the land after the first rich strike had been worked out, but using old educational methods that had been developed to meet other needs in other countries. For the best part of a century,

"IN THE WET," a new novel by Nevil Shute, is to be discussed by Alan Mulgan (below) in ZB Book Review on Sunday evening, August 30. Four other books will also be reviewed at the same session: "Law of the Vultures," by Phyllis Altman (reviewer, Greig Royle); "Intrigue in Baltimore," by Janet Whitney, and "The Conqueror," by John Tebbel (Marie Bullock); and "The Wildes of Merriem Square," by Patrick Byrne (Pat Lawlor).



Spencer Digby

sallies have been made into the field by primary schools, secondary schools, university colleges, and government departments, yet no one would claim anything more than a very limited success. Even when the needs have been fairly clearly defined—as from time to time they have been—the specific questions of what to teach, and to whom, and by what methods, have seldom been answered successfully.

It is perhaps an over-simplification, but not a distortion, of the course of history to say that most of the attempts that have been made to devise an adequate system of agricultural education have failed for much the same reason, namely, the difficulty that human beings find in looking directly and freshly at the needs of a community and then constructing an appropriate educational means *ad hoc*. Most of our attempts appear to have been cast in a mould of preconceived ideas concerning the aims and methods of education and the nature and purposes of existing educational institutions. No doubt this could be said of many branches of education, but it is not often that the issues are so immediate and tangible as they have been in the field that Mr. Wild has so clearly surveyed.

—G. W. Parkyn

## THIEVES' KITCHEN

*MEM OF THE UNDERWORLD, edited by Charles Hamilton; Victor Gollancz. English price, 13 6.*

MOST of the Americans telling these exciting stories, and telling them very well, are thieves. A few tales come from bootleggers and hijackers, with here and there a word from racketeers who control cathouses (brothels) and junkies (dope peddlers). Murder is barely mentioned.

There is an immense variety of thieves represented, from crude moll-buzzers (bag-snatchers) to highly skilled boxmen (safecrackers), including badgers (black-mailers), buncos (cardsharps), carnies (swindlers at carnivals), tools and wires (pickpockets) and scratchmen (forgers). The most subtle and entertaining are the confidence men, whose victims are invariably very rich yet not above trying to become richer by some shady deal.

The main grudge of these thieves is against the host of shyster lawyers, crooked cops and gangster politicians who draw a rich living from their skill and courage without sharing their risks. Risks are high and happy endings very rare.

According to the editor, "less than 30 years ago torture was commonly applied in all the large prisons of America." There are moving descriptions of ordeals on the derrick and in the straitjacket, of starving in solitary confinement and of work in chain gangs. It is a shock to learn that "physical torture of convicts is now outlawed in most States." (My italics.)

Even when he responds to the modern effort to reform rather than to punish, the ex-con has a very hard run—the dicks are always riding him, and his hoodlum pals give him a quick brush-off as a copper-hearted flunky who lacks the moxie to stick with the blot. Fortunately there is a glossary with this well-edited book. A strong case could be made for banning it as an excellent textbook for thieves.

—T.O.G.

## THE WONDERFUL YEAR

*WORDSWORTH AND COLERIDGE, 1795-1834, by H. M. Margoliuth; Oxford University Press (Home University Library). English price, 6/-.*

COLERIDGE and Wordsworth first met in 1795, at Bristol; but the two poets were not living within walking

(continued on next page)

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