

BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

enjoyed. Later, with all the heart-burnings of an idealist deserting a cause, she became pro-Suffragette because no vote for women "meant in effect the stabilising of a status of permanent inferiority"; and in 1918, the first occasion on which women were allowed to vote and the candidates she was one of the little body of women—all defeated—who stood for Parliament.

More valuable have been her non-political activities. First woman Mayor of Chesterfield and founder of its Social Settlement, she also shouldered massive responsibilities in the staggering unemployment problems of the 'thirties; and she has been a member of numerous trade boards and advisory committees. This experience together with widespread and observant travel has contributed towards her emergence now as a woman of stature.

This woman, who for exercise "skipped among the dour peasants" at whistle-stops along the Trans-Siberian Railway, has pungent comment to offer on statesmen and public affairs. For example, referring to the Danzig problem, "A belief common to all international bodies that formulas can solve all problems if mouthed sufficiently—often by mouths without teeth."

The somewhat tedious inclusion of life histories of her beloved dogs and

details of obscure relatives detract somewhat from a book which, if not uniquely penetrating, is nevertheless a valuable social document and the mirror of a woman who gradually "changed from a confirmed agnostic to a most imperfect Christian."

—Prudence Gregory

FOOD AND POPULATION

OUR UNDEVELOPED WORLD. by L. Dudley Stanin. Faber and Faber. English price, 18.

THIS book on the world's peoples, lands and food supply is based on six lectures delivered as Visiting Professor at Indiana University. The author concludes (1) that under-developed lands also include U.S.A., Canada, Argentine and Australia; (2) that it is an easier task to increase production in temperate lands where we already understand the vagaries of climate and soils than to look for immediate development of tropical lands; (3) if man-made barriers are removed and if land is used more efficiently the world can easily support a much larger population. These conclusions so different from those of numerous recent prophets of gloom

must be assessed in the light of the reliability of such data as are available from incomplete world surveys, and reliability may not be high. New Zealand's "potential population supportable from (its) land resources" is given as over 19 millions, an estimate derived from the over 19 million acres of "improved farmland." How this figure is arrived at, and to what extent this area is improved or further improvable the author does not say, and probably only guesses.

—L.J.W.

MILTON'S EPIC

THE POETICAL WORKS OF JOHN MILTON. Volume 1. *Paradise Lost*, edited by Helen Darbishire. Oxford University Press. English price, 30.

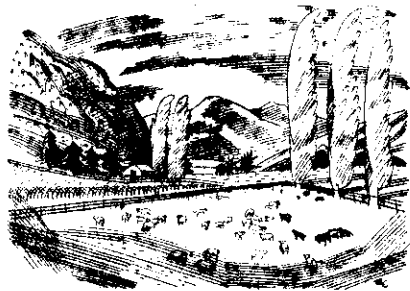
THE literary taste of any age is influenced by its style and quality of book production. One recalls vividly how different Burns's Collected Poems seem when dominated by the Gothic shades of a 19th Century illustrator; or how much more clipped and hygienic James Hogg appears in large, clear type with an introduction by Andre Gide. So in this new edition of Milton's poetry the compact and careful typography and the craftsmanship for which the Ox-

ford University Press is justly famed enable one to read Milton with new eyes.

Helen Darbishire, according to several informed critics, has produced an edition of Milton which is more in accord with Milton's original intention than any other. Her meticulous and scholarly observation of every variation in spelling and punctuation is unquestionably a labour to be admired; and her textual commentary makes it plain that her scholarship has been illuminated by insight. *Paradise Lost*, to which T. S. Eliot once referred as a Chinese Wall built across the road of English literature, emerges in all its lights and shades. But apart from those undeniably great passages which are scattered through the work, the section which relates to the fall of the Angels and the character of Satan, and the lyrical description of Adam and Eve unfallen, alone have full dramatic force. One is overwhelmed by Milton, yet often left dissatisfied. His earth and hell are real enough; his heaven is a somewhat draughty room. —James K. Baxter

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

TROPICAL FISH AS A HOBBY, by Herbert R. Axelrod; Allen and Unwin, English price 21. A guide for the selection, care and breeding of tropical fish for people who wish to keep an aquarium. Fully illustrated.



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