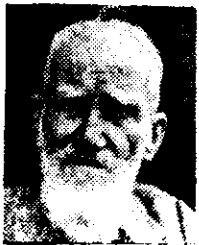


occupy a very large space in this collection. Admittedly, but without contesting the editor's assertion that Shaw's pigfaces "really belong with the plays." I cannot see that this is an adequate reason for their virtual exclusion. "The Perfect Wagnerite" — an essay on the political implication of Wagner's operas — and "The Quintessence of Ibsenism" both appear in full; only a portion of the preface to *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* is included.

One wonders while reading the fragments here presented of *Love Among the Artists* and *The Irrational Knot* why these novels were rejected by the publishers. Was it perhaps because the Victorians did not like their heroes of fiction to bear so strong a resemblance to Bazarov, the radical, who lives in the pages of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*? At all events, Shaw the novelist was a failure who soon gave place to the highly successful journalist, critic and playwright. The musical criticisms he wrote for *The Star* and *The World* in the late eighties and early nineties were doubtless more startling and re-



freshing in those days than they now appear to be. The most striking examples, however, of his habit of courting attention by being deliberately provocative occur in the dramatic criticisms written some years later. "With the single exception of Homer, there is no eminent writer, not even Sir Walter Scott, whom I can despise so entirely as I despise Shakespeare. When I measure my mind against his," Shakespeare's reputation may be left to look after itself, but the leading actors and actresses of Shaw's day, even those he greatly admired, must have found him hard to hear at times. "It is greatly to Mrs. Patrick Campbell's credit that, bad as the play was, her acting was worse."

Passing over a comprehensive selection of Fabian and other essays, I call the attention of any reader who wants entertainment pure and simple to almost any of the items that come under the heading of "Pen Portraits and Reviews." Two of these I specially recommend — one a character sketch of Ellen Terry, and the other a review of Arnold Bennett's book *The Author's Craft*, in which Shaw proves by demonstration that it is much easier to write a novel than a play.

—R. M. Burdon

SHALLOW STREAM

THE OCEAN RIVER, the story of the Gulf Stream, by Henry Chapin and F. G. Walton Smith; Victor Gollancz. English price, 16/-.

THE recent popularity of books about the ocean, the winds and the tides has no doubt thrown this book on our shores. But it falls far short of recent treatises which have understandably fanned interest in these subjects. About a third of it is a popular account of the evolution of marine life, which reads rather like the earlier parts of H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*. Considerable space is then given to the discovery and colonisation of the eastern seaboard of North and South America. It is all, however, at once diffuse and fragmentary. The American authors allow the Spanish to do nothing right. A slight acquaintance on their part with, for instance, some of the recent works of Salvador de Madariaga would have given them a little more sense of proportion. The Spanish American Empire

lasted in extraordinary vigour and fertility for 300 years. Little ever seems to get written in English to enable us to understand better the 150 million Spanish and Portuguese-speaking peoples who are our (distant) neighbours.

The policy of the Elizabethan and some subsequent British governments in promoting piracy and the slave trade in the West Indies is treated indulgently; but the enthusiasm of the authors for British enterprise and naval supremacy becomes noticeably cooler as the date of the Declaration of Independence approaches. Finally they see clearly that British policy in Church and State was no good at all. They dip into the Gulf Stream here and there in the course of it, but the Governor of North Carolina would have cause to complain to the Governor of South Carolina about the length of the intervals. Indeed, the total information about the Gulf Stream could be condensed into a magazine article.

The famous pilot and cartographer of Columbus, Juan de la Cosa, is separately introduced two or three times as if a different person were referred to. Sometimes he is "la Cosa" and finally "Jean de la Cosa." They accuse him of deserting the wrecked ship of which he was pilot, the Santa Maria, but they neglect to draw attention to the evidence in his favour, or to the fact that he was sole owner of the ship.

Why they say Christopher Columbus backed up Galileo in action concerning the roundness of the earth, is a mystery. Galileo was not born until 58 years after the death of Columbus. *Toilers of the Deep*, by Hall Caine, is referred to as a fictional account of the giant devilfish or octopus. This doesn't occur in Hall Caine's titles. Probably they intend Victor Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea*. "Immigration" is used where "emigration" is meant, and "credible" for "incredible" and so on.

The last section is a sort of philosophical discussion on the rise of world powers, after (but a long way after) Arnold Toynbee.

After reading it one cannot help agreeing with "Saki." "Happy is the country that has no geography."

—F. J. Foot

LOW EBB

THE UNDEFENDED GATE, by Susan Ertz; Hodder and Stoughton. English price, 12/6. NO MORE MEADOWS, by Monica Dickens; Michael Joseph. English price, 12/6. THE BIG CHARIOT, by Charmian Clift and George Johnston; Angus and Robertson. Australian price, 18/9. DARK NOON, by Helen Henev; Angus and Robertson. Australian price, 16/-.

THE novel, we all know, is both simultaneously a product of artistic sensibility and an article of commerce. Many novelists contrive not to draw too much attention to the latter fact. It is (continued on next page)

"LAUGHTER ON THE STAIRS," by Beverley Nichols (below) is to be reviewed in the October 18 session of ZB Book Review by Mrs. Lillian Scott. Other books in a session given over to lighter reading will be: "The Shape of Sunday," by Virginia Dawson and Betty Wilson (reviewer, R. T. Robertson); "Florence Desmond," by herself, and "Take It From Me," by Jimmy



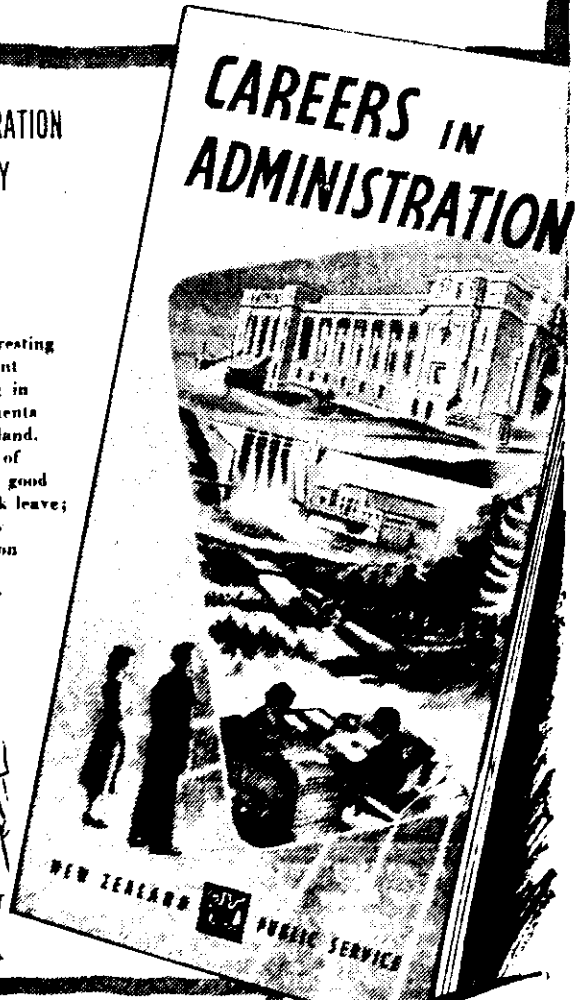
Edwards (John Morris); and "Personal Column" (O. N. Gillespie).

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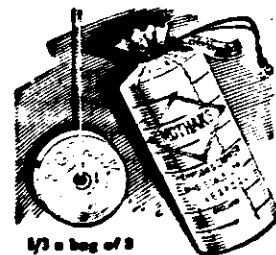
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