

## THE EDITOR'S TABLE

### New Music

If there is one consideration to stay a Spenglerian gloom about the future of European civilization, in these days of literary poverty and freakish decadence in the graphic arts, it is the vigour of new music, and in particular the fine, rich work that is being produced by the younger British composers. Examples that spring most readily to mind are Mr. Benjamin Britten's opera, *Peter Grimes*, and Mr. Michael Tippett's oratorio, *A Child of Our Time*, two works which have won an immediate and excited response from critics and public alike.

Gone are the days when the English were marked down as an unmusical race, sterile of invention since Byrd and Purcell. In the twentieth century England has provided half a dozen of the most important names in music, and a dozen minor composers with authentic talent. After Elgar, come Holst, Delius, Sir Arnold Bax and Dr. Vaughan Williams at the head of this company, working variously to put England in the van of creative achievement.

At the present day, the three men who hold by general consent the key to the future of music are three Englishmen: Mr. Britten, who is thirty-one; Mr. Tippett, who is forty; and Mr. William Walton, who is forty-four. It is to their work that the world, or at least that part of the world which cares for contemporary music, is listening most eagerly.

Glancing through the new Pelican book on modern British music\*, it is quite surprising to see how substantial is the bulk of important compositions produced since 1900 in this country. Normally, and very properly, since music is an essentially international art, one does not think of these matters in what might be called "British Council" terms.

The odd and piquant facts that Delius preferred to be thought a foreigner, that Holst is commonly mistaken for one, are points of biographical rather than of musical interest. Our classification of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Sibelius, Mahler, Debussy, Strauss, Prokofiev and Ravel is according to character and not to nationality.

British composers are thus ordinarily to be considered in mixed company. Yet we may profitably consider them alone, if only to perceive how within the past fifty years a tradition of English music, seeking roots in national folk-songs and the work of the golden eighteenth century, has been revived and re-integrated in the main stream of musical development.

It is not without significance that Mr. Britten, after several years' sojourn in the United States, came back to England to write his finest work; that Mr. Tippett, though his oratorio concerned the persecution of Jews in Germany, employed the musical technique of the early English madrigal.

Nor is it perhaps altogether irrelevant that these two composers should be men of a deeply religious temperament. Mr. Walton, also, having the same facility as Mr. Britten for writing clever trifles in the modern idiom, and embarrassed to some extent by the popularity of *Facade*, produced as his first mature achievement a choral work possessing a spiritual content, *Belshazzar's Feast*.

Here is a hint at least of what lies behind the high achievement in modern British music: a sense of tradition still being created, an inward eye which can see *sub specie aeternitatis*, and the poise of disciplined emotions. It is precisely what our writers and painters have lost that our composers seem to have found. But then, nineteenth-century England was so destitute of great music that there has been little temptation for the younger generation in the field of art to spend its energy in violent revolution against the *ancien regime*.

## CRIME AGAINST RACE

**BLACK BOY.** By Richard Wright. (Gollancz, 8s. 6d.)

RACIALISM is, unhappily, deeply rooted in the southern states of America, where Negroes and "whites" live side by side in enmity, fear and ever-recurring tension. The situation is dramatically illustrated in an English edition of *Black Boy*, in which Mr. Richard Wright, one of America's leading Negro authors, describes his childhood and youth. It is a faithful autobiography and spares no individual or community in its judgments. Yet it is not concerned exclusively with the evil of racialism. Only gradually does the growing boy realize that an implacable hatred separates "white" from Negro.

In his first chapters, Mr. Wright describes the Negro home made hideous by ignorance, poverty, sadism and a religious intensity which allows no scope for love or sympathy. Merciless beating follows merciless beating. The dominant figure in a family which often went hungry is the grandmother, a narrow-minded, embittered Seventh-Day Adventist who saw in every playful child a punishable limb of Satan.

It is surprising that human affection survived this besotted childhood, and that, when at last Mr. Wright sought the freedom of the north, he took his family with him. But with adolescence came pity and a full understanding of the dignity which the Negroes, throughout all their afflictions, are determined to maintain.

The southern newspapers are openly hostile to the Negroes. Negroes, among them Mr. Wright's uncle, were often murdered for trivial reasons, and the law which might have given redress was always a dead letter. Mr. Wright is not describing far-off days. He writes of what was happening between the two wars; for he is still in his middle thirties. There are many thousands of coloured citizens of the United States for whom Roosevelt's plea for "freedom from fear" must have had a hollow and mocking sound.

## ADULT EDUCATION

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION OF MEN AND WOMEN.** (Oxford University Press, 1s.)

THIS pamphlet, compiled by the Education Sub-Committee of Nuffield College, is based on careful enquiry. It is a comprehensive survey of facilities for adult education provided under the Education Act, 1944, and also by numerous voluntary bodies.

Illiteracy has not yet died out in this country, seven thousand men having been taught to read and write in the Army. The pamphlet is wisely cautious about a great expansion of adult education on the lines of A.B.C.A., although a desire for knowledge has been aroused. One of the weakest places lies between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. This is intelligible. The need of more residential colleges is urged. And a list is provided both of those that exist and of proposed new ones.

The pamphlet is mainly a factual statement and inspiration is not looked for. But it is a very valuable conspectus.

## WINGS AND WORMS

**BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS IN BRITAIN.** By Vere Temple. (Batsford, 12s. 6d.)

THE outstanding feature of Miss Temple's book is its illustration. She has the advantage of being artist as well as entomologist; her ten coloured plates of typical butterflies and moths add an exceptional delicacy of treatment to accuracy of representation. She also includes a large number of her own pen drawings and an even larger collection of excellent photographs.

Her method of working is not exhaustive but selective. She discourses on the butterflies according to season and locality, packing in a great deal of hard fact about the habits and behaviour of the insects; and on the more distinguished families of the innumerable race of moths. Miss Temple personally breeds the caterpillars—and gives them proper attention in her book—keeps accurate records of her observations, and ends with some practical hints to amateur collectors.

## PARISH HISTORY

**ABBOTS LANGLEY.** By S. G. Thicknesse. (King and Staples, 6s.)

THE parish of Abbots Langley deserves to have its history written and printed in this *de luxe* manner if for no other reason than that it was the birth-place of the only Englishman to become Pope of Rome.

But there are other interesting facts connected with this Hertfordshire village, and Mr. Thicknesse makes the most of them by sketching in their ecclesiastical and national background. His is a model parish history.

## A RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS THINKER

**GOD WITH US.** By S. L. Frank. (Jonathan Cape, 12s. 6d.)

DR. FRANK is a Russian intellectual who, like his younger and more famous contemporary, Berdyaev, did his best to carry on as a teacher of philosophy, under the Soviet Government, after the Revolution. After a few years, Berdyaev found his position impossible, and Frank, as early as 1922, was exiled on the ground that he was "exerting a harmful influence on youth." Since then, first in Germany, and later in France, he has lived in retirement and has written much, especially on the philosophy of religion.

His last book, translated from the Russian by Natalie Duddington, is a series of studies in speculative theology—perhaps Berdyaev's word "sophiology" would best describe his line of thought—on the nature of faith, "the paradoxical truth of Christianity," and on this truth as the way and the life.

It is not always easy to apprehend accurately what Dr. Frank means to say, and he is a difficult writer to "place," either theologically or ecclesiastically. A first impression might well be that his exaggerated anti-intellectualism and immanentism, his apologetic, exclusively based on direct religious experience, his dislike of scholastic categories and classifications, his view of the nature of revelation and of the Church, range him with Catholic modernists of a generation ago. Further study will modify this impression; and he writes himself that his doctrine is not to be understood in a modernist or pragmatist sense.

What is more interesting and important is that his work exhibits most of the characteristics of Eastern and, in particular, of Russian religious thought: the strong emphasis on fellowship and *sobornost*, the expiatory value of suffering and asceticism, the preaching of the Resurrection as the central truth of the Gospel, the belief in the possibility of "deification," and the expectation of the final complete redemption and transformation of the entire cosmos.

Dr. Frank is presumably a member of the Orthodox Church, though that fact hardly appears in this book. What does appear clearly is that he is a devout Christian of deep and wide sympathies. He takes a hopeful view of the "oecumenical" movement in the non-Roman Churches and—denominations. At the same time, he can write of the

Roman Church that it is "the only earthly institution on which we may rest our hopes of saving Christian civilization."

His outlook, on the whole, is hopeful because Christians are now almost everywhere a minority, often a despised and persecuted minority. "Our epoch resembles that of the first centuries of Christianity"; and a persecuted Church may hope to win the blessing promised to those who suffer persecution gladly.

## CRY FROM THE HEART

**THE HUNGRY SHEEP.** By Roland Roberts. (James Clarke, 7s. 6d.)

CANON ROBERTS, Chancellor of Truro Cathedral, writing while still on active service as a senior chaplain, maintains that "now is the day of opportunity. . . . The sands of opportunity are fast running out for the Church of England and institutional religion in general." Every day is a day of opportunity, and God's time is always Now. But Canon Roberts' title is perhaps misleading. "The sheep look fed-up, and are not hungry," is a diagnosis which might come nearer to the truth.

The author writes in a colloquial style, with much fluency and considerable urgency. It is all desperately sincere, and slightly commonplace. The author appears to be a Catholic with Liberal Evangelical leanings. He describes his book as "a challenge to the Church and a cry from the heart." It opens well: the first two chapters show realism and observation. But after that it becomes effervescent, and there is a lot of quotations from little books of an ephemeral character.

Canon Roberts does well to point out how the laity dislike clergymen in muff. He stresses the importance of parochial visiting. He is realistic about the quality of Service ordination candidates. Yet, with regard to intercommunion, he can write: "What more natural and delightful than that those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity should desire thus to share in the Family Meal within the Mother Church of the country?" as if naturalness and delightfulness were the essential criteria.

Canon Roberts explains that he had to write this book "in brief and scattered hours of leisure under active service conditions," and separated from books of reference. If he had waited until he got home to his library, it might have been no less stimulating, but more solid.

## PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

**CHRISTIAN MORALS.** By Lindsay Dewar and Cyril E. Hudson. (University of London Press, 7s. 6d.)

THREE chapters of this book are initiated by Canon Hudson, three by Canon Dewar; but it is a genuine work of collaboration, not a series of detached essays. Canon Hudson begins with a statement of the Christian doctrine of man, emphasizing in particular the distinction between the "likeness of God," which was lost by the Fall, but may be restored by grace, and the "image" of God, which is indestructible.

Canon Dewar analyses the relation of nature to grace, and shows the vital importance of a right conception of natural law and the need of reviving and re-stating it. In chapters iv. and v. he discusses the principle of Christian ethics, the cardinal and theological virtues, and the nature and scope of moral theology and casuistry.

Writing on "Problems of Authority," Canon Hudson points out that Christianity is both a religion of the Spirit and a religion of authority, but the authority is paternal, not despotic. In chapter vi. he deals with a number of the formidable problems which confront the Christian moralist in an increasingly secularized world: problems of the political and social order as well as of personal conduct.

The authors are faithful to the teaching of the New Testament as interpreted by Catholic tradition and the great systematic theologians, especially St. Thomas Aquinas. But they do not merely repeat what the recognized authorities have said. Thus, in discussing the nature of conscience, Canon Dewar points out that mediæval philosophers and theologians were handicapped by lack of a scientific psychology. Modern psychology has thrown a good deal of fresh light on questions of this kind, and both he and his collaborator make good use of their knowledge of it.

While any theologically-minded reader will profit by the study of this book, its greatest use will be to help parish priests and other pastors and

teachers in planning the courses of instruction which they ought to be giving on these subjects. Instruction on Christian morals is as important and as much needed as instruction in the Christian creed. It should be as regular and as systematic. In fact, it has often been vague and even sentimental. The parish priest who follows the guidance of Canon Dewar and Canon Hudson in this "Study of First Principles" is not likely to go far wrong.

## ST. TERESA

**THE INTERIOR CASTLE OR THE MANSIONS.** By St. Teresa of Jesus. Done into English by a discoloured Carmelite. (Sands, 8s. 6d.)

THERE are some people to whom the writings of St. Teresa are unintelligible; but there are others to whom she has a meaning and a message. The latter company will prize this new edition and translation of one of her most important works.

St. Teresa died in 1582 at the age of sixty-seven. The "Interior Castle" was written towards the end of her life, with the avowed intention of helping her daughters to realize the part that, if they were faithful, God would play in their prayer. The Castle, of course, is the soul. The door which admits to its many mansions is prayer.

But with all her profound knowledge, and the many supernatural favours which came to her in life, she insists that humility and self-sacrifice are the searching tests of a true lover of God. Spiritually-minded to the full, St. Teresa certainly was; at the same time she was one of the most downright, practical, commonsense women who ever lived; and there are not many of its hundred or so pages in which there is no reference to some passage of holy Scripture.

The anonymous translator of this important book has done her work thoroughly, and the English is as good as it can be. Each chapter has a useful summary and explanation of its contents; and a complete index rounds off a fine piece of work.

## WORDY WITNESS

**CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN THE POST-WAR WORLD.** Edited by A. C. Craig and Hugh Martin. (S.C.M. Press, 3s. 6d.)

THIS symposium appears to have two purposes: first, to report on the progress and shortcomings of the so-called oecumenical movement in Britain; and secondly, to enunciate the bearing of Christian principles on international and social affairs. Except for the last two chapters, by Mr. W. G. Symons and the Bishop of Sheffield, we seem to have heard it all many times before.

Mr. Symons, however, has his feet firmly on the earth in his chapter on "The Obedience of the Individual Christian," and he makes a number of really illuminating points about the ways in which lay men and women can obey God in contemporary society. The Bishop of Sheffield, too, writes pungently and realistically about "Worship." These two chapters have to do with practical possibilities, and help to redeem the high-flown wordiness of the remainder.

## CRIME AND MYSTERY

**THE HOUSE IN LORDSHIP LANE.** By A. E. W. Mason. (Hodder and Stoughton, 9s. 6d.)

**DEATH ON THE ROOF.** By Basil Francis. (Quality Press, 8s. 6d.)

**THE FIFTH MAN.** By Manning Coles. (Hodder and Stoughton, 8s. 6d.)

CRIME this week is more complex in plot than plausible in execution or convincing in motive. As all the best detectives insist that deeds, not motives, matter, and that everybody is a potential murderer, one might expect that this would involve no great intellectual hardship. But fiction seems to demand more verisimilitude in its composition than is required by history, and the result is a certain loss of effect.

Mr. Mason is, however, extremely readable. His allusive style suggests the presence of a skeleton in every paragraph, compelling breathless attention through sheer dread of failure to take up some conversational point which may be vital to the scheme of the story. Mr. Francis favours straightforward exposition of detective spade-work, and relies more on well-constructed evidence than imaginative insight.

Mr. Coles's story is a thriller of a rather unusual kind. A British prisoner of war is sent back to England to spy for the Nazis, but prefers to double-cross the enemy. He begins by insisting on making a genuine and unassisted escape from Germany. His ensuing adventures are fast and furious; and though sceptics might dispute about the probability of their occurrence, credibility is implicit in their narration.

## REVIEWS AND MAGAZINES

### THE EXPOSITORY TIMES

IN the April number of the *Expository Times* Dr. David Daube produces some interesting rabbinical analogies to certain passages in the gospels where the disciples ask for private explanations of Christ's public pronouncements; and Dr. L. Hughes gives an admirable explanation of the value and historical background of the "Quincunque Vault."

## NOTICES

*Revealing Christ.* By Percy Hartill. (S.P.C.K., 2s. 6d.) These addresses by the Archdeacon of Stoke-on-Trent, first published in 1939, have been re-printed in a revised form. They are suitable for Lent reading.

*Church Choir Management.* By Kenneth R. Long. (Faith Press, 2s. 6d.) This book is concerned, not so much with voice training or the technical art of singing as with creation, enlargement and handling of parish choirs. Mr. Long has tackled an important subject. A badly-managed choir practice is apt to put the young out of touch with religion for the rest of their lives, and conversely, a well-managed choir ensures a nucleus of faithful Churchmen.

*The Post-War Preacher.* By A. E. Simpson, B.D. (A. R. Mowbray and Co., 2s.) This latest work of Canon Simpson has the qualities of sobriety, simplicity and common sense which have marked his previous publications. The earlier chapters on the importance of the sermon are specially stimulating, and his advice will enable many of the clergy to approach their task of sermon preparation and delivery with fresh zeal. Canon Simpson insists on the necessity of using the pulpit for plain teaching about the great facts of the Catholic faith.

\* *British Music in Our Time.* Edited by A. L. Bacharach. (Pelican Books, 1s.)