NEW BOOKS

OUTLINE OF A METAPHYSICS. The Absolute-Relative Theory. By Franklin J. Manchette. Philosophical Library. N. Y. 1949. $3.75.

MAN AND THIS MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE. By Brynjolf Bjorset. Philosophical Library. N. Y. 1949. $3.75.

"Not couched in the technical jargon of the schools" is the phrase in which *Outline of a Metaphysics* is recommended to us. The guileless reader who takes this to mean the absence of any jargon must be prepared for this kind of sentence: "Out of this entire alembic of Absolute Z.A.U. metaphysics relationship the essential dynamicity of the Zero-Atom -Unit emerges as the essential characteristic of the relative —for the foundational dynamicity of the Zero-Atom-Unit follows at once from its character as the original divergent from the Absolute, since as primary divergent, it must be dual to the Absolute" (p. 57) Philosophy necessarily employs technical language yet many who have not scorned the traditions of "the schools" have yet disciplined their prose in order to write the idiom of their day with simplicity and distinction. Mr. Manchette was made of sterner stuff, though we are glad to hear that he was "frequently prevailed upon" to substitute "conventional terms for those of his own devising." Ugly or unnecessary inventions irritate. Even infelicity of expression may injure a good cause. Who could take Mr. Manchette's Absolute wholly seriously after being told that "The significance of such a First Cause, a Necessary Being, the Absolute, for the relative world is enormous" (p. 23)?

The A.R. Theory, as its author sometimes telegraphically names it, might be described as—to parody Bradley—"Both Appearance *and* Reality." Like a latter-day gnosticism, it seeks to mediate between the Uncreated and creaturely nature by means of the Logos of Major Polarity and the graded hierarchies of Minor Polarities. It may be doubted, all the same, whether the relationship between the Absolute and the relative world is really resolved, except verbally any more than it was by the ancient concept of Emanations. The Psuedo-scientific reference of such a term as Zero-Atom Unit, for instance, obscures the difficulties of its metaphysical status. Again, the question of free will and causality is not answered merely by saying "where Mind emerges, there the inevitable process of polarity, its unswerving uni-directionality, is ruptured" (p. 85). It may well be that Mr. Manchette, "from a position won throughout his personal encounter with reality", was "devoutly convinced of the comfort of the Absolute" and that, "Polarity he could fervently declare to be the essence of the cosmos, for he had found it to rule in the business world." These statements are his nephew's who also writes in the Introduction, "Likely most anything can happen in a Fifth Avenue Apartment." In this case it appears most likely that a skillful myth, satisfying to its business-trained creator and to the *zeitgeist*, rather than an abiding rational philosophy, has been fashioned there.

Triviality and a journalese which stifles thought with verbiage and anecdote are the distinctive marks of *Man and this Mysterious Universe*. The solution of the world's ills, including the Russian pro-

blem, is to follow on the acceptance of the notion that the univers consists entirely of vibrations held together by Love. This will revolutionise our lives (though not so drastically as to jeopardise present profits) and make every one rich. "From there science may go on to the more subtle task of raising men to become gods" (p. 52). The connection of this consummation devoutly to be wished with the "science of vibration" is obscure. The panacea equally well might be animal magnetism, phlogiston, or mumbo-jumbo pure and simple. What is plain is the *sancta simplicitas*, which ignores every unpleasant fact and dresses the lowest motives in the language of high spirituality. In the Cloud-Cuckoo Land thus created, we are encouraged to believe that a high divorce rate is favorable for family life. ("Americans insist on being married to the girls they love and will even go through the expense and agony of divorce to achieve this" p. 99—the order of the two evils is typical) and that a bigger and better Renaissance is on the way now that industry has brought art into its own. How happy then the prophecy of science that telepathy will make war and crime impossible by detecting anti-social plans at the moment of inception in the brain! How impossible to consider for a moment that this blissful dream could be most easily converted into a nightmare of tyranny more horrible even than the talescreens of the Thought Police in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*". No stab of doubt must prick the pretty bubble of illusion that every pin and everything is tight and right in the Cosmic Caravan.

The author says, "It took the jolt of a world war to put me in the writing mood" (p. 15). No subsequent jolt, not even the dissolution of our planet, is likely to shatter the sublime confidence of that mood. "Thus we break into atoms surrounding us and discover their tremendous display of the force of Love." (p. 40). Having presented man with the new gadget of nuclear fission, the Leader of the Caravan, discreetly hiding his face, we are told, is smiling, Yes—but at whom?

K. M. HAMILTON

SONNETS OF LOUISE LABE. Translated by Alta Linda Cook. University of Toronto Press-Reginald Saunders. Pp. xvi & 48. Illustrated. $2.25.

PROUST'S WAY. By Francois Mauriac. The Philosophical Library (New York). Pp. 105. $2.75.

AUTUMN LEAVES. By André Gide. The Philosophical Library (New York). Pp. 296. $3.75.

Every one who has had any thing to do with the making of the first book listed above, from Louise Labé down, is to be congratulated. The slim volume is a work of art: the shape is comely, the cover design is beautiful, the type is excellent, and the appearance of every page suggests spaciousness and beauty. The original sonnets are, of course perfect in simplicity, sincerity, and passion; it is unfortunate that for most people this poetess of 16th century Lyons has been overshadowed by the Pleiadé, for her work gives the authentic flavor of Renaiss-

ance France. Miss Cook had a very difficult task to translate these sonnets into English; yet she has done her work well. (The originals and the translations face each other from opposite pages, so that the reader can judge the work of Miss Cook for himself.) This is decidedly a book to own and cherish, not only as a work of typographical art, but for its contents, both French and English. It should make an ideal gift for the person interested in Renaissance literature and for the book collector.

Proust's Way consists of eight short essays by Francois Mauriac. Despite the blurb on the dust jacket, one can see little connection between the essays on Proust and his masterpiece and the essays on Jacques Riviere. Moreover, in his judgement of Proust, M. Mauriac is prejudiced by his avowed Christian (and Roman Catholic) approach to the subject: he seems torn between admiration and disapproval. The essays are so slight and, at the same time, so allusive to recent French literary schools and figures that only a professed student of recent and contemporary French literature would gain the full flavor, and such a reader would hardly need a translation. The proof-reading has been done very carelessly: whole sentences on pp. 35 and 36 are out of place, and the present reviewer noticed at least six words misspelled in the text. The book may have one real value for the English reader: it reveals how seriously the French, unlike Americans and Canadians, take literature. That is why, despite a decline in political and economic importance, France is still the greatest civilizing influence in the world.

Gide's *Autumn Leaves* is a very much more important book. The editorial work and the proof-reading were much better; we are provided with a bibliographical list to indicate when and where each article was originally published. Essentially, however, this is a better work because Gide is a finer critic and a more profound writer than Mauriac. *Autumn Leaves* is composed of essays written during the last fifteen or twenty years, with the emphasis on the last few. Here we have such delightful personal essays as "Spring", "Youth", "My Mother". Then we have a group on various French writers, and lastly some essays in which Gide gives his philosophy of life, religion and literature. Gide sees French culture as the product of an ever present tension between the rational and critical on the one hand and the emotional and authoritarian on the other. In religion Gide is an agnostic with a profound admiration of the character and ethics of Jesus: he is drawn by the imaginative and emotional stimulus of religion, but his reason will not allow itself to submit to the irrational. Gide stresses the virtues of courage and duty; perhaps, though he has renounced the Protestantism in which he was reared, we have here an inheritance from his childhool training. A very interesting essay is the one written for the centenary of Goethe's death; in it Gide balances the Goethean creed of fulfilment through joy and activity and the Christian view of life. Enough has been said, perhaps, to indicate the richness of this very fine book.

B. M.

AN INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE. By Ivar Spector. Toronto, D. Van Nostrand & Co., 1949. 454 pp. $8.25.

This book is a concise history of Russia, and, as such, is a welcome addition to the thin ranks of Russian histories in English. The author has divided his book into two main parts, before 1917 and after, and each of these is subdivided into periods. There are also sections covering the geography and population, the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., a chronological chart of Tsars, a bibliography and an index.

One of the most useful sections is that entitled "A Century of Culture, 1815-1917." Here the rise of the novel as the principal form of Russian literature is integrated with the increasing political consciousness of the intelligentsia in the 19th century, and the author outlines the influence of Belinsky, Dostoievsky and others on the later political and artistic development of Russia.

The book claims to be only an introduction, and consequently the author has been forced to hurry over questions that deserve fuller treatment. More than once the reader is tempted to disagree with Prof. Spector's conclusions. Nevertheless, when there are so few books on the subject available at all, one is grateful for one so nearly impartial, well written and attractively bound.

DONALD B. CLARK

A HISTORY OF SPAIN. By Rafael Altamira. 2nd Spanish Edition, translated by Muna Lee. D. Van Nostrand Company, Toronto, 1949. Pp. XXX, 748. $9.25.

The first edition of Professor Altamira's one volume *History of Spain* appeared in 1933, when the author was sixty-seven years of age. He had already published a four volume *History of Spain and of Spanish Civilization*, which ran through three editions, and had become known internationally as an able historian, lawyer, and judge. He was thus well equipped for his most recent work, the story of the Iberian Peninsula from prehistoric times to the dictatorship of Francisco Franco. Essential facts are included, but unimportant kings, the numerous palace intrigues and minor wars are omitted to make room for the story of the people as a whole. The translation of the second edition by Muna Lee has provided English-speaking students with a scholarly text for the study of Spanish history. Fourteen maps and ninety-two photographs are included, and a chart at the end of the book enables the student to compare the development of Spanish civilization with that of other European countries. Two tables are provided: Table I gives the principal dates in the political and social history of Spain; Table II lists the dates of important inventions and the notable men in Science, Art, and Letters. These supplement the text and provide a well-balanced account of the political, economic, social, and literary history of Spain.

R. S. LONGLEY

OUT OF MY LATER YEARS. By Albert Einstein. Philosophical Library, New York, 1950. Pp. 282. $4.75.

This second volume of collected essays by Dr. Einstein covers a period of about fifteen years—1934 to 1950. The subject matter is highly diversified, ranging all the way from fundamental general convictions to such apparently disjointed particulars as the advocacy of lighthouses as places of retreat for young intellectuals, and the condemnation of the American Council for Judaism. Yet, for the discerning reader, these essays are tacitly held together by two dominant and interrelated facets of the author s personality: his scientific intellectualism and his ethical idealism. Moreover, it is by an examination of just these traits and their interconnection that both the strength and weakness of his general position can be gathered.

Perhaps the best indication of this position is to be found in his essay on science and religion. There it is asserted—Dr. Einstein rarely argues a point—that, because science tells us what *is*, whereas religion tells us what *should be*, there is really no conflict between these two disciplines. Of course, once this disjunction is granted, it leaves him free to expand on the one hand his matter-of-fact contribution to the science of physics, and on the other his idealistic evaluations of religion and politics. Still, Dr. Einstein does more than imply that he can reconnoitre on both these fronts without inconsistency: he buttresses the cogency of his case by means of the methodological premise of rationalism. That is, while in point of subject matter he contends that science and religion are widely separated, in point of method he insists that rational, coherent thought should be common to both. Ultimately this unifying methodological premise is rooted in the profound faith that the simplicity and grandeur of reason is "incarnate' in existence itself. Further than this bare mention of reason in existence Dr. Einstein does not go. Apparently, even though he believes that the scientist must of right philosophize, the problem of exactly how rational existence must be interpreted, in order to justify and clarify the exercise of coherent thought as a fruitful enterprise in both what *is* and *should be*, is largely ignored. He merely asserts his "confidence that human thought is dependable and natural law universal." Be that as it may, what should be emphasized at this juncture is that the methodological premise of rationalism determines both the weakness and strength of much of what this unique physicist has to say.

One of his chief characteristics, which at the same time distinguishes his scientific rationalism, is direct simplicity of insight and expression. Accompanying and supporting such simplicity is a relative lack of mental compromise and dialectical subtlety. Thus Dr. Einstein seems to have no grave suspicion that physics cannot really tell us anything of a conclusive nature as to the natural order of our sense-experiences. That is, even the possibility of such profoundly uncertain scepticism does not seem to have crossed his mind. True, this may or may not be a defect: it would appear to depend on the kind of subject matter, and the kind of head investigating it; and in any case the defect is hardly ever absolute, but rather one of degree. No one, for instance, would question the positive value of Dr. Ein-

stein's contribution to physics. But this is because the creative and rigorous simplicity of his mind aptly lends itself to those concepts and propositions about sensible experience that are capable of mathematical formulation. On the other hand, it is just this simplicity of mind that makes his brief remarks about the more philosophical subjects of ethics and politics less accurate and valuable. Witness, for instance, his exaggerated claim that it is not the vagueness of ethical precepts that constitutes the problem of securing a tolerable state of human society, but rather the difficulty of making those precepts potent in the life of man. Given the acceptance of a set of ethical precepts, the problem of influencing men is of course a real and important one. Yet, the question of what precepts are to be accepted never seems to disturb Dr. Einstein's simple and unquestioning faith. In particular, those of the Jewish-Christian religious tradition are taken on trust as enjoining in his view the "free and responsible development of the individual." At the same time, he ignores the fact that history is full of evidence of the rareness of a satisfactory working union between individual freedom and responsibility, and that rarer still has been the success of any theoretical formula that presumed to reconcile their divergent claims.

It is doubtless true that the majority of Dr. Einstein's pronouncements on political and ethical matters are dictated by genuine moral fervour. Such statements as "Let us not even shun the fight when it is unavoidable to preserve right and the dignity of man" are not infrequent. Still, since he insists on the social character of morality, it is equally true that, for his moral fervour to have substantial significance, a much more ambitious and thorough social philosophy is called for than is evident in this volume. Dr. Einstein, however, in conformity with the narrow demands of scientific rationalism, either ignores or is unaware of this flaw in his armour. He does, it is true, make the point that social-ethical goals cannot be established by reason but "through revelation, through the medium of powerful personalities." Even so, he also asserts that "if we can agree on some fundamental ethical propositions" (and for Dr. Einstein such agreement is possible in terms of the Jewish-Christian tradition)" then other ethical propositions can be derived from them". Within the limitations, then, of this hypothetical condition, the rational development of a social science of ethics should be possible. Yet in arguing his ethical case for socialism, he sums up most of its force in the dictum—"In such an economy the means of production are owned by society itself and are utilized in a planned fashion." Surely something more constructive is required of a social philosopher than the mere use of such words as 'society' and 'planned.'

If, then, this volume displays serious flaws, it is nonetheless better than most that deal with similar topics. Certainly in physical investigation Dr. Einstein possesses the unique capacity of putting creative thoughts into a few simple words and formulae, words and formulae that other men take volumes to explain. Again, this very rigorous simplicity of mind, which stands him in good stead in physics, enables him to make shrewd observations concerning matters social and personal. Here, for example, is a random selection of direct hits:

"Of what is significant in one's own existence one is hardly aware.."

"..the intellectual worker, due to his lack of organization, is less well protected against arbitrariness and exploitation than a member of any other calling."

"There is no compromise possible between preparation for war on the one hand, and preparation of a world society based on law and order on the other."

"I must frankly confess that the foreign policy of the United States since the termination of hostilities has reminded me, sometimes irresistibly, of the attitude of Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II.."

It is such incisive comments as these that add relish as well as instruction to an otherwise heavy diet of repetitious fare. For, if the needless repetition of certain themes such as individual freedom and the necessity of a supranational organisation were eliminated, this volume would be a model of concise literary craftsmanship.

ROBERT H. VINGOE

THE WORLD MUST BE GOVERNED. By Vernon Nash. Harper and Brothers, N. Y., 1949. Pp. XVI, 206. $2.50.

Mr. Nash has written a timely and challenging book. The theme is not new, but the issues are made crystal-clear: Man must no longer submit his disputes to the uncertain arbitrament of war. War is able to determine the victor and the vanquished, but is not a dispenser of impartial justice. Each successive war has become more devastating; another world conflict could destroy our civilization. To prevent such a catastrophe, the world needs a political authority with sufficient power to guarantee security and justice to all, and to administer under law those interests which are distinctly international.

Having stated his thesis, the author proceeds to outline his proposed organization. It is no less than that envisioned by Tennyson in *Locksley Hall*, the "Parliament of man and the Federation of the world." Mr. Nash is a Vice-President of the United World Federalists, who are seeking to establish a world government with powers limited, but adequate to assure peace. They advocate a World Assembly, a World Executive, a Bill of Rights, and a world law. "Adequate powers" would assure the proposed federal Government control over atomic energy and other scientific developments which could be used to wage war, and the command of whatever troops would be required to provide security against aggression.

In supporting a World Federation, the author emphasizes the weaknesses which existed in the former League of Nations and the present United Nations. The League of Nations was as impotent when it was twenty years old as it was in its first year. (p. 23). "The United Nations merely camouflages Power Politics." (Chapter II). "There is not a vestige of merged sovereignty in the so-called United Nations." Its Assembly can do no more than pass resolutions and make recommendations. These weaknesses, Mr. Nash maintains,

could not be overcome by amending the existing Charter, since the great powers are unlikely to surrender their Veto. The solution can be found only in a federal system in which each constituent member, while retaining substantial areas of sovereignty for itself, delegates to central government in perpetuity those essential powers which have been already defined.

While sharing the author's belief that a World Federation would undoubtedly reduce, or eliminate, the possibilities of war, the reviewer is not so sure that the United Nations has failed, or that the proposed federation can be more than a very desirable goal. The Communist attack on South Korea has given the United Nations a new prestige. Its flag is being carried by its troops, and its members, after a slow response to the appeal of its Secretary-General, are presenting a solid front against the aggressor. If the present conflict in the Far East brings the democracies closer together, a federation of some sort among them might be projected, but at the moment it seems unlikely. Thus far even the smaller democratic countries have shown little inclination to surrender a part of their sovereignty in perpetuity without first knowing what it would mean to their economic, as well as their political, future. The author's belief that such important questions as international trade could be settled after a federation has been formed, appears somewhat unrealistic. Nor do his illustrations from history, especially from the United States before 1789, offer satisfactory parallels to present world conditions. Yet his vigorous approach to the subject, and his insistence on more education and on the absolute necessity for world peace make the book a real asset to the peace propaganda of our age.

R. S. Longley

Pax Britannica. By F. A. Voigt. Longmans, Green. Pp. 576. $5.75.

There are two things that must be said for the author of the seven essays that comprise this book: he knows his own mind and he has complete confidence in the rightness of the contents of that mind. All of the hundreds of opinions and propositions it contains are put down as if they were statements of plain, incontrovertible fact. As many of them deal with highly controversial matters, this assured omniscience becomes increasingly irritating, and the irritation is hardly less when, as is often the case, the stalest of platitudes (for example, "No country can survive without patriotism,") instead of being taken for granted, are announced as if they were new and significant truths. Occasionally the author comes up with a good remark. On page 498, the thought of the Soviet Union, with its purges and drastic administrative measures and its crises "which are more intractable in a bureaucratic absolutism than in any other order," prompts him to say, "It is questionable whether a bureaucratic absolutism is an order at all. It is certainly not an organic order, but

rather in the nature of a frozen anarchy " and on page 516 he writes, "It is one of the dangers of every political doctrine that those who support it may take it seriously, especially if they are Germans." But there are long stretches where the monotonous trip-hammer of successive short sentences is unrelieved by anything new, profound or witty, and almost the whole of one essay is devoted to arguing that there is no "other Germany ' but merely aspects of the one Germany—a quibble that hardly seems to merit such extended treatment.

The central theme of the book is the serious one of the security of Britain and Europe in an insecure post-war world. The author takes the position, which an increasingly large number of people are coming reluctantly to accept, that the Iron Curtain is "none the less a dividing line, because, in a physical sense, it can be crossed. Spiritually, it is becoming impassable" (p. 469). Russia worships God-Caesar, while Europe worships God and Caesar and there can be no compromise between them. If Russia remains master of the satellite countries, they will cease to be European. The question is whether the peace of Europe will be a *Pax Europaea* or a *Pax Muscovita*. The former can be achieved only if the balance of power is restored. As Britain would be the balancing power, the *Pax Europaea* is identical with the *Pax Britannica*, and since the United States is obviously essential to the balance, it is identical also with the *Pax Atlantica*. The author has no use for federations, regional or global, and the restoration of the balance of power requires the restoration of the independence of small nations, particularly of what he calls the "Middle Zone" countries lying between the Arctic Circle and the Greek frontier.

All this does not get us very far. Nor do we get much further when the author carries out the promise of the dust cover to combat the assertion that England is no longer a Great Power. Power, he writes, "does not depend on bulk, population, resources, and on material force, surpassing in magnitude the force which others can command . . . effective force depends on balance or leverage. As long as England can hold the Balance of Power, she is a Great Power, perhaps the Greatest Power" (p. 541). From the fact that England has always been dependent on other Powers, great and small, he concludes that she is more powerful because of her dependence on the United States and that the United States is the more, not the less, powerful because of its dependence on England (p. 544). Almost every country could make claims to be a Great Power on this kind of argument, and it offers cold comfort to those who are seriously concerned about the vacuum created by the decline in Britain's strength and her vulnerability to atomic air attack. His claim that Britain is at present a Great Power would seem to be contradicted by his earlier statement that "without a Middle Zone of independent but associated countries, there can be no Europe—and no enduring *Pax Britannica*" (p. 506). How is the independence of the "Middle Zone" countries to be restored? Perhaps by a preventive war (p. 551). Mr. Voigt does not call outright for a preventive war, here and now, like some of the more rapid American publicists, but he makes a general case for preventive wars by arguing, correctly, it seems to the reviewer, for whatever it is worth, that the medieval distinction between just and unjust wars is truer than the modern distinction between wars of defence and

wars of aggression (pp551-52). But far from considering the prospect of the devastation of Western European cities by atomic bombing, he does not even once mention the existence of the atomic bomb. His whole discussion, therefore, seems curiously unreal and old-fashioned.

The most controversial chapter of the book is that which deals with the rise of Tito. According to Mr. Voigt, Mihailovitch was "the noblest figure of the Second World War" (p. 346), to destroy whom was "a task which might have seemed wholly impossible in 1943" (p. 245), and Tito an upstart who was getting nowhere and who would not have risen from obscurity and inconsequence to power had it not been for the fateful British decision to support him. Mr. Voigt agrees with Mr. Sumner Welles' opinion that this decision was probably Mr. Churchill's greatest mistake in political tactics (p. 320). It may be so; the reviewer would not presume to judge, for if there is anything thicker than the fog of war, it is the fog created in the immediate post-war period by the charges and counter-charges in the spate of books and articles that purport to tell us what happened. When can a refusal to attack be justified on the grounds that it would lead only to drastic reprisals and when is it to be condemned as a failure to prosecute the resistance vigorously? At what point do tacit accommodations with the enemy cease to be legitimate in view of the military situation and become collaboration? The verdict turns on the answer to questions of this kind, and those without first-hand knowledge of the characters of the leading figures in the drama and not in possession of the full facts of the different military situations confronting Tito and Mihailovitch simply have not the means of answering them. But there is a more concrete reason why the layman in this matter might hesitate to accept Mr. Voigt's account. If that account be true, the story of Tito's early strength and activity was one gigantic hoax. How then was Mr. Churchill so grossly deceived? Almost everyone and everything had to conspire to deceive him, and in Mr. Voigt's explanation almost everyone and everything did, including the alleged revolutionary romanticism of the members of the British military mission to Tito, among them Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean. It appears that Englishmen, being denied, by British political stability and capacity for peaceful development, an outlet for their revolutionary emotions at home, are prone to surrender to such emotions when they are abroad and particularly when the Balkans come within their range.

Anyone interested in the case for Mihailovitch will find it, together with references to a large part of the extensive literature on the subject, in this long essay of 130 pages. But again there is a curious omission. The author states confidently that Tito's "allegiance by personal conviction and life-long service was to the *Comintern*. And to that allegiance he remained faithful" (p. 306). It is true that the substance of the essay was written in 1943, 1944, and 1945 (p. viii), but the book in which it appears was published in 1949. A discussion of Yugoslavia published at that late date, which does not mention the rift between Tito and the Kremlin, which we now know

was developing long before the end of the war, is out of date even before it appears.

J. H. AITCHISON

A GENTLEWOMAN IN UPPER CANADA. The Journals of Anne Langton, Edited by H. H. Langton. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company, 1950. Pp. 249. $3.00.

The people of Upper Canada appreciate their own heritage. Both Ontario and Quebec evoke the spirit of place and bring to life days long past by publishing books of biography from time to time. Doctor Lorne Pierce's *William Kirby* is a monumental work of the kind; it not only recreates the genesis of *Le Chien d'Or* but also the early scene in Niagara. A book like *Mary's Rosedale*, by A. G. Meredith, can fling an aura of romance over a street name in Toronto. The present book brings to life once more the sturdy pioneer settlement of a hundred years ago.

In 1837, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Langton and their daughter Anne came out from England to join their son John, who had taken up land on Sturgeon Lake in Ontario. They reached New York after a three week's voyage and travelled north by slow stages; Mrs. Langton has nothing but praise for American inns. They found Niagara Falls an unimaginable revelation of grandeur. Anne writes: "You must ramble about and retrace your own steps many times before you can form any notion of the scale of magnificence before you." As they approached Toronto by water, Mrs. Langton thought the place looked "flat and agueish," a vastly different impression from that of the Queen City's skyline today.

Family ties were strong with the Langtons. As William, the elder son, had remained in England, Anne wrote frequent letters and kept a journal that informed him and his household of the daily experiences in the New World. With a few additions, these make up *A Gentlewoman in Upper Canada*. The letter journal opened in 1837 and continued until Anne's return to England for a long visit in 1846.

John welcomed them to something more than a lodge in the wilderness. He had a snug little home on one of the numerous lakes that, as he wrote, gave the region "an extent of internal navigation unparalleled in any other part of the world I should think." Before the year was out, he had "Blythe House" ready for his father's family at a short distance from his own dwelling. Between them they had a library of twelve hundred books. On her return one day from tidying up her brother's house, Anne wrote in her journal: "I came back with a strengthened conviction of the importance of woman, and congratulating myself that, though I might be an old maid, I could never be an old bachelor." Later, John became a paterfamilias and, in due time, a member of Parliament and of the Senate of the University of Toronto. He was a Cambridge graduate.

Anne's narrative is lively, thoughtful, sometimes even philosophical. The home-making, farming, and social life of those pioneer

days live in her quiet, yet vivid, pages. As a child she had studied painting in Rome, where the family spent several winters, and to the end of her life she delighted in wielding the brush or the pencil. The present book is illustrated with a number of her sketches of "Blythe House" and its neighborhood; it is beautified by a charming self-portrait as frontispiece.

SISTER MAURA

THE PORTABLE CHAUCER. Theodore Morrison, ed. Toronto, Mac-Millan and Co. 1949. Pp. 600. $2.75.

VISIONS OF PIERS PLOWMAN. Nevill Coghill, ed. Toronto, J. M. Dent and Sons. 1949. Pp. 143. $3.00.

THE PORTABLE MEDIEVAL READER. James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin, edd. Toronto, MacMillan and Co. 1949. Pp. 687. $2.75.

Verse translations such as *The Portable Chaucer* and the *Visions of Piers Plowman* are not new phenomena in the field of letters. Chaucer in particular is such good fun that admirers from the time of Dryden have obligingly made the Medieval poet available to people who are unable to read Middle English. Altruistic though the motives of such translators may have been, admirers of Chaucer usually wince at such works, often refusing to admit that they may be enjoyable since they are at best imperfect reflections of the original. Such admirers, however, may read with tranquillity and even enjoyment Theodore Morrison's treatment of Chaucer—the *Canterbury Tales*, *Troilus and Cressida*, excerpts from *The Legend of Good Women* and *The House of Fame*, and a number of short poems. True, they will not be reading Chaucer at his sprightly best, but Mr. Morrison's translations are as faithful to Chaucer in every way as translations can well be.

There have been two main methods of translating Chaucer in the past. Writers such as Pope and Dryden appear to have conceived Chaucer as a man who ought to have written as they themselves did; and after trimming and scrubbing and frouncing him out of any resemblance to himself, they tucked him up into an uncomfortalbe Procrustean bed which exactly matched their own characteristic styles. Scarcely more satisfactory is the method of such translators as Wordsworth and others after him, who have retained or invented easily understood archaisms such as "eke", "adown", and the like in order to establish the feeling of antiquity. Like the imitation wormholes in simulated antique furniture, such archaisms are not convincing. Mr. Morrison has avoided this latter approach to translation as far as possible and the first approach altogether, Aiming at absolute fidelity to the spirit of Chaucer's writing, he has tried, and with great success, to give us the substance of what Chaucer had to say, to render it in the easy-going colloquial language of today, and to call

a spade a shovel no more often than necessary. His task was complicated by the fact that he recasts Chaucer while holding, in most poems, to the original verse forms, although to avoid being sidetracked by the demands of rime, he transcribes the *Troilus* into blank verse. The nature and success of Mr. Morrison's translation is perhaps best observed by a comparison of a few lines of Chaucer with the modernization of them.

> And smale foweles maken melodye
> That slepen al the nyght with open ye
> (So priketh hem nature in hir corages);
>
> When little birds are busy with their song,
> Who sleep with open eyes the whole night long,
> Life stirs their hearts and tingles in them so—
> ("Prologue", *Canterbury Tales*)

> The Cook of Londoun, whil the Reve spak
> For Joye him thoughte he clawed him on the bak.
>
> As the Reeve told of these students and their guile,
> For joy the Cook of London all the while
> Felt just as though his back were being scratched.
> ("The Cook's Prologue", *Canterbury Tales*)

> Thou seyest that droppying houses, and eek smoke,
> And chidyng wyves maken men to flee
> Out of hir owene hous; a! benedicitee!
> What eyleth swich an old man for to chide?
>
> You say that smoke
> And falling timbers and a railing wife
> Drive a man from his house. Lord bless my life!
> What ails an old man, so to make him chide?
> ("The Wife of Bath's Prologue," *Canterbury Tales*)

If Mr. Morrison sometimes only succeeds in converting champgne into beer, as he modestly fears, it is to be remembered that beer, when it is alive and sparkling, is also very enjoyable.

Nevill Coghill, to a far greater extent than Mr. Morrison in his *Chaucer*, has arranged the various skeins of *Piers Plowman* to make the work acceptable to the modern reader. Most of the passages of *exempla* and moralizing, of debate and theological disquisition he has placed apart from the narrative. To the medieval reader these appeared as ornamental and desirable; the modern reader prefers his narrative uncluttered by too many interruptions. Mr. Coghill has therefore divided his book ino three sections; the account of the visions —the narrative backbone which holds the poem together; the autobiographical references to William Langland, the author, and some excerpts concerning ethical and philosophical subjects; and some biblical and apocryphal events, such as the Incarnation and Harrowing of Hell.

Mr. Coghill's treatment of Chaucer's work on the B.B.C. Third Programme has indicated his outstanding abilities as a translator. There is, nevertheless, occasional evidence that the translation of the alliterative verse of *Piers Plowman*—the sort of thing Chaucer scorned as "rim, ram, ruff"—proved to be a vexatious problem. He uses archaic language throughout his version of the poem, but he has justification: Chaucer, Langland's contemporary, would have considered the style of writing in *Piers Plowman* countrified and old-fashioned. In the main, Mr. Coghill's verse rendition is as faithful to the metrics and texture of the original as it is to spirit and meaning. From the beginning of the poem when

> In a summer season, when soft was the sunlight,
> I shook on some shreds of shepherd clothing,
> And habited like a hermit, but not a holy one,
> Went wide in this world, watching for wonders,

we may enjoy a view of 15th century English life that is fine indeed. It is a view that is both visionary and realistic; and although *Piers Plowman* can stand on its merits as a work of art, a study of his examination and denunciation of the ills of England gives us a fine background for the understanding of Chaucer and his times.

Of no less value, in this regard, is the *Portable Medieval Reader*. It is, of course, of wider interest and value, for it is a collection of documents illustrative of many phases of life in Europe during the Middle Ages. The documents are grouped according to various divisions of society, both temporal and spiritual, and there is a very handy chronological chart of historical events in Europe from 1050 to 1500. The *Portable Medieval Reader* is a veritable library in small, and one can discover in it such varied things as what Arabs thought of Crusaders, what the Waldensians believed, how to cook a dish called "Eel reversed", or an account of the coronation of Richard Lion Heart. You may even try your hand at solving "The Case of the Missing Head", a mystery dating from 1227.

The *Portable Chaucer*, the *Portable Medieval Reader* and *Piers Plowman* all have informative introductions and notes, and together these three books make an enjoyable approach to a fascinating period.

C. L. Lambertson

Spirit of Israel and Other Poems. By Hyman Edelstein. Ryerson Press. Pp. 67. $3.00.

Hyman Edelstein, who uses also the pen name Don Synge, is a poet with the work of whom Canadian readers should be much better acquainted. The volume under review contains some new material and representative poetry from preceding volumes, such as *Canadian Lyrics* (1916, 1921), *Spirit of Israel* (1942), and *Last Mathematician* (1949), and also illustrates the method of *All Quiet in Canada—and*

Why (1944), in which, by interspersing quotations from the letters of his son Corporal Ray with comments of his own, he pays tribute to those who manned the outposts during World War II. Of Ireland, his native land, Edelstein can write as spontaneously as Yeats, and of Canada, his adopted country, he delightfully catches the spirit in his poems of nature. As the title of the new volume indicates, however, he is primarily and distinctively an interpreter of the spirit of Israel, finding in the message of the Book the remedy for the sufferings not only of the Jews in all parts of the world but also of the whole human race. In his main subject matter he challenges comparison with Heinrich Heine, Israel Zangwill, and his fellow Canadian poet twenty years his junior, Abraham Moses Klein. Of his technical skill no phrasing could be better than that of his friend and teacher, A. J. Leventhal, Trinity College, University of Dublin: "a true marriage of the English and Hebraic muses with a nice fugal sense of the music of both languages."

V. C. RHODENIZER

THE NEW WORLD OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. By Lennox A. Mills and Associates. Minneapolis: the University of Minnesota Press. 1949. Pp. 445. $5.00.

We are at present witnessing throughout the Eastern World successful rejections of Western domination coupled with the rapid spread of communism. This ideology is repugnant to most of the freedom-loving Western World but in many ways attractive to the teeming unorganized multitudes of the East who have never enjoyed and probably do not understand western democracy and who have never experienced a standard of living much above barest subsistence. The future peace of the world and certainly the future of western civilization depend desperately upon the establishment of a relationship of confidence and generous cooperation with the eastern countries, one that demands from us intelligent understanding of the various eastern peoples in terms of their own diverse sociological, political and economic frameworks. Only with such understanding can we begin to cope with the complex problems that face us in our dealings with these people. It would be the very height of stupidity, a height unfortunately too frequently reached on this continent, for us to view and deal with these problems in terms of western institutions. That is not to say that western experience has no bearing on eastern problems—indeed, it has a valuable contribution to make but one that must be offered with insight and tact and generosity; and one that must be absorbed and adapted from within, not imposed from without.

The book under review is a useful contribution to this type of understanding. It deals with that part of the Asian continent bounded by India to the west and China to the north, including the adjacent islands in the Pacific Ocean. The political divisions are Burma, French Indo-China, Siam, Malaya, Idonesia and the Philippine Islands, with a combined population of about 155,000,000 (slightly

greater than that of the United States). The book is the product of eight different authors, each writing on an area or subject in which he is a specialist. It consists of a brief survey of the area, followed by chapters on each of the six political divisions, concluding with four chapters dealing with different aspects of the whole area: the Chinese in Southeast Asia, Problems of self-government, Southeast Asia in world economics, and international relations in Southeast Asia.

One cannot expect a book covering so broad a subject to provide a detailed description and analysis of the problems facing the area; but it does provide an intelligent, if rather thin, sketch of the historical social, political and economic structures of each of the countries and of their relationships with one another, with China, the U.S.S.R. and the West. The authors proceed with insight and understanding gained from much experience and study of the area. For example, Lennox Mills, who edited the book and contributed three of its chapters, is professor of political science at the University of Minnesota. He has travelled extensively in Southeast Asia and Ceylon and has written many articles, as well as being the author or part author of five books, about the area.

The point is made that the problems of the area cannot be solved simply by the establishment of political democracy in the western sense. The heritage for such a system is lacking, as is a high literacy rate, which is necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for a democratic form of government. If and when some forms of democracy are established in the area they will undoubtedly be so much influenced by indigenous sociological institutions as to be quite different than any of those of the West.

J. F. Graham

Twentieth Century Economic Thought. Glenn Hoover, Ed. Philosophical Library, New York, 1950. pp. 816.

This book consists of twenty-two chapters each written by a different author. The order in which the chapters appear could be improved by some form of classification. The bibliography is moderately useful.

The great diversity of subject matter and its controversial nature make the book difficult to review. Some of the chapters do not treat the problems satisfactorily. The discussion seems to have been toned down and vital issues obscured. The book is entitled "Twentieth Century Economic Thought," but it has little to say about modern masters. Its chief concern is with policy and the preservation of a free competitive society; some emphasis is placed on theoretical matters.

The preface states: "This book is written by economists, but not primarily for them. It is designed instead for the more informed general readers. They have heard our economic problems discussed—often *ad nauseum*—by editors, commentators, pastors and politicians. This book is based on the hope that some of these readers want to know what professional economists have to say about economic problems." Such statements should put the reader on guard. Moreover, profes-

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sional economists should not "talk down" their subject. The issues should be kept clear and the terminology precise.

In several of the articles there seems to be an unqualified acceptance of full employment, in the popular sense of jobs for everyone, as a goal, and there exists the great faith that the government can create a setting favourable to the maintenance of full employment in a competitive society as we know it. Means and ends must always be kept in mind. When 'competition' dominated, there was a different international political and economic balance of power, and there was land to be occupied. Today we should be forced to consider not only the achievement of full employment and the preservation of private enterprise, but also the degree of stability (or even economic security) that is desirable and the extent and type of bureaucracy that should exist.

These latter problems are raised, for example, by the final chapter on "The Direct Control of Prices." On pp. 812-13 we find the following passages: (1) "What is needed when a depression starts is a readjustment of the price structure without permitting that readjustment to result in a decline in the general level of prices." (2) "The needed readjustment in values—relative prices—is of the same sort that would occur under perfect competition. Recognizing however that perfect competition is not possible, we should strive so to control the controlled prices that they would fit with the competitive part of the price structure." (3) "There is an alternative method of obtaining a better balance of price relationships during depression—the maintenance of the prices of otherwise flexibly-priced commodities through direct price controls." This sounds like an about face. There is an unwarranted final air of authority about the whole matter. Would the author permit price increases, either individually or collectively, as they do occur during the upswing of the cycle? Mathematically, if some prices fall others must rise to maintain the general price level. With respect to making prices for the competition sector, the author would support prices in the latter group. The extent to which such a policy should be pursued and the timing of the measures are important questions. Obviously, too, the author is thinking in terms of a closed economy.

Certain chapters such as Chapter VII, "The Modern Theory of Economic Fluctuations," and Chapter **XIX**, "The Role of International Monetary Agencies," are well written. Prof. Knight's contribution should be read. Chapter **XI**, "International Commodity Agreements," is factual and useful.

N. H. Morse