

were, what their problems are, than when he allows the actors themselves to carry on. I have a feeling that he knew what he wanted to do better than he was able to do it; that the book is like a play in which the underlying plot and purpose are fine, the situations well thought out and dramatic, but the directing and characterization not quite adequate. This is my overall impression, though there are many scenes in which the essential poignance and irony of the triple conflict are shown in vivid clarity and in which the characters stand out as real people. The book just misses, I think, being a really profound commentary on human relationships; it has, in spite of its weaknesses, great sincerity and wisdom. One of the characters strikes a keynote by remarking, "You might say that we are capable of living on three levels: the base, the trivial, and the heroic. Fortunately, we have grown out of the base; we slip back into it only under exceptional pressure. Unfortunately, we have not yet reached the point where we can maintain the heroic pose with any permanence. We achieve it on occasion. When that little California girl fell down the abandoned well heroic rescuers were a dime a dozen. But it is as if our wings were not strong enough to maintain us in this upper air for any length of time . . . we find it necessary most of the time to get along on a sort of median plane, not very bad, not very good. We live by what you call trivialities. . . ."

If, as I said, and perhaps too harshly, "One Big Family" doesn't quite live up to its author's intent, it remains a sincerely moving, perceptive, and readable book.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 370

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 370 will be found in the next issue.

KC CKL TQLX XC

ACTFTH PX NRL BPK GRC

QX QKFQEKPKN.

S. G. KQLNOXDRL

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 369

His impromptus smell of the lamp.

—PYTHEAS.

Said of Demosthenes's Orations.

Fiction Notes

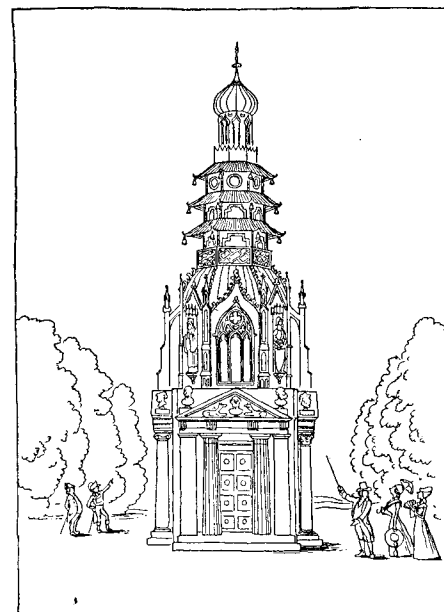
THE WILD WIND, by Marjorie Sinclair. John Day. \$3. Marriage with a Greenwich, Conn., broker, golfer, and country club habitué can pall pretty quickly on the sensitive-type girl. One dip into her great-grandmother's diary is enough for Lucia. The jig is up, farewell to the Round Hill Club, off to the Hawaiian Island of Makaaniloo, where the missionary bones of her ancestor lie buried in the earth she loved so well. Not easy to love either. All's at odds here. Lucia is tapped for trouble. The pull between embedded superstition and modern education is matched by the ancient resentment of the natives towards the white off-islanders. Worship of false gods, belief in primitive panaceas, restless ghosts, and variously assorted herbs unite the faithful, straight-arming the stranger. But Lucia plunges in, going a step further than her kin by marrying one of the local lads. Might as well be back home for all the stability she achieves. However, passion does win out and idolatry prevails.

The beach at Waikiki can't be as velvety as it looks on our travel folders, after all.

—CATHERINE MEREDITH BROWN.

THERE'LL ALWAYS BE A DRAYNEFLETE, by Osbert Lancaster. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.25. Mr. Lancaster is a good hand at typically understated British spoofing, which may be reckoned as one of the fine arts. If his words are quietly amusing, his black-and-white drawings are more loudly entertaining. They record his country's history from Roman days to our own. Drayneflete—imaginary name, of course—is a typical small English town with historical associations, of which this book is supposed to be a sort of chatty guide for the benefit of the quite imaginary tourist. Naturally, the town's leading families come in for a large share of the fun.

There was, for example, in the eighteenth century the illustrious figure of Alexander, second Earl and eleventh Baron Littlehampton, "a man of wide culture and great sensibility," who devoted himself throughout a long life to the promotion of literature and the arts. One of his achievements was "Lord Littlehampton's Folly," an architectural curiosity "expressly designed to display correct examples of all the five great schools of architecture," i.e., the classic, gothic, Chinese, Hindoo, and Egyptian. The author gives a black-and-white rendering of this singular pagodalike structure, sure to produce a chuckle. Best of all



—From "There'll Always Be a Drayneflete."

"Lord Littlehampton's Folly."

are the author's parodies of English verse, beginning with an exquisite gem of Middle English prosody and concluding with a clever take-off on T. S. Eliot. It is all very solemn and vastly entertaining.

—JOHN COUNOS.

COAT OF MANY COLORS, by Hulda Peterson Putzke. Dorrance, Philadelphia. \$3. It was an unhappy moment when the author chose intermarriage as the theme of her novel about Milwaukee during the Prohibition era. Jo's problem — a gentle girl confronted with marriage into an orthodox Jewish family — is a very real one, but Jo is not a real enough person to make the impact of her dilemma felt upon the reader. It is rather ludicrous to see Jo first become the mistress of her Jewish doctor because she so firmly believes herself an outsider, a "shikkksa," only to turn around and consent to marry him after he reads her a passage from the Bible.

There is very little to justify the publishing of a story which serves only to bestow the author's confusion upon the reader. The question of intermarriage is a serious and important one which will continue to plague our society for a long time. A book which only reiterates the seriousness of the problem without offering one iota of guidance or enlightenment is of no value whatsoever. Miss Putzke does have a talent for amusing and colorful dialogue and often is able to get a genuine chuckle from the reader. Had she chosen a less delicate theme, "Coat of Many Colors" might have been a more entertaining and delightful novel.

—JOSEPH M. GRANT.

Poetry. *A poem may first achieve the dignity of print through the columns of a periodical or between the covers of the proverbial "slender volume," but if it ever attains wide currency it is almost always as part of a bulky, somewhat somber anthology. The commonest type of anthology is, of course, that which undertakes to encompass a sizable span of a nation's literature. Mary M. Colum offers some arresting speculations below on what qualities are necessary in a successful anthology in reviewing David Daiches's "Poems in English: 1530-1940." A rarer type of anthology is that John Ciardi has edited in "Mid-Century American Poets," a selection of the works of fifteen important poets now at the height of their powers. The other volumes reviewed below are of the "slender" variety: a tiny bit of them may eventually receive an anthologist's accolade.*

410 Years of the Lyric Mother Tongue

POEMS IN ENGLISH: 1530-1940. Edited by David Daiches with the assistance of William Charvat. New York: Ronald Press. 763 pp. \$3.50.

By MARY M. COLUM

WHAT mysterious qualities make one anthology interesting and entertaining and another dull, even though the same poems be included in both? All sorts of abilities are involved: the temperament of the anthologist, the profound and intuitive knowledge of poetry and poetic periods, the knack of arranging the poems so that they contrast with and light up the poems that precede and follow, the very way the book is printed and presented. Now the present anthology, compiled by two professors, with one, Mr. Daiches, doing most of the job, is somewhat on the boring side—at least it is on the wingless side as regards compilation. It approaches poetry in too pedagogic a manner; in the later sections the choices are not always inspired, and the modern section leans too heavily on the fashions of the moment. Then, too, it seems to this reviewer that the anthology does not begin early enough. English poetry was started and well on its way before 1530, when this collection begins. How can anybody understand English poetry without knowing certain of the medieval poems such as "Sumer is icumen in," "I sing of a maiden," without knowing some of Piers Plowman and Chaucer, and without having the ballads in one's head?

"Poems in English: 1530-1940" is intended for students and has a foreword addressed to the teacher by one of the compilers and a general introduction by the other. Still, even in a book for students, we could very nicely do without what might be

called schoolbook poetry, the sort that everyone learns in pre-college days. Here we are given Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," that editorial in verse which has not a single line of poetry, and what might be called the parson's poem, "Crossing the Bar," generally to be found printed on funeral cards and heard sung at funeral services. We are given "The Ancient Mariner" with all those side notes which Coleridge probably thought up in an opium-haunted moment and which can have no function whatever for readers who cannot help but know what the poem is about. We have Wordsworth's "Michael" complete, a poem which has an historical literary importance but which would wither any student's incipient passion for poetry. The Victorians generally—and here is the place for a most rigorous selection—are not carefully selected. Many of them wrote too much and sometimes they wrote schoolgirlish poetry, and we are given such specimens as "Break, break on thy cold gray Stones, O Sea," followed here by "Sweet and Low" and a couple of other items which almost ruined for the twentieth-century mind Tennyson's reputation as a great poet. Of course, the anthologist does include some of Tennyson's fine poems, and surely it is time that Christina Rossetti's "When I am dead, my dearest" was left where it belongs, as suitable words for sentimental drawing-room music. It should be noted,

however, the Browning is very well selected, and in such a way that any reader of poetry must realize Browning's immense influence on what is called "modernist poetry."

In the eighteenth-century section the anthologist is occasionally brilliant, as in his quotations from George Berkeley and Shenstone. The selections from Swift are not such as would give an insight into that sardonic and mocking mind, the poet who, as he said of himself, "invented irony." Too often in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the poets are represented by their second or third best but this may be because the anthologist believed there was some virtue in unfamiliarity. But let the reader, as a test, look at the selections from Byron and Poe. To the present reviewer's mind, the greatest failure is in the modern period. It is hard to fathom why such pieces as

nonsun blob a
cold to
skylessness
sticking fire

should be the sole representative of the work of E. E. Cummings, and why put in among good poems of Ezra Pound a piece of witlessness like "Winter is icumen in Lhude sing Goddamn"? Several of the poets in the modern period are represented because they are the fashion of the moment, and they certainly do not belong in an anthology covering several centuries. Yeats is represented by fewer pages than is Eliot, and not only are the selections not commensurate with Yeats's greatness, but a couple of the poems, "The Second Coming" and "Byzantium," are too difficult for any but initiates. This review, for all that, will end on a word of praise: the Tudor and Elizabethan poems, with which the anthology begins, are arranged with a freshness and enthusiasm that make them seem new and strange—and that even though every lover of poetry has them trippingly on the tongue. This is not only due to the loving choice of the poems but also to the fact that the poets, Wyatt, Sydney, Spenser, Raleigh—indeed all of them—have an individual, a personal style, a signature as it were—and this characteristic, essential to all real writing, is conspicuously and sadly lacking in some of the poets featured in the modern period.

