

tameness, his withdrawn, abstract, academic decorum. We wish him good luck with, good critics for, his new school of criticism. We wish it in a voice of perfunctory good-will.

Notes

POETS' FRUSTRATIONS: Byron once made the irreverent observation that if Laura had been Petrarch's wife he wouldn't have written sonnets all his life. It is a paradox, recognized long before, that some of the greatest works of the imagination were created through the sublimation of the artist's unfulfilled love. There are not many writers who have the wit and erudition to juggle that paradox; Etienne Gilson in his "*Choir of Muses*" (Sheed & Ward, \$3.50) is such a writer. The "choir" whom he assembles to illustrate it are an assorted lot: Petrarch's Laura, Goethe's Lili Schöenemann, Baudelaire's Mme. Sabatin, Wagner's Mathilda Wesendonck, Auguste Comte's Clotilde, and Maeterlinck's Georgette.

The scope in time, from the Renaissance to the present, and in art-form, poetry, music, and philosophy, allows M. Gilson enough room to discourse with an easy and wide erudition.

—ROBERT HALSBAND.

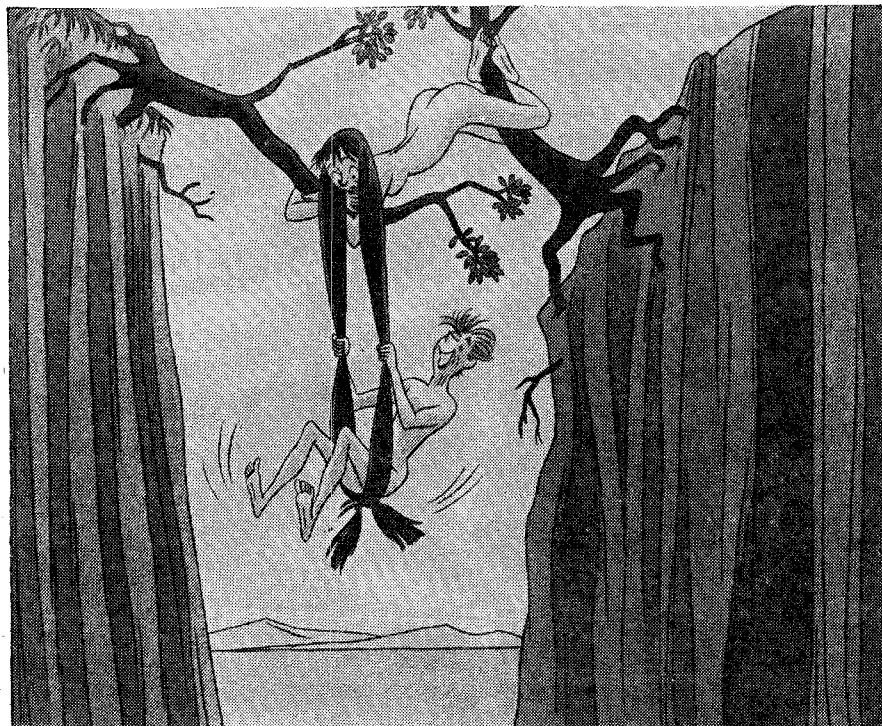
POUND AS CRITIC: A critic, says Ezra Pound in an essay on Guido Cavalcanti, is "normally a bore and a nuisance." Though Pound may annoy some readers into believing him a nuisance, none are likely to find him dull. He shatters traditional literary idols, he is often flippant, even ill-mannered. But there is no denying the passionate integrity of his critical standards or the acumen of most of the judgments which he has recorded in thirty years of critical writing. T. S. Eliot, as editor of "*The Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*" (New Directions, \$6), has performed a notable service in bringing together in one volume a coherent pattern of challenging essays.

Mr. Eliot has arranged the essays logically, so that they give a unified view of Pound's theories of the artist's function and, in historical perspective, of his attitudes toward world literature and individual writers. The most immediate impression is the high seriousness with which Pound takes his artistic concerns, poetic and critical. He is essentially a consummate craftsman, addressing himself to others of his calling. The artist's main obligation is to report on the nature of man. Bad art, he bluntly asserts, is immoral because the artist falsifies his report. Pound's intensive application to rhythmic techniques and forms is strikingly valid evidence of his con-

sistent analogy between poetry and music and other art forms (he has written on Arnold Dolmetsch and Brancusi). Historically he finds the origin of all great art in the ancients and semi-ancients. Translation for him thus becomes both an artistic expression and a literary introduction for the neophyte. He traces the lyric tradition from the Greek poets of the Melic period and the medieval poets of Provençal and Tuscany. Pound speaks at times with dogmatic assurance. "Chaucer should be on every man's shelf. Milton [and Pound refuses to budge from the conviction that Milton is a rhetorical thunderer] is the worst sort of poison." Words-

worth is "a silly old sheep with a genius." Pound's emphasis on the musicality of verse is paralleled by insistence on fine prose. Of these qualities his praise is unstinted. His admiration is far-ranging and erudite: Sappho, Catullus, Arnaut Daniel, Villon, La Fontaine, Browning, and Swinburne. These and others are his models of prosody and, largely therefore, of good poetry. Nor does he ignore Eliot, William Carlos Williams, or—surprisingly—Robert Frost and D. H. Lawrence. Prosists like Rémy de Gourmont, Henry James, and Wyndham Lewis give Pound forceful demonstrations of his esthetic tenets.

—EDWARD A. BLOOM.



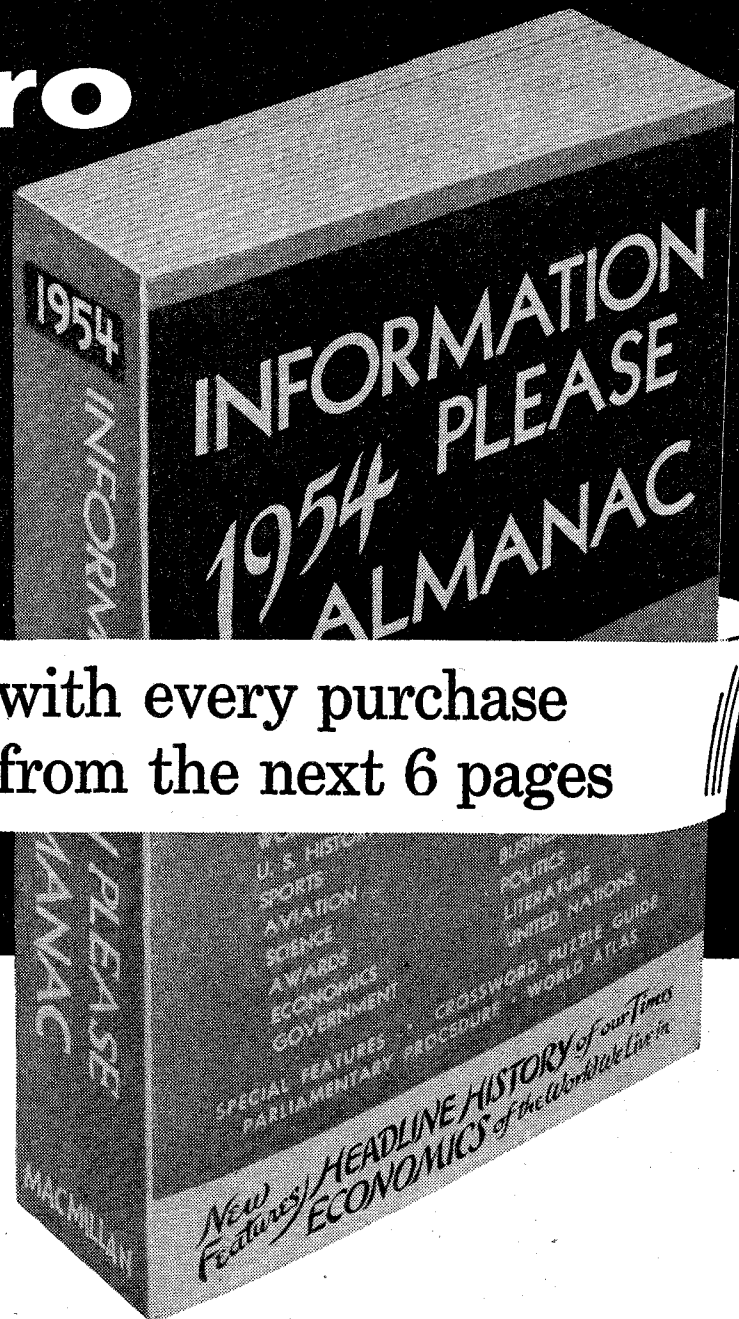
"You're the only one who understands me."

BUSY FEMALES: There is little doubt that the drawings of Abner Dean, like the comic strip of Walt Kelly and the paintings of Jackson Pollock, are subversive and that some Senate committee will get around to coping with this national menace very soon. In his latest collection of cartoons, quaintly entitled "*Cave Drawings for the Future*" (Dial Press, \$3.50), Mr. Dean employs his now familiar format—sparse, one-dimensional, almost childishly simple line drawings of naked but sexless men and women—to poke oblique fun at the mores and morals of the young American bourgeois. His "cartoons for the courageous" have long been popular among members of New York's gray-flannel, crew-haircut set. I suspect their appeal is not so much to the courageous as to the nervous fauna of Madison Avenue. Mr. Dean does not believe that any of us are very unique, that we have any major secrets of any consequence, or that what happens to us matters very much. His most biting irony is directed at women and there is more than a twinge of hatred in it. One drawing, for example, depicts a monument out of male corpses. The caption reads, "Women are the real builders." Mr. Dean will certainly keep the analysts and their patients giggling.

—WILLIAM MURRAY.

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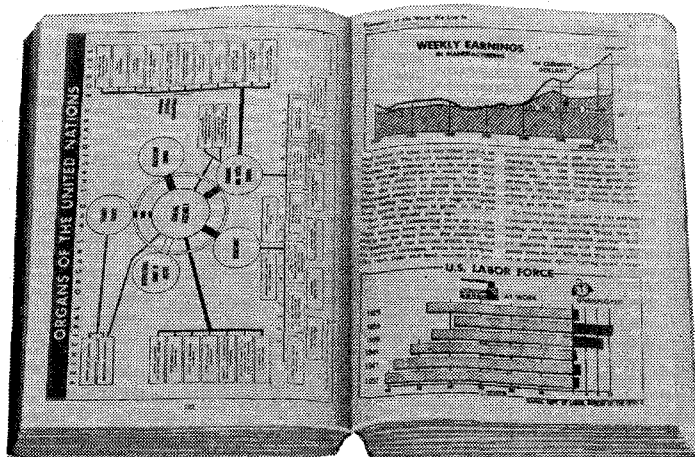


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152	159	160	166	168	169	188	189	190	191	213	214
226	239	240	244	253	269	270	300	302	303	304	307
309	315	316	317	318	319	324	330	332	338	346	347
348	349	350	352	354	356	357	373	374	377	378	382
386	394	398	404	405	412	413	416	417	418	419	421
428	434	437	438	439	441	442	445	447	448	450	451
453	454	455	457	458	459	461	462	463	464	465	467
469	470	471	472	474	477	481	482	483	484	485	486
487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498
499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510
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Sleighride Into Darkness

IN MY recent quick look at the British theatre I was faced by the choice either of reporting on productions seen in embryo during their out-of-town tryout period or not mentioning them at all. I chose the former course but, since this can be desperately unfair to the productions reviewed, I trust my readers will regard what follows as merely a preliminary account of the new Christopher Fry play as seen at Edinburgh some six weeks before its scheduled London opening.

At its present stage of development "The Dark Is Light Enough" would seem to have a rich potential. The play, described as "a winter comedy," takes place during the Austro-Hungarian revolution of 1848-1849 but is not a history play. Rather it is the story of an incredibly wise and compassionate woman who recognizes that the good in the worst of us is as valuable as the good in the best of us. The period and the setting are made to order for the romantic talents of director Peter Brook and scene-designer Oliver Messel. Because of their work, the production is already thick with style.

But, since most actors find it hard to have both style and the kind of reality which gives impact to lines that often dissipate their own immediacy by pausing to make side comments on other matters, a lot of work is going to have to be done on the performances. Fortunately, "The Dark Is Light Enough" stars the one actress in the British Empire who can best deliver both style and intense reality at the same time. Dame Edith Evans, with her 100-piece orchestra of a voice, makes the Countess Rosmarin every bit as remarkable as Mr. Fry intended her to be.

The play itself, though still infected with some of the exhausting circuitousness that marked this playwright's earlier work, represents a new departure in a direction which must be applauded by those who want to see Fry come more to terms with theatrical convention. In "The Dark Is Light Enough" the line is purer, sparer, and less encumbered with ornament, though the author has indicated his unalterable stand against absolute clarity by two lines in the play. While in one the countess forbids her little conversation group from discussing "eelelogy," in another she says: "If all the crooked

places of the world have been made plain to you while I was out, that I shall not forgive." Somewhere between these two poles dances Christopher Fry.

This dancing includes such a beautiful description of driving through the snow as:

I've been as clever as an ostler,
And driven alone, one human and
two horses
Into a redeemed land, uncrossed
by any soul
Or sound. And always the falling
perfection
Covering where we came, so that
the land
Lay perfect behind us, 'as though
we were perpetually
Forgiven the journey.

It also includes such profound thoughts on death as:

The argument, philosophy, wit,
and eloquence
Were all in the light of this end
we come to.
Without it there would have been
very little
To mention except the weather.
Protect me
From a body without death. Such
indignity
Would be outcast like a rock in
the sea.

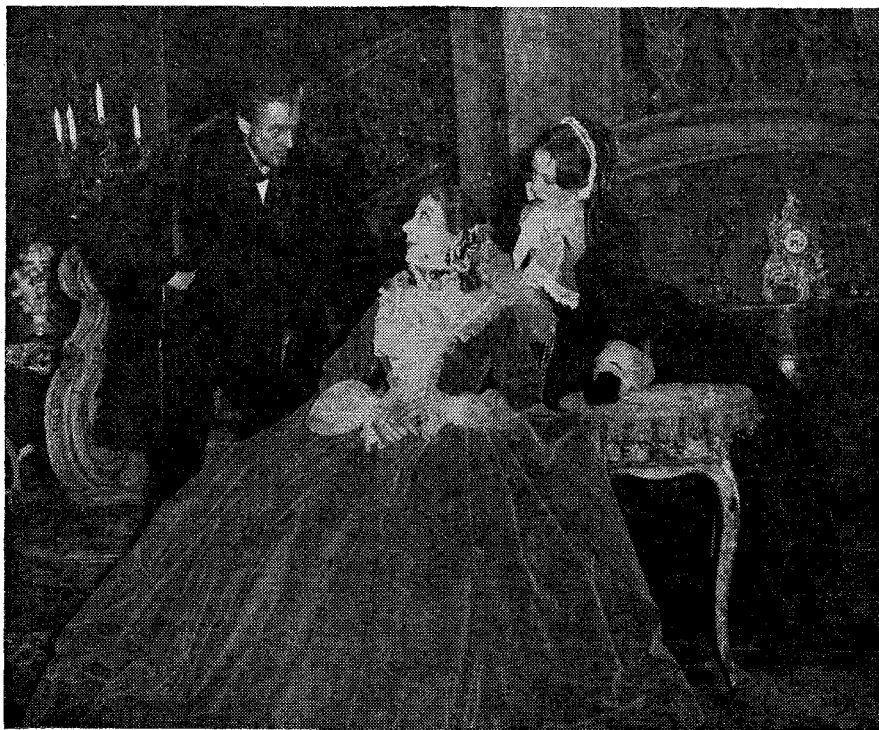
But with death it can hold
More than the earth shows it, and
more than time
Gives it. In its nature
There seems to be a founding
music it can almost hear
And moves to know and under-
lays a dance
In which it sometimes dreams.

There are other equally fascinating thoughts on such subjects as embracing causes, the loss of free will when we are elected into love, the problems of being a writer, the futility of revolution and of war, and this credo which is as plain speaking as Christopher Fry has ever been:

I shall never make
Myself or my friends or my way
of life
Or private contentment, or any
Preference of my nature, an ob-
stacle
To the needs of a more true and
living world
Than so far I have understood.

But the author and his director are well aware that brilliance, profundity, sincerity, and style are not enough to engross an audience for two and a half hours. If "The Dark Is Light Enough" is going to have the success its art and poetry entitle it to, it is going to have to find a means of making us care passionately about its characters. Now it is a beautiful but remote midwinter night's dream.

THE failure of Charles Morgan's "The Burning Glass" on Broadway and to a lesser extent in London is



Dame Edith Evans in "The Dark Is Light Enough"—"the line is purer."