

## Books of the Day

### RECENT VERSE

By Hugo Manning

Roy Campbell's **Talking Bronco** (Faber, pp. 91, 7s. 6d.), where inspired invective thunders against many things, including Left-wing poets, Jews, Tartuffes, and even the Beveridge Plan, is perhaps the most exciting book of new verse.

Mr. Campbell's great gifts are apparent in his use of everyday idioms and in more transcendental imagery like "The skies Were tracered by the straddlers With arrows from the blue guitars That on their strings tunam-talse The tap-dance of the morning sails." His desire for expressing propaganda like a Mayakovsky in reverse is quite conceivably detrimental to his poetry. He derides those who "trade in doves And fatten on the world's distress," but persists in trading his own fixations in the form of prejudices that are too sweeping to be just. He also seems to use the fact that he served in the war as a licence to broil his pet aversions with exceptional indignation. One cannot deny Mr. Campbell his place as an outstanding poet, nor his share of vision and honesty, especially when he says "We all become the thing we fight" and that some "Will plagiarise the cock-in-trade Of purges, massacres, and crimes, Before their hatred is cooled." Perhaps Mr. Campbell's phase would become even more considerable if he had fewer bees in his bonnet. Or is it that his inspiration is only at full tide when his poetic star is kindled to a wave of unrepressed spleen and when he can present his verse like a wild man at a circus sideshow?

After Mr. Campbell's performance the long poem by V. Sackville-West, **The Garden** (Michael Joseph, pp. 114, 6s. 6d.), seems magnificently serene and well disposed towards humanity. This successor to Miss Sackville-West's last long poem, "The Land," tells of "gardens in the midst of war" and uses an interpretation of the seasons as a vehicle for her pleasant lyricism and sustained craftsmanship. Montagu Slater's **Peter Grimes and Other Poems** (John Lane, pp. 108, 7s. 6d.) serves a good purpose in a different way. It gives admirers of the opera "Peter Grimes" an opportunity of reading the libretto. Most of this book is made up of poetry from Mr. Slater's dramatic scores and there is no doubt that it is never verse. But its brittle and repressed quality, unfortunately, renders some of it dull both to the ear and to the senses.

Geoffrey Grigson in **The Isles of Scilly** (Hodgkiss, pp. 45, 5s.), by the very nature of his descriptions of islands, bays, caves and landscapes and his obvious imagery, sets himself a distinctly intellectual and educative task with his poems, which at best can only be regarded as pleasant innocuous pieces. The poetry in Henry Reed's **A Map of Verona** (Jonathan Cape, pp. 59, 3s. 6d.) reveals a slightly deeper poetic vision than either that of Mr. Slater or of Mr. Grigson, but one has the impression that Mr. Reed has worn thin much of his genuine talent in this direction by too much self-inflicted censorship. Already his verse shows symptoms of fitting into an æsthetic strait-jacket which some literary arbiters may applaud but which may eventually neutralise his power as a poet.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

We have received the following books, &c.:

From Collins:  
**FUTURE BOOKS**, Vol. II. The Stage is Set By  
W. W. Waters. Illustrated. 5s. net.

From Cornish Brothers, Birmingham:  
**NATIONAL PARKS FOR BRITAIN**. By Henry  
Coxe. Illustrated. 8s. 6d. net.

From E. Droz, Paris:  
**DUMAZO FRANCESCO VASCO**, 1732-94. By  
Franco Venturi.

From Hera'd Printing Works, York:  
**STRANGE COMMISSIONS FOR HENRY FORD** By  
H. F. Milton

From the Oxford University Press:  
**ATOMIC ENERGY FOR MILITARY PURPOSES**. By  
Percy de Wolf Smith (Princeton University Press).  
2s. 6d. net—**LORD MACAULAY'S LEGISLATIVE  
MOMENTS** Selected, &c., by C. D. Dharker. 18s.  
net—**THE PERCY LETTERS**. Correspondence of  
Thomas Percy and Edmond Malone. Edited by  
Arthur Tilston (Louisiana State University Press).  
10s. net

From Putnam and Co.:  
**AN AMBASSADOR IN BONDS**. By Sir Lancelot  
O'Phant. 17s. 6d. net.

From the St. Botolph Publishing Company:  
**CITIZEN OF THE WORLD SERIES 1—Czechoslovakia**  
by Commander E. P. Young. 3s. 6d.

From the Sylvan Press:  
**THE COUNTRY CALENDAR**. By John Claridge.  
Edited by G. H. T. Kimble, M.A. Illustrated  
4s. 6d. net

From G. Whittaker and Sons, Stalybridge:  
**CLIMBERS OF ANCIENT STAYLEY** By G. H.  
Whittaker. Illustrated. 1s. 6d.