crouch on the edge of the empty dark? How can an artist view his own work as anything more than a striving after wind? What heart can he have for producing his wares to be displayed in the ghosts' bazaar, that market-place where seller and buyer are equally cheated? Enough . . . enough . . .!

●

NATURE does indeed feed precious things to the rat, and man feeds them to fire and bombs. *Library buildings can be replaced, the archives that record the story of a city or a country may never be.* That is one of the many melancholy reminders contained in a report which appeared in the Harvard *Alumni Bulletin* concerning the destruction of books and libraries during the war. Irreplaceable things and records have gone for ever. Sometimes the very effort to save things were what destroyed them. For example, in France, when the great library of the Chapter of St. Thomas was threatened, the books were hurriedly removed for storage in a rural area. There the books were destroyed by rain, mould, rats, mice and insects. The library itself was never damaged. Again, in Holland, the monks of the Abbey Van Berne hid their rarest volumes in local farm-houses; almost all were destroyed.

The destruction of books in the great blitz on London was equalled three years later when Leipzig's publishing houses were destroyed during the air-raids on Germany. We have lived in a period of 'the burning of the books,' which began officially and barbarously in peacetime by deliberate deed in Germany, Spain and Russia. (In Galway someone proposed to burn Shaw's books in public!) We have indeed travelled far. In 1914, the burning of Louvain's University Library horrified the world; in 1940, the news of the second burning of it was received as merely news of an incident that had been expected.

The Harvard *Bulletin* does not mention one remarkable book which has disappeared almost without anyone noticing the fact. Nearly two centuries ago there appeared the first edition of a book which in edition after edition was to serve the generations of Royalty and Aristocracy as their stud book. The *Almanach de Gotha*. There, each Princeling of Mardeburg —Gothania could verify the descent, on left or right side of the bed, of Europe's Arch-Dukes, Marchesas, Princes, even unto Polish Lords, Italian Counts and Barons of Lithuania. And then, in 1945, a Russian Army without Grand-Dukes came to Saxony and arrived at the town of Gotha where long ago the Dukes of Saxe-Coburg Gotha had built their castle of Friedenstein a thousand feet up on the Schlossberg. The new, rather glum, style Russian Army sent a few men into the old printing-house of the old family of Justus Perthes, which had printed the *Almanach* almost since its beginning. And the army took away all the archives, the lists of names that had once helped to form the connective tissues of the Holy Roman Empire; and they took away all the other records of the *Almanach*, all the files, charts and chronicles of wasted time.

THE BELL

EDITED BY PEADAR O'DONNELL

VOL. XIII. No. 1. OCTOBER, 1946

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THE BELL is published monthly. Subscription rate, 18*s.* a year, postage, 1*s.* 6*d.* extra. Prose contributions should be sent to the Editor (Verse to: Louis MacNeice, The Poetry Editor), THE BELL, 2 Lower O'Connell St., Dublin, accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope for return if unsuitable. Business address: 2 Lower O'Connell St., Dublin. Tel. 22246.

FACTS AND FAIRIES

By THE EDITOR

THE story of the relation of the Irish Independence movement with freedom movements in other lands in those days when Ireland's name was a slogan of liberty has yet to be told. However weak the Irish representation, and little sanction it could claim from the people as a whole, it expressed what was highest in intelligence and courage at that moment. It would be good work for a group of our young writers to review those associations, and in their light, edit the whole body of our revolutionary literature. For this aspect of our tradition has been neglected.

The story would be only half told, however, unless the body of writing which expressed the attacks on the Irish organisations with International affiliations is also represented; indeed this might well be the more colourful and instructive section. But, if the whole were done, the anthology would help a new generation to understand the paper wall with which all subject nations are surrounded; on the inside is written what their enemies would have them believe of themselves, to their demoralisation, and on the outside what they would have the world believe of them, to their isolation.

The need for some work along these lines is made clear by the experience of meeting foreign journalists who come here these days to report on aspects of our life. For many of them arrive carrying with them old stories which appeared on the outside of the paper wall in far-off days; as witness the journalist who reported back to the English working-class movement, through the columns of the *Daily Herald*,

TWO POEMS

HECTOR

By VALENTIN IREMONGER

TALKING to her, he knew it was the end,
The last time he'd speed her into sleep with kisses :
Achilles had it in for him and was fighting mad ;
The roads of his longing she again wandered,
A girl desirable as midsummer's day.

He was a marked man and he knew it,
Being no match for Achilles whom the gods were backing.
Sadly he spoke to her for hours, his heart
Snapping like sticks, she on his shoulder crying.
Yet, sorry only that the meaning eluded him

He slept well all night, having caressed
Andromache like a flower, though in a dream he saw
A body lying on the sands, huddled and bleeding,
Near the feet a sword in bits and by the head
An upturned, dented helmet.

POEM ATMOSPHERICAL

By MICHAEL GREGORY

DOG-WEARIED now from his iliads, aeneids, odysseying,
Haywire to sleep, to louze in his kennel of memories,
With his secret-bone-pleasure at classic employment, yes, and Homeric slaving,
And craving no further dispatch-mention, medal, Nobel-prize,
No, not even a pension for services rendered, Aeolus,
Bulldog-breed, old-school-tie, sound in tradition always
Snarls at this fiddling interference, these stick-pointing dictates;

This would-be cat's-whisker subtlety ; townies, sophisticates
Turning his snug to a stream-lined depot for smut-stories!
And as, his action suspended, asleep in the hiatus,

The jaded suburban hears spanning his snoring forties.
With a wash-line of prattle the neighbours' brats, snot-faces,
Goes to the door, a Laocoon with his braces,
A rheum-eyed two-handed-engine, a Nemesis, shirty ;

And rings the change to snivels and blubbered self-pity ;
So does Aeolus with satyr-grin, lone wolf of skyways,
Clamp down on this bone of contention, the aerialed gossip,
The dredgings of chaos, the plaint of a world gone allways . . .
Now Paris, a gigolo, dope-addled . . . Madrid, a young bull in heat . . .
Even Beethoven is staggered right off the beat . . .
The Choral a hopeless bags . . . A tour of Babel . . .

DENIS JOHNSTON

By HILTON EDWARDS

ON the edge of the Egyptian desert sits a Sphinx. It is suggested that the Sphinx has a secret. Certainly it looks inscrutable, provocative, and tells us nothing. Blowing gently at the dust lying thick on the very delicate tracery of my early teaching I find that it was the Sphinx of Thebes in Greece who held the secret, and that had Œdipus gone to Egypt he might have found no riddle to answer.

Denis Johnston has developed an air of judicial detachment and cautious remoteness that provokes one to probe for a secret, but whether this air be well-founded or not remains to me a secret still. Denis is to me not so much the usual person composed of different facets as an entity composed of quite different persons, all of them as yet incomplete. For the moment I write of him and not of his work.

force. Impatience, the example of other countries, the appalling condition of the Jews in Europe, the petty snubbing of those Jews who fought for the Allies in the War (the Redmondites), the exceedingly gentle handling of the Mufti of Jerusalem (who went personally to seek Hitler's aid for his people, but who will certainly not be tried as a Quisling); all of these things have led to the present highly explosive situation.

It will be remembered that when, two years ago, similar riots and outbreaks occurred in French-ruled Syria, the British took swift action. They marched into Syria and ordered all French troops to retire to barracks! This displeased the French, but they had no choice. Were the Americans, or the French, or the Russians to adopt the same somewhat summary methods in Palestine, in Egypt, or in India, it is improbable that the British Government would rejoice at such a victory for law and order. . . .

At present the Jews make a precise demand: that the 100,000 additional Jewish immigrants recommended by the Anglo-British Commission be admitted. The British reply: 'Lay down your arms first, then we shall see.' Obviously the Jews no longer trust the British sufficiently to do so. The British military authorities think that they can make them. It remains to be seen how far along this road of criminal folly the British Government is prepared to be dragged by its military 'servants.'

Yes but, it will be asked, what *can* the British do? Two things, it seems to me: implement at once the unanimous recommendations of the Anglo-American Commission of six months ago, and hand over the mandate to UNO, with the request that it be transferred to a nation, or group of nations, with no material interests at stake in the region.

The new mandated authority would have no easy task, but a fresh start would be made possible. The eventual solution will probably be some form of partition, however unsatisfactory that will be from some points of view.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE GATE THEATRE

ALL FOR HECUBA. By MICHEÁL MACLIAMMÓIR. (*Methuen*, 21s.)

Reviewed by CHRISTINE LONGFORD

THIS review is purely personal. So is the book. What else should an autobiography be? I have been waiting for it anxiously, since a few chapters appeared in THE BELL. And since I am interested in Ireland, Dublin, the theatre in general, the Dublin Gate Theatre in particular, in Micheál MacLiammóir and above all in myself (mentioned on sixteen pages, see index), I cannot pretend to be dispassionate. Nobody would believe me if I did. I am even intensely interested in Yugoslavia and Greece; and I always laugh at the jokes, the situations and especially the people that Micheál finds comic. I have known many of the characters in the book, including the anonymous, the pseudonymous and the symbolical; it reminds me of some I had forgotten, and makes me want to remind him of others he may have forgotten himself. But I shall not spoil his stories, as I know what a nuisance it is when people say 'It didn't happen quite like that.' When anyone has taken the trouble to write a long, varied and entertaining book, no one has a right to be captious on matters of detail. I cannot imagine what I was like seventeen years ago, and I am afraid Micheál has been too kind to me. I will make only one protest: I swear I was never bored by the early shows in the Gate, and I would not have watched them night after night, if I hadn't enjoyed them. As he has included in his gallery what I consider a flattering portrait of me, I must say of him, without flattery, that he is the most brilliantly talented friend I have ever had. This may give an impression that we take in each other's washing. We do not. But I would rather be suspected of taking in washing at home, than be found guilty of washing dirty linen in public.

Micheál MacLiammóir can act, paint, talk and write;

if I had to grade his talents as civil servants grade sausages, I would put them in that order. He can make jokes in six languages ; he can sing, play the piano, dance and cook. He can do many other things ; but as this is not a testimonial or an obituary notice, I will leave it at that. The question is, how much of his talent appears in his autobiography ? Has he been able to write a history of that amazing subject, himself ? Take acting first, as I believe that is his best line. Personally, I think he is the second best actor in Ireland, and Anew McMaster is the first. It is hard to write about acting : hard for a spectator, and even hard for an actor who by a miracle, as in MacLiammóir's case, can also write. How much does this book tell us about his acting ? Not enough. There is something about his Hamlet, but I want more. His superb Antony, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, is barely mentioned, though he suggests he was pleased with it. I should like to read more about the child-actor who sent London into raptures ; and here I must confess, with all apologies for being inquisitive and old-fashioned, that I wish the scheme of the book were more chronological. The flash-backs and flash-forwards are confusing. Time and place change as quickly as in an expressionist play.

Micheál tells us the date and place of his birth on page 303, while describing neuralgia on an air-journey between Brindisi and Athens. But I should like to begin at the beginning, with Cork and childhood and the discovery of his talent, and then stories about His Majesty's and Sir Herbert and *Boy Blue*. The first interview with Sir Herbert is delayed until 'Retrospect' in 1935. 'I had acted in front of a mirror for years' Micheál remembers ; why not give us more of that ? Some of his considered opinions on acting, which are of enormous interest, are incorporated in a story about Belgrade. For instance, 'The real achievement of the Abbey was the invention of a new tradition in writing, not in acting, for what in acting did it invent that was not being practised elsewhere by seekers after reality ? One thing : the use of authentic

Anglo-Irish speech.' I would have expected to come to that earlier, with reference to the foundation of the Gate. 'In the Irish theatre we live in a shapeless chaos, and whether we are doing well or ill is understood only by a handful of people.' Why keep that for the Srbski Kralj? 'Repertory is hell,' says Hilton Edwards in Paris, and he is quite right. 'Even in England,' says Micheál, 'the tradition of the stage is an imperfect and *parvenu* affair, and in Ireland we have only the crumbs that have fallen from the English table.' But on the next page he says 'Let's go and have *gaufrettes* with our coffee.' 'The blank eyes and complacent smiles we had battled with in Dublin' he remembers among sun-drenched pine-forests and sandy Prussian hillocks. Dublin haunts him, and we all understand that. Very early, in Monte Carlo, we find 'Dublin with its drab prejudices, its growing and passionate mediocrity,' and then we are off again.

One meditation about Dublin actually occurs in Dublin, at the beginning of 1930 ; and it will set any two Dubliners arguing for weeks. I would not agree about this city's 'almost total indifference to the pleasures of the eye.' I would say that Dublin has not been ungrateful for MacLiammóir settings and Edwards lighting ; that in fact their most admired successes, since those days, have been in gorgeous spectacle, and not in experiment. About Dublin's inability to discriminate between the second rate and the tenth rate, I think Micheál is right. I wish he had said more about his painting. These illustrations give no impression whatever of his work ; and he refers to one of his finest designs, a garden which was like a Persian miniature, only as a setting for a very funny theatrical party.

I enjoyed some good polyglot jokes in this book. But does Micheál MacLiammóir, can he any more than Oscar Wilde or other brilliant talkers, write as well as he talks ? Can he supply the lack of that beautiful voice, those mimetic triumphs, those flashing eyes and expressive features to which no photographer has ever done justice ? No, not quite. There is no denying that he is a writer, that he has

imaginative and descriptive powers, an immense vitality and facility and an overflowing vocabulary both in English and Irish. But as a writer, he is a dramatist first. We all know what good dialogue he writes in his plays and music-hall sketches; and in his reminiscences, the best passages are in the dramatic, and not the narrative form. His dialogues, both Platonic and farcical, with Hilton Edwards anywhere or with Box and Cox in Malta, are first-rate. Narrative seems to bore him. He becomes embedded in purple patches, or caught in whirlpools of rhetoric, or flies off at tangents, when I want to ask 'What happened next?' Sometimes he refers to a thing that has happened before, when he has forgotten to tell us what it was.

From about the Ninth Season onwards, I want to say that I remember some things differently, that 'it didn't happen like that.' The theme-song of a certain drama seems to be 'We were poor, but we were honest, Victims of a rich man's whim.' The drama, of course, is the quarrel with the Longfords. It is in no sense a tragedy, not a comedy or a farce either, but a sad little melodrama which is now out of date. The Longfords once wept over it too. The Longfords are very sorry that Edwards-MacLiammóir were worried about them in Delphi in 1936. They also remember that they were worried about Edwards-MacLiammóir in Delphi in 1933. They remember all the dates differently. But here is a whiff of the laundry; and as I hate laundry-work more than those girls who went on strike in Dublin last summer, I'll stop at once. It is offensive to wash dirty linen in public, and to wash clean linen is silly. So with a reference to 'old, unhappy, far-off things,' I refuse to discuss what used to be called the Split.

It is a pity that *All for Hecuba* is a little out of date already; that it took so long to be printed, and is so badly printed. Foreign words, exotic phrases and even easy ones are shockingly mangled; but I hope we all have the patience to puzzle them out. I shall not try to imagine how this book would appeal to readers who knew nothing about Ireland, the theatre or Micheál MacLiammóir. I can only say that I think it will be very much borrowed in Dublin, and will be discussed even more than it is borrowed.

THE SCARLET TREE

THE SCARLET TREE. By Osbert Sitwell. (*Macmillan, 15s.*)

Reviewed by Honor Tracy

THE memoirs or letters of a writer are commonly among the liveliest and most enjoyable of his works, partly, perhaps, because the theme is in the nature of things one of which he can never tire. It is curious that while people soon become wearisome if they talk about themselves, when writing on the same subject they are apt to be more diverting than ever. Sir Osbert is no exception. *The Scarlet Tree*, which is volume two of his trilogy *Left Hand, Right Hand!* has a vitality in it which has been missing from some of his other books. Too often in the past he has been content to lecture, too often, merely to catalogue: he has been too much the connoisseur, the Artist with a big A, the *Geniesser*, if a gothic term may be used of one so floridly, so devoutly baroque. He has described things too often, and indeed continues to do it in the present volume, not in the language of a poet but of a confirmed gallery-walker: scenes are Jordaens-like, Piranesi-like, ample flesh is Rubens-like, an old man in rags and tatters is Goyaesque, a garden has a pre-Raphaelite charm, a woman's smile is delicate and resigned as that of a Luini; and all these adjectives are so much dead wood in the living branch of his sentences, besides being incomprehensible to all who are unfamiliar with the painters in question. Miss Edith Sitwell in this respect goes further yet, using, for instance, the adjective 'Martha-coloured' to denote something of the same

colour as a dress worn by a certain lady named Martha : thus narrowing down her audience to those initiates who personally knew Martha at the time when she had this particular dress. Whether, in the former case, it is laziness or a kind of emotional anaemia, or whether Sir Osbert is addressing himself consciously to such people, only, as have done the Grand Tour and enjoyed its artistic advantages, there is in all this a suggestion of writing for the Family : and an artist of such quality has no business writing for the Family.

Here, however, in *The Scarlet Tree* (' the blood, that fragile, scarlet tree we carry within us . . . ') are universal qualities, freshness and humanity as well as the more superficial and decorative qualities that we take for granted. The ground covered is the writer's childhood from his eighth to eighteenth year : and his great achievement has been to give not only a brilliant account of the life of an upper-class little boy in the pre-Edwardian era, with its nannies, governesses and tutors, its prep. school and public school, its warm, conspiratorial friendships with the servants of the house, its stately visits to the homes of grandparents, uncles and aunts : but at the same time, and each woven subtly into each, a sensitive description of childhood as all children, rich and poor, experience it, in its wonder and perplexity, its sense of the mystery underlying all things, its despairing attempts to plumb the grown-up mind. There is a delightful story as regards this last, which will awaken memories in many of us. Overhearing, to his horrified concern, a well-loved aunt remark to another : What a pity Osbert never does anything useful ! he runs out and feverishly constructs a dam across the brook at the end of their garden ; the rain comes and a flood ensues, ruining the aunts' favourite, most costly, flowers. Thus he learns how hard, how very hard, it is to do good in this life. Then there is the long misery of school, with its boredom in class, its suffering on the playing field and in the dormitory at the hands of noisy little savages who are represented as the very fiends

of hell, although in fact they were no more than the future pillars and props of the society whose passing Sir Osbert so deeply deplores ; indeed, his whole picture of school-life seems to have been coloured by that strange, secret envy exceptional natures have of the blithe herd, the ' blonde, blue-eyed and common-place,' and, despite the honourable amends made on the last page of the book, there is a somewhat disagreeable flavour to it.

On the other hand, in his description of his parents, of Sir George, overbearing, egotistic, cranky, yet with odd generosities and curious streaks of imagination—who but an imaginative person could have put a small boy's terror of hell-fire to flight for ever with one short sentence ?—and Lady Ida, extravagant, pleasure-loving, violent, infinitely tender towards her sons, cold and even cruel to her daughter, he shows a detachment all the more remarkable since there is never any doubt where his affection lay. The book teems with wonderfully rich portraits, of Edith, Dowager Countess of Londesborough, Lady Ida's mother, deserted by the smart set in her widowhood, of Henry Moat, the butler, sighing amid the delicacies of Florence for roast pork and boiled suet pudding, Granny Sitwell and her prayer-meetings and the clergymen clustering round her like wasps about a ripe peach, the sympathetic tutor Ragglesedge, discovered telephoning to a bookmaker when thought to be leaving tracts on old women in the village, the appalling Fun Brigade, with its Victorian horse-play, its quaint predilection for placing live lobsters in the beds of the house guests ; and yet there is nothing patchy about it, nothing anecdotal. It moves along powerfully and cohesively, with an ever-deepening sense of tragedy and coming disaster ; tracing not only the growth of child to adolescent but the transition of a society from a period on which the last rays of the sun still lingered to our own, in the author's words, ' most bestial,' age.

AN HOUR IN THE HAND

HAPPY AS LARRY. By DONAGH MACDONAGH. (*Fridberg, 6s.*)

Reviewed by HENRY REED

HAPPY AS LARRY is a play written in a manner which is to-day usually reserved for radio-features. It employs an intermittent narration by a group of commentators ; the main action takes place in a series of inset scenes. This is a wearisome and mechanical enough device in radio ; one rarely avoids the feeling that the author has lacked the energy or the invention to construct a convincing piece of fluent action. It strikes one as a lazy way of writing, even on the air. Off the air, it seems lazier still. It is true that the six tailors who provide Mr. MacDonagh's narration are lively enough in their stock way, and that eventually he fits them fancifully into the main action, but one is aware of contrivance throughout ; and one suspects that an effort is being made to divert us from observing the thinness of the main theme.

Yet it is not a boring work to read. It is probably a better play for the study than for the theatre, for it lasts but an hour in the hand, while in the theatre it would certainly last two. It is written in what can best be called light verse. Of this Mr. MacDonagh makes a genuine virtue ; he is both fluid and varied, and there are several passages which are vividly memorable :

> There she goes, the door is shut,
> Close your eyes and see her work,
> She tests the blade, the dangerous slut,
> A woman fit for Hare or Burke,
> Opens Larry's waistcoat, coat,
> Opens the shirt and then the vest
> Feels the flesh still warm and soft
> On her husband's hairy chest,
> Reads the chart and marks the spot,
> Puts the knife against the skin,
> Closes her eyes and presses hard
> Feeling the keen blade sinking in. . . .

That is fine. And, for what it is, *Happy as Larry* is very good. But what is it ?

It is this : A group of six tailors on a forestage are discussing marriage. Their remarks are not without a little of that roguish near-bawdiness about the pleasures of two-in-a-bed-o'-winter-nights, a little of which goes a long way (or else not far enough, I am sometimes perplexed to know which). One of them begins to tell the story of his Grand-da, Larry, who had two wives and never decided which of them was good and which was bad. We move back (inset) to Larry, a lusty young husband who discovers a young widow lamenting in a churchyard. She has just buried her husband ; on his deathbed he has made her promise not to marry again till the clay is dry on his grave. When we first see her, she is fanning the grave in order to help things along. (This is one of those actions that only an Irish writer would accuse an Irish character of performing.) Larry takes her off home for a cup of tea. His own wife is the victim of the attentions of a Rossinian doctor ; she spurns them, until, unbeknownst, he poisons Larry ; then, to the astonishment and horror of the neighbours who have come to the wake, she yields to him. Here the tailors take a hand in the action: *They* poison the doctor. Seamus, the doctor's accomplice, urges Mrs. Larry to extract some blood from Larry's heart and pump it into the doctor. This she sets about doing. At the touch of the knife, however, Larry comes, rather dazed, to life again. Mrs. Larry falls dead. The tailors explain to Larry what has happened ; he abjures regular unions forever, and announces his intention of becoming a ruthless sexual terror to the neighbourhood. He is dissuaded from this course by the widow whom he has found drying her husband's grave. All ends happily, and the tailors, having successfully adjusted the past by their timely incursion, return to the present. Curtain.

Is this a good story ? Not very, I should say. Yet I have read the play twice, and do not think I have missed anything, except, possibly, the point. There is a good deal

of briskness about the verse. The whole thing is the kind of thing one would happily put up with in an opera, for which, indeed, the play would provide an admirable libretto. Or, perhaps, the words might be cut entirely, and it might do very well as a ballet. In its present form, as it seems to an English reader, it is invincibly *thin*. Yet the English reader cannot help feeling, also, that perhaps he has missed something that an Irish reader would seize and applaud. Is the English reader being too sophisticated? Or merely too naive?

A QUIET CORNER

HAPPY DAYS! By E. Œ. SOMERVILLE and MARTIN ROSS. (*Longmans Green & Co., 10s. 6d.*)

Reviewed by B. G. MACCARTHY

THE retrospective glance over a full and varied life is always worth while. When, as with these essays, the mind which looks back is richly humorous, steeped in literary associations and enriched by travel, the reader is assured of some very pleasant hours. Dr. Edith Somerville is a citizen of the world—part of which is Ireland. During a long lifetime as a writer, she has maintained always the same point of view. That *élan* which characterised her at the beginning is still her greatest charm as an essayist. In any rôle, in any situation which she describes, she refuses to take herself seriously. She turns upon the human scene (which she sees as a comedy) a shrewdly observant eye. The humour is always mischievous, but never malicious.

Through these pages, through these varied landscapes wanders an *enfant terrible*, albeit an *enfant terrible* with poise and a fine tact. The Victorian background takes shape before us—a period of simple manners, limited reading, heavy meals and family prayers. The amused onlooker sees rows of kneeling domestics from the rear,

and tries not to think of cows motionless in a shed. An ancient brougham sweeps up the avenue, full of earnest ladies paying a formal visit; the young master immediately runs like a wild animal to a sheltering grove; his lady rushes upstairs to a bedroom and goes to ground under an antique four-post bed. She is pursued by an officious parlourmaid who, gazing at a protruding extremity, exclaims: 'Merciful God! Isn't that her Ladyship's foot?' Such anecdotes (and there are many of them) revive the atmosphere of Florry Knox and the Irish R.M. There are some pithy anecdotes which show the Somerville ability to catch a curious sort of truth in a single line of dialogue. Witness the woman who was asked which she loved best, her husband or her son. She replied: 'Me son, of course! Why wouldn't I love me son better than a strange man?'

Writing of the Ireland of her childhood, Dr. Somerville says: 'Life in that quiet corner of Ireland, during the period I am now considering, may be compared to existence in a large, airy, sparsely-furnished room, with plenty of wide windows well-opened, but only one narrow and generally closed door.' Through this door, from the Irish countryside, we see enter only ingratiating horse-copers, robust squireens, Paddy Dawley the earth-stopper, kennel boys, the Mountainy Man, witty retainers. They are amusing, but only in relation to their superiors. They are never seen *per se*. Yet neither can this point of view find identity with English life, from which it remains detached. When it gazes on the world outside this island, it sees it through the light of Irish irony. Such an attitude has deep roots in this country, though not native roots. It has a sincere love of Ireland, though its conception of Ireland would not coincide with that of the majority of the people. Perhaps it is this strong, though shallow, individualism of the Anglo-Irish which, when allied with humour and a true artistic gift, makes possible such a light and finished attitude to life.

SHAW, YEATS AND FLORENCE FARR

BERNARD SHAW AND W. B. YEATS. LETTERS TO FLORENCE FARR. Edited by CLIFFORD BAX. (*Home & Van Thal, 7s. 6d.*)

Reviewed by JOSEPH HONE

FLORENCE FARR was the daughter of a well-known sanitary reformer of the mid-nineteenth century. She went on the stage and married one of the Emerys. Bernard Shaw certainly, and Yeats probably, met her in Morris's house at Hammersmith, where, having left the stage for a time, she was learning the art of embroidery under Morris's daughter, May. Both had love-affairs with her—Yeats's certainly and Shaw's probably being brief—but if there was any rivalry between them it concerned the use of her talent rather than the conquest of her heart. Shaw says in an 'explanatory word' to her letters in this volume that he failed to work up her technique and capacity for hard professional work, and abandoned her to Yeats and 'cantillating,' whereas the *Autobiographies* of Yeats suggest that the boot was on the other leg, and that a Shavian side of her personality, her wit and paradox, defeated the poet's intentions for her. She played the heroine in Shaw's first play *Widowers' Houses* (1892), and in 1899 she came to Dublin to play Aleel in the first production of *The Countess Cathleen*. The letters from Yeats in this volume were mostly written between 1895 and 1908, and those from Shaw begin in 1891 and end in 1910. Shaw's are the better, in Yeats's there is too much anecdote about Abbey Theatre controversies. Florence Farr spent the last years in the East, superintending a college in Jaffna and absorbed in politics and those 'heterogeneous studies' to which, according to Yeats, she was always moved by 'an insatiable, destroying curiosity.' She must have been herself an amusing letter-writer, to judge from some extracts from her correspondence with Yeats, quoted in Mrs. W. B. Yeats's note to the latter's letters.

FROM HUE TO HUE

IN THE KINGDOM OF KERRY. By RICHARD HAYWARD. (*W. Tempest, Dundealgan Press, 17s. 6d.*)

Reviewed by BRYAN MACMAHON

HERE is a book I opened in a spirit of scepticism. Gradually I found a tide of grudged appreciation winning home in me and when I had read through to the end, I confessed myself loaded with the over-compensatory enthusiasm of the convert. The writer's success is wholly due to a fine variety of personal outlook : he is scholarly, indignant, jocular, didactic or informal. He is always studiously discursive.

A prime trick of his is to scoop the best of this and that by letting the professional guide or jarvey say his piece and then indulgently deriding him. This device is so ingenuous that it is instantly drained of all vice. Times there are when the prose is lush and lyrical, but how else save in impatience and in impotence can one grapple with, say, the shafted lights over the Lakes as they shift from hue to hue of the spectrum. Footsore as we are, we are jollied along over Rock, Reek and Maam and though we stumble we grow more respectful of the man before us. The scholar in him shows us the Chi-Rho Crosses in the crumbled abbeys, the jester in him laughs at such phenomena as an unsinkable man ; the zealot in him denounces the intrusion of sham villa on good landscape or the glazed tile on grey graveyard ; the anchorite in him leads us up grass-grown roads and the imp and the acrobat in him takes us out on dizzy pinnacle of Skellig Michael and leaves us there with our vertigo for good company.

Theo. J. Gracey's drawings mate admirably with the text. They are of three types, the purely diagrammatic, the land or seascapes that are subservient to the text and, finally, the independent or whimsical. The whimsical have won my heart.

There is a foreword by Maurice Walsh, who in the dedication is dubbed the father and mother of this book.