

outer world of other men, nature, and eternity. There is torment in this, and few poets knew it better than Muir, but it is also man's only hope of redemption and of happiness.

Professor Butter's short study of Muir and his work is worthy of its subject. He approaches the poems with respect and with intelligence, but he never makes the mistake of trying to separate the writer and the man. Perhaps Muir's own lucid, profound and resonant last poems are the best coda to his Harvard lectures. Their allegiances are often rooted in the past, but their urgency speaks poignantly yet confidently to our contemporary world.

ELIZABETH JENNINGS

A PREFACE TO THE FAERIE QUEEN, by Graham Hough; Duckworth; 25s.

This book seems to be, at least in part, modelled upon Professor C. S. Lewis' *Preface to Paradise Lost*, and like that work, is intended as a corrective. Mr Graham Hough is of opinion that Spenser's great poem is less known and less loved than it should be, and that to restore it to its true position, the reader should be led to approach not through the allegory – the line taken by several recent books – but by way of its genre as a romantic epic.

In setting forth this view the author gives an exposition of the romantic epic as such, and of Spenser's Italian models, which should be exceedingly useful to students, especially those who have no Italian. His insistence on Spenser's essential independence of all the poets and philosophers whose work he draws upon so freely, is timely and important.

But no one can exhaust the riches of the *Faerie Queene* in one book and Mr Graham Hough, being obliged to play down something, has played down the allegory and the special purpose Spenser avows, to which playing down a somewhat Grundyish conception of morals has contributed. Concentration on the narrative and on the human aspect of the persons keeps Mr Graham Hough rather on the surface of the poem, but this may be all the better if the readers whose approach has been thus made easy, are led to seek the depths for themselves.

SR MARY PAULINE, I. B. V. M.

JUST OFF THE AISLE – The Ramblings of a Catholic Critic, by Richard A. Duprey; Newman Press; \$3.95.

Philistinism laced with self-righteousness, a Jansenist conscience and a handbook of moral theology – these, in the opinion of too many Catholics, are the proper qualifications of a critic of the liberal arts. Their possessor is automatically entitled to write letters of bitter complaint to the press about plays or films he has not seen, and books he has no intention of reading; to censure the judgment, taste (and even the good faith) of professional Catholic critics whose lives are spent in grappling thoughtfully with just those problems which (it is assumed)