

The author is a convinced social creditor, but his thesis is presented with a great deal more pretentiousness, pomp and circumstance and false assumption than the writings of Douglas, Soddy and the rest. For example, after describing conditions in Nazi Germany, Dr Robertson continues that 'with the exception of an avowed and open secret police there is nothing in this dismal category which does not apply to Britain'. The reason given for this obviously absurd assumption is that 'since all nations are subject to the same play of financial forces, all must show the identical pattern of behaviour'. One feels that the author has departed from the scientific method early in his work. If he believes that he will believe anything.

The section on money is the usual rehash of material on usury, debt and taxation, and from there the author moves on to a section curiously entitled 'The Mental Mechanism and our servitude thereto'. Early in this section we are told that of all the great faiths that of Christianity has been the most perverted, for which reason the source and centre of the world disorders is to be found in nominally Christian countries'.

There are many interesting and provocative sections in this book, but they are smothered and vitiated by a restricted mode of thinking, represented by the quotations we have already given. The publisher's claim that this is a major social document of vital importance to all concerned with the building of a new society is surely not borne out by reference to the minimal section on religion where it is dismissed in the following terms: 'the "objective" of the mechanism of religion is to foster "unreality" and to inculcate submission to external authority'.

JOHN FITZSIMONS

GO EAST, OLD MAN. By Vernon Bartlett. (Latimer House; 9s. 6d.)

Discoursing at large on the East is a dangerous habit unless your audience consists of cronies who can interrupt you with their own tit-bits of experience. You are apt to meet that glassy look that denotes boredom. The trouble is that for the stay-at-home there are altogether too much strangeness and diversity in eastern life. They give him indigestion.

Mr Vernon Bartlett is too experienced a raconteur to fall into this trap (though even he comes near it sometimes when the reader is led from rich lunch to richer dinner through a welter of unimaginable scenery and architecture). He has a light touch and knows how to vary his narrative with good stories and ridiculous situations, to say nothing of his sorties into politics and social problems.

The book is written in diary form, which has advantages. It makes possible sudden stops and new beginnings, and more ground is covered to the page. It is moreover the diary of a convalescent, and convalescents have a way of mingling irritation with golden enjoyment. The reader is likely to pass through similar moods.

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