

looked faintly epicene, The ladies had chubby, pear-shaped faces, blackened teeth; their eyes were invisible slits, eyebrows shaved and smudged-in high up on the forehead; their hair falling down to the ground in a long black cascade.

We understand, too, something of the overwhelmingly important part played by aesthetic discrimination in the lives of these people. Success in love, prospects of promotion, depended chiefly on the quality of one's calligraphy, one's ability to distinguish minutely between different blends of incense, the deftness with which one could at a moment's notice turn out thirty-one syllable poems, the delicacy with which one could allude to other well known poems in the common educated body of knowledge.

We understand too how such considerations came to take precedence over the weightier matters of learning, religion and government. Dr Morris's chapters on religion and superstition are particularly illuminating, for he shows us how the complex mingling of Tantric Buddhist spells, Shinto beliefs in ritual defilement, directional taboos deriving from Chinese Taoism and a host of archaic beliefs in malevolent spirits encumbered the lives of Prince Genji and

his associates, but brought them little comfort in the face of calamity and misery. We see the bottom of melancholy, the sense of impending decline, which underlay the colours and the scents.

Indeed Dr Morris shows clearly how shaky were the foundations of this exquisite community, moral, spiritual and economic, and how inevitably it should have disappeared by the end of the twelfth century in civil war and a new military order. Disappeared, too, with curious completeness. Little of it survives today, and no single thing which now is popularly considered typically 'Japanese' even existed in the world of the 'Shining Prince'.

I should hasten to say that one need not have read the *Tale of Genji* in order to find this book fascinating. Those who know nothing of Japan could be enthralled by Dr Morris's account of this vanished society. Those who know something of the difficulties of tenth-century Japanese prose will be quick to accord Dr Morris's imaginative scholarship the respect it deserves. But the book is so elegantly and lucidly written that we tend to forget the immense amount of reading and research which has gone into the making of it.

*Carmen Blacker*

THE FUTURE OF MAN by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, translated by Norman Denny; *Collins, 30s.*

The publication, in 1959, of Teilhard's *L'Avenir de L'Homme* was more or less contemporaneous with the Reith Lectures entitled 'The Future of Man', given by Dr P. B. Medawar who has subsequently made himself the foremost (not to say most forthright) critic of Teilhard's thought in this country. The situation has been intriguing from the beginning: interest is further heightened by the appearance now of an English version

admirably done.

Two of the most significant achievements of nineteenth-century science were, firstly, the formulation of the laws of classical thermodynamics (with strict demonstration of their validity by observation and experiment as required for a 'law' of science), and, secondly, the first convincing enunciation of the theory of evolution (despite all the woolliness inescapably

associated with a scientific 'theory' dealing with matters infinitely more complex than simple heat-exchanges). Earlier biologists thought of evolution as progress in some real sense. It has been left to biologists of this century to look on evolution as no more than a special branch of physical science, subject always, in particular, to 'the second law of thermodynamics'. Ignorance of this law, it will be recalled, is regarded by C. P. Snow as a shortcoming in the 'literate' to be compared with frank illiteracy in the 'numerate'. The law has to do, of course, with the inevitable increase in entropy, or 'sameness' in respect of energy-levels, in any closed physical system. There may be arts-men today who were stimulated by Snow to look the matter up, but even in the days when it would have been hard to find non-scientists who could say anything very sensible about the 'second law', its implications were in fact well-understood by many playwrights and novelists. The scientists' message, based on this law, that man's future is ultimately of the bleakest kind (however enthusiastic might be an individual scientist's advice on how best to pass the time away before the species goes the way of others to degradation and annihilation), is surely at the root of much of the sick pessimism

to be seen in twentieth-century culture.

The book under review consists of a collection of Teilhard's articles and addresses written over a period of thirty-five years. They are devoted to the implications of a new scientific law, which he ultimately formulated (again with strict demonstration on the basis of observation) as the 'law of increasing complexity-consciousness'. In such a collection there is bound to be a certain amount of overlap and repetition; the quality varies, partly according to whether the article was published in his lifetime or not. But the total effect is very impressive: the law which bears his name will in time be found to be as valid as the 'second law', and as far more significant for man. Its implications will revolutionize our understanding of nature, and give new hope to a world that has suffered too much from earlier and less adequate understandings.

I predict that this work will establish Teilhard even more firmly in this country as a thinker and writer of genius. Those who found *The Phenomenon of Man* difficult to understand, will find here the essential meaning of the former work, expressed in a way that cannot fail both to excite the imagination and appeal to the intellect.

*Bernard Towers*

ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE AT HARVARD. The Roman Catholic – Protestant Colloquium, edited by Samuel H. Miller and G. Ernest Wright; *Harvard University Press and Oxford University Press, 40s.*

This Harvard Colloquium is an important exemplar of ecumenical dialogue. It took place in March 1963, between the first and second sessions of Vatican II and before the death of Pope John XXIII. It was essentially a meeting of academics, scholars and specialists, some one hundred and sixty of them, divided about equally between Protestants and Roman Catholics; among the

participants however were Greek Orthodox (including Dr Georges Florovsky) and Episcopalians. The public addresses were roughly divided between biblical studies, the nature of reform in the Church, word and sacrament in Protestant worship, and morality and the exercise of conscience in a pluralistic society.

The colloquium was divided into four seminars,