

The introduction of analogies between Government and personal economic problems is useful, because it will lead to a better understanding of current difficulties. The public, ever awed by the self-styled experts, is inclined to treat matters of National Economy as entirely beyond comprehension, and content to leave them in what often prove to be incapable hands.

It is only when the author leaves his chosen road and ventures to offer Biblical quotations as justification for present-day Banking that he invites criticism. If the Banking system needs defence, nothing will be gained from such a method. In fact, it is likely to be worsted in contests of this kind. The occasional ethical expeditions do not, however, prevent the book from being eminently readable and a fund of common-sense.

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MODERN WELSH POETRY. Edited by Keidrych Rhys. (Faber; 6s.).
POEMS. By Lynette Roberts. (Faber; 6s.).

'English poems by contemporary poets of Welsh extraction' would be an accurate, if clumsy, title for Mr. Rhys's anthology. The exact quality of such a common denominator is hard to discover. True, there are bits of manifest Welsh dotted about these poems: place-names, slang, a cryptic blasphemy. But for the most part there is nothing to distinguish these 'Welsh' poets from any Englishman, American or Scot whose poetical manners meet with the approval of, say, *Poetry* (London) or *Penguin New Writing*.

A Welsh contribution to English poetry must mean more than private wisecracks with a Welsh accent. Many of Mr. Rhys's friends could with profit undergo the traditional discipline of the *cynghanedd*, with its metrical austerity and care for the *depth* of words. Fortunately the shoddy programme pieces in the anthology are more than redeemed by the work of such a poet as Alun Lewis, whose death in India is a major loss to poetry. His modest mind and careful imagery remind one strangely of another Welshman killed in another war, and Lewis's poem to Edward Thomas printed here is a moving epitaph to both poets.

'Climbing the steep path through the copse I knew
My cares weighed heavily as yours, my gift
Much less, my hope
No more than yours.'

Miss Roberts, both as a member of the choir as well as a solo performer in her *Poems*, illustrates very well what an Anglo-Welsh poet can hope to achieve. She has the initial advantage of a mature mind, a lively curiosity ('*I was one of these / Always observant and slightly obscure*') and the rare gift of seeming to make all her words new ('*Rose-hips red as braziers shine from the hedges*'; '*Plains of space, free, sky-free, lifting a green tree on to a great*

plain'; 'Dead as icebone breaking the hedge'). And her sharp understanding of Welsh metrical forms gives a distinctive shape to her poetry; she uses an idiom and never an accent. Writing in English, she has, as she should have, a proper regard for the integrity of that language. But she comes to it fresh, inquisitive, with a Welsh memory. Her English readers should be glad. I.E.

THE INNOVATOR. By John Brett Robey. (Faber; 10s. 6d.).

Its title would hardly suggest that *The Innovator* is a novel concerned with the events leading up to the Crucifixion of Our Lord. It is indeed a strikingly original essay in a medium that invites disaster. Almost any scriptural novel at once induces a feeling of resentment. Quite apart from the Christian's sense of reverence towards the God-given record of the Bible, there is its unparalleled literary economy. To add to the story is to destroy it. One has only to think of *Hall Caine*, not to speak of the exquisitely written blasphemies of *George Moore*.

Mr. Robey's novel deals with the first four days of Holy Week, and in particular with the deliberations of the Sanhedrim. He draws a clear picture of the conflicting loyalties of the Jewish leaders and he makes such figures as *Annas* and *Caiaphas* consistent with the basic account of the evangelists. Many of the minor characters are excellently conceived: *Hayyim*, the cynical councillor; *Susannah*, the secret believer in the Messiah; the crude servants. Perhaps the novel's chief achievement is the character—for as such it emerges—of the City of Jerusalem. It comes to life with all its crowded humanity, its oriental splendour and squalor, the city of David and the city of the Roman soldiery. Most wisely Mr. Robey only introduces our Lord at the end, before the Sanhedrim at night; and the only words that are uttered by Him are those we already know.

Some of the incidental detail of *The Innovator*, however, seems to reveal a failure in discrimination. As realistic writing it is successful enough, but it would better serve a Hollywood film-scenario than a novel which, because of its theme, demands absolute singleness of mind. I.E.

NO DREAMERS WEAK. By Michael de la Bedoyere. (John Miles; 9s.).

At the present critical moment in world history the questions which Mr. de la Bedoyere poses and discusses are of the first importance. Never has it been so urgent that we should clear our minds concerning the spiritual and moral principles which should regulate international relations, and on the way in which Christian principles can be applied to world events. Discussion is heard on all sides at present on the political and economic background of European problems, but far less interest is shown in the more fundamental principles