

Great strain on the relations between chiefs and their people is also caused by the operation of the agricultural, veterinary and health regulations. It should be remembered that very often these have only been stringently applied since 1945 and there is a great deal of evidence from all over British Africa to show that they, more than any other single factor, have been responsible for uniting the peasants on whom they bear within the new African political parties.

Such problems inherent to the policy of indirect rule will have to be faced by the forthcoming independent governments and therefore the documentation provided by this book makes it relevant reading for anyone interested in the future as well as the past of Africa.

W. J. ARGYLE

THE VICTORIANS. By Sir Charles Petric. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 30s.)

The bigger the subject, the more books may (if they are good ones) be written on it. Once the history of the jute industry in early Hanoverian Dundee has been 'done', it need never be done again. But 'the Victorians', or even just 'the social transformation' over which they and the Edwardians presided—for how many books of the impressionistic and anthological kinds on such limitless themes is there not room? G. M. Young's is of course the nonpareil, but there are many others and will be many more. It is in fact impossible for anyone of keen and interesting mind not to bring up something new, or throw new lights on old facts. But, alas! Sir Charles Petric has not managed to do so. He has little new to say; his anecdotes are most of them old chestnuts; and the principles that underlie his selection of material are, to say the least, obscure. Even the illustrations are poor. Who is to read this harmless, aimless book? It's no good for students. Even as an 'appetizer' it won't do, for it is far too dull. Presumably Sir Charles's books find those readers among the retired and the leisured in whose hearts sound chords readily responsive to his simple interest in such things as royalty, aristocracy, society gossip, *bons mots*, startling contrasts, sport, virtue, and amateurism. If they don't know as much about nineteenth-century society as may be learnt from a good sixth-form text book, then this book may teach them something; but they'll need plenty of enthusiasm for its author and his approach to carry them through it.

G. F. A. BEST

IN DEFENSE OF REASON. By Yvor Winters. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 42s.)

If the first credential we demand of a critic, before we listen to his rationale, is that he should tell us what particular writers he thinks are good writers, Professor Winters has never been backward in presenting it: Elizabeth Daryush, for example, 'the finest British poet since T. Sturge Moore'; Adelaide Crapsey, 'who is certainly an immortal poet, and who has long been one of the most famous poets of our century'; and of course his wife, Janet Lewis, 'one of the best poets of her generation, as well as one of the best fictionists'.