

clearer line had been drawn between fact, deduction and surmise. Many corrections of detail are to be expected in such a work, but there is no excuse for the irrelevant or superfluous remarks that are sometimes dragged in. What Shakespeare said about Fitzwilliam does not matter; we want Fineux's own words without an allusion to radicalism; the connexion between Baynham and Don Quixote is not apparent; it is surprising to learn that Cromwell, "that good parliamentarian, was also a Welshman," and still more surprising to find the statement in a notice of David Cecil.

Numerous errors of fact and judgment stand out in this volume. But when all is said, historians of parliament and of the fifteenth century will owe to Col. Wedgwood and his collaborator a heavy debt for the enthusiasm and labour that have gone to make this unique and fascinating volume. Elsewhere comparison has been made between it and the D.N.B. and N.E.D. In bulk, scope and potentiality the comparison is justified. We can only hope that Col. Wedgwood will take every possible step to ensure that contrast between them in respect of scholarship shall be reduced to a minimum.

S. B. CHRIMES

GREEN NATURE

Through the Woods. By H. E. BATES. With 73 Engravings on Wood by AGNES MILLER PARKER. *Gollancz.* 10s. 6d.

This book is a continuous essay winding its way like an intimate path through the English woodland from April to April. The author takes the lead, with his associate throwing out her charming little asides. They are the best work she has done, adding to her meticulous watchmaker skill a depth and freedom of tone and design. I have never before seen the texture of fur so sympathetically suggested in woodcut. Miss Parker is perhaps not quite so successful in her birds. They are sometimes a little too solid and carved. But there is one full-page plate in this book, a squirrel running down a bough of pine, amid cones and leaves, which gives one a sense of perfection. The air-fluffed fur, the skin and muscles beneath it, the nervous hesitation and grip upon the branch, all are expressed with an admirable economy of stroke.

The book has obviously been a holiday task for Mr. Bates, a release from the rigours of fiction. He has let himself go. But he is artist enough to make his self-release a gesture of discipline and authority. His prose retains its early fancifulness, but it is now restrained, and augmented with a deeper quality, mature experience one might call it, though that is hardly a definite enough phrase for a critic to indulge in. But the additional muscular force, the greater speed and hardness of Mr. Bates's paragraphic structure, so notable in his *House of Women*, is immediately evident in this essay, where he might have been expected to relax for a few sensuous moments with his muse's first love, green Nature, the siren of his early tales.

It is no exaggeration to say that now, at least in the power of evoking the scent, touch, sound and movement of the English scene, Mr. Bates is comparable to W. H. Hudson. He has a like faculty for suggesting lavishness by means of a simple statement, unadorned with adjectives. He had learned to balance his sensuous excitements of eye and ear against an ordered curiosity. He controls his rather dangerous, Keats-like responses to immediate impressions, as it were setting them aside to cool while he finds a place for them in his pattern. The intellectual intervention, paradoxically, only adds to the richness of the material, just as an ecstasy can often be heightened by sceptical examination. Here is an illustration of what I mean. The passage is, indeed, symbolical of the process by which he has perfected it.

This fusion of wood and water is an entrancing thing. Without the wood the stream would be nothing: a mere thin watercourse winding through its flat meadows. Without the water the wood, on its slope and with its air of quietness and mystery and of being a world within itself, could not help being a constantly delightful thing. But water and wood, together, shading and watering and bounding each other, each gives to the other something which the other does not possess, the wood giving to the stream something solid and shadowy and immemorial, the stream giving to the wood all the incomparable movement and twinkling transience of moving water, the tree shadows standing deep in the stream, the reflection of sunlight flickering a kind of water-light up into the shadowy branches of pine and alder. The wood and the water are here, in fact, for each other and with each other. It is a fusion that is almost perfect.

With the technique that can turn such a paragraph as that, so nicely balanced, the art so well hidden, Mr. Bates can explore

where he likes, not only in the dark places of nature, but also of the mind. Here is an example of both being done together, the mental idiosyncrasy being made to re-create the scene; cause and effect mutually evocative.

At one period of my life I did much walking by night: long vigorous walks out of the town into the surrounding country. It was a country that was almost treeless, but if I walked far enough I reached woods. Reaching them, I at once used to turn back. They had some powerful quality of darkness, some awful intimidating blackness that I could not face. I have been in woods too by day when I have been glad to get out of them again, to see the sky. It may indeed be that shutting out of the sky that feeds fear. There is an extraordinary comfort in the sight of the day, of clouds and sun by day, of starlight especially by night. Space and distance kill fear at once. It flourishes on littleness and confinement, and it is in the little spaces under the confined branches of woods that it flourishes at times almost into terror.

One could give many pictures from this book; cottage and pub interiors, country folk, foxes, birds, music of wind and branch, texture of mushrooms, the evil habits of game-keepers, a thousand-and-one facets of rustic life. They would all serve to explain why Mr. Bates is unique in his generation, a generation usually somewhat bored by nature-writers, being more concerned at the moment with economic and political frontiers than with what lies behind them.

RICHARD CHURCH

THE PEACE BABEL

Nearing the Abyss. By LORD DAVIES. *Constable.* 3s. 6d.

The Alternative to War. By CHARLES RODEN BUXTON. *Allen and Unwin.* 4s. 6d.

Alternative to Rearmament. By JONATHAN GRIFFIN. *Macmillan.* 6s.

Rumours of war, conscription decrees, speeches at Conservative Conferences, all act as daily reminders of how deadly was the blow which the fall of Addis Ababa dealt to the whole flimsy edifice of collective peace. Mr. Neville Chamberlain has soon managed to console himself by gloating over his new air-force of "terrific striking power." The Archbishop of Canterbury has informed his flock that Christian duty now demands, not merely that we should take steps to prevent our wives and sisters from being raped, but also that we should guard against the more likely occurrence of our trade routes being tampered with. Church and State are busy patching up their old unholy alliance on the 1914 model. Others are eager to deduce from the Abyssinian fiasco a less distressing moral. This is the purpose of these three books. Each author is convinced that if only the course which he advocates were adopted something might be saved from the wreck.

Lord Davies has written a critical essay on League machinery. The structure set up in 1918 must be overhauled and our immediate efforts should be concentrated on the establishment of an Equity Tribunal and an International Police Force. By these means the League may gradually approximate more closely to the federal ideal. This dissertation on the implications of federalism is wholly admirable, but to discuss peace in such terms begs the real question. Lord Davies himself points out that in the early days there was a conflict between the French idea of "a League fully armed" and the British conception of a Round Table for discussion with the sanctions issue carefully secluded in the background. He even quotes Sir John Simon. "It is not the Anglo-Saxon habit to make defined engagements for undefined circumstances." This statement amounts to a categorical repudiation of the Covenant. Just at the moment, therefore, a treatise on Anglo-Saxon habits would have been more serviceable than a study of Genevan constitutions. Mr. Buxton's solution is hardly more realistic. The League has failed in its endeavours to maintain an unjust *status quo*. It has not failed in its task of securing justice among nations, because this work has never been attempted. A World Conference must be called, and a sincere effort made to satisfy the economic and colonial demands of the have-not powers. Such a Conference would, in fact, secure neither peace nor justice. For instance, what right has Mr. Buxton to class Russia, robbed and humiliated at the end of the war, as a satisfied nation? When does a have become a have-not power? There is only one answer; when its rulers squeal and bluster and make their followers prefer guns to butter. If the causes of war are economic, they must be shown to depend on the working of the social system, not on some crude assessment of geographical opportunities. Finally, Mr. Griffin's solution of purely defensive armaments. He has ransacked the pronouncements of every military strategist in three continents