

indeed the gallant fellows, who took part, a sense of playing the game impervious to what lesser breeds considered justice, a response to the illusion that English women and children were in danger. Lofty talk went with sharp practice, and both met their match, for the burghers quoted the Bible and proved rather more slim. Oom Paul was a good hand at throwing the lions to the Christians.

The Uitlanders who were to be rescued lost their nerve, and their rescuers, whose tide was suitably commemorated in the doggerel of Alfred Austin, the Poet Laureate, were neatly rounded up, to face the old truth, which had vexed moralists and churchmen before them, that rebellion is a crime until it succeeds. This attempt was muffed from the start, and its end was not even punctuated by firing squads. Considering the provocation, the Boers were moderate; rough, of course, but not vindictive. The Transvaal and Orange Free State Republics included sums of 3s. 3d. and 19s. 1d. in their claims for damages.

The complicity of British officials on the spot was clear: how far did it extend to the Colonial Secretary? The chief actor in Lady Pakenham's fascinating study is Joseph Chamberlain himself. She writes as an insider to the houses of the Birmingham patricians, her appreciation is at once dry and generous, and her irony does not flaw her sympathy as she follows the proceedings of the Committee of Inquiry. Chamberlain emerged unscathed, mainly because he had the majority of his countrymen behind him after the Kaiser's telegram, partly because the members of the tribunal were not disposed to be such bounders as to probe into the private affairs of fellow-members of the club, partly because the splendid Miss Shaw—the real heroine of the story—played the poor weak woman to their brandy-and-seltzer chivalry and effectively hid the baby in the basement of *The Times* and the Colonial Office.

There was a sort of amiable barbarianism about the whole amateurish affair. It was the prelude to the South African War, the last of the gentlemen's wars, so General Fuller entitles it, and that was settled by a treaty on which the victors congratulated themselves on their combination of statesmanship and sportsmanship. 'But far-seeing?' Lady Pakenham asks. 'Looking back it is at least arguable that they were generous to a fault. The British people at home, in their eagerness to experience the pleasant freedom which comes from a sin expiated, forgot that duty bound them to other races in South Africa besides the Boers.' Instead of the present steam-roller of a Union, a slowly-matured federal constitution would perhaps be better able to respect the differences of race and colour.

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

THE MOVEMENT OF WORLD REVOLUTION. By Christopher Dawson. (Sheed and Ward; 13s. 6d.)

At the first reading this volume would seem to consist of a series of detached studies. It begins with an essay on the relation between European history and world history which is one of the most brilliant that Mr Dawson has ever composed. It closes with sixty pages entitled 'Asia and the West',

which is partly an expansion, partly a re-print, of 'The Revolt of Asia', published three years ago. In between there are lectures and articles on the Renaissance and the Reformation, on Rationalism and on the world expansion of Western ideologies and of Christian tenets. All are on the same high level; few authors have evaded so successfully and so long any lapse into the second-rate.

It is only gradually that an underlying unity of theme becomes apparent. It is a prolegomenon to a study of the possible creation of a new world culture through the transforming force of Western technology. Of course it can only be a prolegomenon. There is only a passing reference to Mehmet Ali, who as Napoleon's heir in Egypt shares with him the responsibility for the creation of the modern Middle East. The problems of New Africa stay unexplored. But the importance of *The Movement of World Revolution* lies in what it foreshadows. It would seem to be a necessary prelude to Mr Dawson's greatest book since *The Making of Europe*.

GERVASE MATHIEW, O.P.

THE VOICE OF POETRY IN THE CONVERSATION OF MANKIND. By Michael Oakshott. (Bowes and Bowes; 10s. 6d.)

There is nothing in this witty essay more accurate than the account of poetic activity or more engaging than the refusal to allow it to be justified in the language of practical or scientific activity. But it may be wondered in the end whether Professor Oakshott has not justified the two latter in terms of poetic activity. If there is nothing but activity, the self and the not-self (the images) generating one another spontaneously, and each activity is distinguished by the kind of images which partner it, what happens when they speak in turn and listen to one another? According to Professor Oakshott, not argument leading to conclusions since this would reduce them all to science, nor persuasion leading to profit, since this would reduce them all to practice, but conversation—for in this 'different universes of discourse meet, acknowledge each other and enjoy an oblique relationship which neither requires nor forecasts their being assimilated to one another'. But this too, if it is to be a conversation and not a shouting match, needs a *formalis ratio*; the participants will ask whether the others are relevant or irrelevant, or, better still, interesting or boring. It then begins to sound very much like the description of poetic activity; 'in this process images may generate one another, they may modify and fuse with one another, but no premeditated achievement is pursued. . . . At every turn what impels the activity and gives it what coherence it may possess, is the delight offered and come upon in this perpetually extending partnership between the contemplating self and its images.' Change the word 'self' to 'selves' in the last sentence and you have a description of the conversation. The conversation itself then is meta-poetic activity. It is quite an achievement to have shown this.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.