

catastrophe. The way is clear for a new beginning, for a return to the obedience of the old and fundamental laws of Germany's historical existence. The "Prussian Revolution," of which National Socialism was the natural (though not inevitable) final consequence, has ended in failure—now the old order, whose undying vitality has been proved by the witness of so many prophets and martyrs, and for which Thieme himself gives testimony, can be re-established.

In this sense, Herr Thieme regards National Socialism as a purely German phenomenon, the final product of the German political mind's fatal aberration. He does not realise—as indeed few of us did in 1940—that it is merely one form of a much more general perversion, of an all-pervading and infectious disease, against which no community is immune. Had he seen this, he would perhaps have been a little less confident about the old German order's eventual restoration, and consequently more explicit in his programmatic passages. As they stand, they will leave his followers somewhat dissatisfied, while exposing him to cheap attack from his adversaries. If there should be a second edition of this book, one would wish to see the Postscript amplified in this direction, together with a shortening of some of the sentences (one of these rambling constructions, on page 120, spreads itself out over 23 lines of fairly small, if beautifully readable, print!).

One thing might be said in conclusion: books about contemporary affairs can neither be fully accurate in their descriptions, nor fully convincing in their conclusions, unless they accept as true the word of Pope Pius XI: "Totalitarianism is the heresy of the 20th Century." Herr Thieme, who with his book has set such high standards of objectivity, of truthfulness, accuracy, and logic in argument to all those, who after him will wish to write about the phenomenon of National Socialism, could—in the opinion of this reviewer—still improve on them, if he would rewrite some of it in the light of this papal utterance.

DR. IUR. ERICH M. VERMEEREN.

THE ARTISTS OF THE WINCHESTER BIBLE. By Walter Oakeshott. (Faber; 10s. 6d.).

The Winchester Bible is perhaps the greatest monument remaining from the 12th cent. English art. The fact that it took three generations to complete its illuminations gives it a primary value for the art changes in taste and style in one of the chief art centres in Europe between 1140 and 1225.

Mr. Oakeshott has published a selection from the illuminations in forty-four plates, and has added twenty-two pages as introduction to them. The only criticisms that can be made of the present volume is that the plates are too few and the preface too short; the first was perhaps unavoidable owing the present difficulties in production; the second is so much to be regretted precisely because of Mr. Oakeshott's minutely careful scholarship and *expertise*.

The illuminations fall naturally into two periods. The style most admired at St. Swithin's, Winchester, between 1140 and 1165 was a new amalgam of elements long current in the North. There seem clear links with the pre-conquest school at Winchester, the standards of taste if not "English" are at least markedly Anglo-Norman. But from 1165 the work seems more international; it seems to follow an English dialect in international art forms, but it is no longer part of an age old and sophisticated vernacular. For the change in art forms happens to coincide with the change in culture as Anglo-Norman England develops in the new world of the Angevin empire. The Angevin contacts to the South and East bring with them fresh influences from 12th century Constantinople, passing North-West through the Angevin links with the Court at Palermo and perhaps through a direct traffic in textiles. And then a generation later something of the new Gothic spirit of the Ile de France comes down to Winchester, perhaps through Westminster. It could be maintained that no book published in the last 15 years has conveyed so perfectly the changes in 12th century English history.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

RIME, GENTLEMEN, PLEASE. By Robert Farren. (Sheed & Ward; 5s.).  
SELECTED POEMS. By George Every, J. D. C. Pellow and S. L. Bethell. (Staples Press; 6s.).

Robert Farren is an Irish Catholic poet. His first two volumes, *Thronging Feet* and *Time's Wall Asunder*, showed him to belong to the Gaelic tradition of such bards as Aonghus O Dálaigh and Mac-Aingil. In his third work, *The First Exile*, he re-told the story of Saint Colmcille, and, in a sequence of over seventy poems, proved himself master of a multitude of different verse-forms. In this respect, his virtuosity is similar to that of the contemporary Welsh poet, Vernon Watkins. Now in his latest collection, *Rime, Gentlemen, Please*, he presents a new facet of himself: that of satirist and lampoonist. And here, like Yeats, his ambition has run too far ahead of his potentiality: good poets are seldom lampoonists and good lampoonists seldom poets, for satire, if it is to be trenchant, is best confined to the short clipped jingle, and not to lines as unwieldily as

I hear, entranced, my neighbour's scale-descending  
snore like a car-exhaust groan down the street.

The clumsiness of the image only helps to recall Louis MacNeice's better treatment of a similar theme in *Sunday Morning*. Yet, despite this apparent weakness, there is much compensation to be found in Farren's poems, *The Dancer* and on the *Death of a Sculptor*. There is a particular precision about them which not only emphasises their craftsmanship, but also increases their lyrical effect upon the reader. He is a man to whom poetry comes "like a redwing hopping the hedge for haws." Anything attracts him: a water-colour morning, a shrub like a flag-box, men climbing the Matterhorn, cloud-aluminium or yellow-taloned thunder. He is