

A HANDBOOK OF PRINTING TYPES WITH NOTES ON THE STYLE OF COMPOSITION AND GRAPHIC PROCESSES USED BY COWELLS. W. S. Cowell Ltd. (Faber; 12s. 6d.)

It has become a habit to decry the state of modern printing and publishing as undermined by paper and labour shortages. But the very scarcity of books and good printing seems to have revived interest in the art. It is certainly encouraging that a firm of printers can today expect the general public to spend twelve-and-six on a book of their type faces and house rules. The firm present only ten composing faces, but they are the choicest—though some will be disappointed not to discover Imprint among them. And the whole presentation is of such excellence that it will surely encourage many a general reader who knows nothing of the art to take an interest in it and to treat the printed page as something more than a mere utility. There are useful notes on the house style, preparation of 'copy' for the press and proof correcting, with acknowledgments to Oliver Simon's book on typography which has here evidently exercised considerable influence.

Finally the reproduction of a large number of illustrations of various processes and the notes on the methods employed are of exceptional interest. This is a book to revive the spirits of any who are dejected by the present prospect of the arts and crafts as being ruined by mechanism.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

LETTERS TO A SISTER. By Christopher Hollis. (Hollis and Carter; 8s. 6d.)

The completion of the trilogy of *Death of a Gentleman* and *Fossett's Memory* makes very pleasant reading but leaves the reviewer bewildered if not exasperated. In a series of letters to Robert Fossett's widow, another English gentleman gives his views on life, politics, art, education, the future generation, with the confidence born of a long tradition, but lightly and artlessly as befits both the writer and his chosen means of communication. But such views and such manners belong to a generation rapidly becoming extinct, and a part of the charm of these letters lies in their power to stir those of us who were born too late to be properly aware of the Edwardian security, too early to understand the emerging world of the troglodytes. They are also welcome, because they are expressive at not too deep a level of the perennial philosophy—in the widest possible sense of that word. The picture is unquestionably authentic, and as such makes one wonder if life may not be lived wholly on the plane of natural virtue after all. That is why it is also an exasperating book. As a character in a novel, Peter Hartington-Smith would be acceptable; there are people who at least *seem* like him and who behave in accordance with his outlook. On the other hand, if Mr Hollis had given these views as his own in a more definitely philosophical work

or even in a series of essays it would have been legitimate to ask, just where does the Catholic Church come into the picture? One cannot help regretting that more of its supernatural force is not indicated in these non-committal—perhaps ‘irresponsible’ is less than just to the real author—letters. Michael Paravane, the Catholic, is a very elusive figure and typical—if at all—of a very small group; on p. 69 Peter catches a glimpse of the limitations of merely natural reasoning and in the style there is an echo of Belloc, but it is only an echo and the original thunder is harmlessly distant. Surely, if those of us who were born into the age of security are at a loss to understand younger lives jerked from crisis to crisis—the Russian Revolution, the Wall Street Crash, Hitler, and the atom bomb—we may be allowed to cultivate our garden: but in the spirit of St Benedict, not of Candide.

EDWARD QUINN.

PHYSICS AND EXPERIENCE. By Bertrand Russell. (Henry Sidgwick lecture; Cambridge, 1946; 1s. 6d.)

Lord Russell's opening paragraph might lead one to hope that he intended to deal with the metaphysical presuppositions of the inductive method used by physical science. But he proceeds to state his problem somewhat as follows. External objects, if it be assumed that metaphysics is essentially correct in its account of them, are very unlike what we perceive. But physics is built on inferences from perception. How can we account for the discrepancy? Russell then discusses perception and the relation of mind to matter, with his usual combination of logical acumen and neglect of metaphysics.

He takes for granted the truths of physics and does not discuss their origin. To resolve his problem it would seem essential, however, to consider first the method of physics, and the kind of knowledge to be expected from such a method. Since the method is quantitative, based on measurement, it can only issue in a mathematical account of nature; it is therefore not surprising that colours, scents and sounds (for example) are omitted. Incidentally the method cannot proceed unless we have independent grounds for believing its basic assumption, namely that there is order in nature; and such grounds can only be metaphysical.

E.F.C.

PUZZLED PEOPLE. By Mass-Observation. (Gollancz; 7s. 6d.)

‘A study in popular attitudes to religion, ethics, progress and politics’, or, more briefly, ‘Well, I don't know’—the representative answer to Mass-Observation's enquiries in a London suburb. The Ethical Union, which sponsored the enquiries, concludes that ‘the principles of Christianity and the principles of liberal rationalism have failed to save the masses from desultory living’, and hopes that ‘transforming the conditions of life and thought . . . by wise and