

From the first mutterings of Protection and Tariff Reform to the dummy enactment of Home Rule, September 1914, we are escorted by a highly informed guide and even taken behind the scenes of many dramatic encounters. Yet sensation is avoided. Even Parnell's outrageous treatment of his followers in his last years is soft-pedalled, though he upset almost permanently the temper of a whole nation. In these days when the whole temper of Europe has been altered for the worse by a maniac's grievance it looks like a venial sin, but it is a good historian's part to use the scales of eternal justice and to point the right and wrong of events. There be historians who tell us that moral standards vary or soften according to the age. Not so, say we. The less historians they.

Manning and Gladstone are both at their best in their 'statecraft' correspondence, and it softens the asperities of partisanship to note how much the Liberal Party did in its great days for the progress of the nation. The great work came to a head after the Grand Old Man was in his grave, when Lloyd George in the great and acrimonious debate on the Welsh Church Bill presented us with the historic phrase that the Tory opposition (hereditary holders of Church lands) had *their hands dripping with the fat of sacrilege*. Screeching disclaimers were as summer wind in the faces of those facts which the author presents to justify the great Welshman's 'jewel five words long.'

Never to be ignored either is the account of what the Irish members did even for Empire Trade and Religious Education. The good that parties do is oft interred with their bones. So shall it not be while books like this are valued for their truth even more than for their arrangement or their style; both of these, in this neat five shilling tract, most clear and most alluring.

JOHN O'CONNOR.

PRINCIPLES OF PROSPERITY. By Francis W. Hirst. (Hollis and Carter; 8s. 6d.).

Among the more vociferous of our post-war planners there is a growing spirit of financial irresponsibility; due, no doubt, to the astronomical budgets of war-time. A tentative suggestion that their most hare-brained schemes are not economically practical, calls forth a tirade against 'vested interests' and 'forces of reaction.' Mr. Hirst cannot be said to fit either of these vague abusive terms, and the Utopians would benefit from a glance through his criticisms. The book is an attempt to translate the essentials of Political Economy into terms that will be readily understood by the ordinary citizen. It is, after all, the ordinary citizen who will be victimised by the lightning cures of the political quack; and his best protection is a knowledge of a more orthodox remedy. The theory that everybody and everything can be subsidised from a bottomless public purse is a prevalent one; the explosion of that theory by the author is timely, and amply justifies any recommendation of this publication.

The introduction of analogies between Government and personal economic problems is useful, because it will lead to a better understanding of current difficulties. The public, ever awed by the self-styled experts, is inclined to treat matters of National Economy as entirely beyond comprehension, and content to leave them in what often prove to be incapable hands.

It is only when the author leaves his chosen road and ventures to offer Biblical quotations as justification for present-day Banking that he invites criticism. If the Banking system needs defence, nothing will be gained from such a method. In fact, it is likely to be worsted in contests of this kind. The occasional ethical expeditions do not, however, prevent the book from being eminently readable and a fund of common-sense.

MAURICE McLOUGHLIN.

MODERN WELSH POETRY. Edited by Keidrych Rhys. (Faber; 6s.).  
POEMS. By Lynette Roberts. (Faber; 6s.).

'English poems by contemporary poets of Welsh extraction' would be an accurate, if clumsy, title for Mr. Rhys's anthology. The exact quality of such a common denominator is hard to discover. True, there are bits of manifest Welsh dotted about these poems: place-names, slang, a cryptic blasphemy. But for the most part there is nothing to distinguish these 'Welsh' poets from any Englishman, American or Scot whose poetical manners meet with the approval of, say, *Poetry* (London) or *Penguin New Writing*.

A Welsh contribution to English poetry must mean more than private wisecracks with a Welsh accent. Many of Mr. Rhys's friends could with profit undergo the traditional discipline of the *cynghanedd*, with its metrical austerity and care for the *depth* of words. Fortunately the shoddy programme pieces in the anthology are more than redeemed by the work of such a poet as Alun Lewis, whose death in India is a major loss to poetry. His modest mind and careful imagery remind one strangely of another Welshman killed in another war, and Lewis's poem to Edward Thomas printed here is a moving epitaph to both poets.

'Climbing the steep path through the copse I knew  
My cares weighed heavily as yours, my gift  
Much less, my hope  
No more than yours.'

Miss Roberts, both as a member of the choir as well as a solo performer in her *Poems*, illustrates very well what an Anglo-Welsh poet can hope to achieve. She has the initial advantage of a mature mind, a lively curiosity ('*I was one of these / Always observant and slightly obscure*') and the rare gift of seeming to make all her words new ('*Rose-hips red as braziers shine from the hedges*'; '*Plains of space, free, sky-free, lifting a green tree on to a great*