

finished knitting a pair of socks old Mrs Fielden had begun to knit for him. The correspondence continues, simple, personal, revealing. They are both good Catholics. The people in their very different lives take on reality.

No more than for the 'star-crossed' lovers does the course of Anna and Simon's love run smooth. Simon is at ease in letters; meetings prove him to have a difficult character, a man consciously resisting possession by another because he had suffered from a possessive mother. Anna is uncomplicated, Simon complex, hypersensitive, suspicious. They are, in spite of this, in love.

There is nothing of the novelette here. Miss Elizabeth Hamilton's writing is flawless, with a quality that recalls Jane Austen or perhaps Virginia Woolf. Anna's tranquil and artless unfolding of the story makes one feel like an intruder compelled by circumstances to eavesdrop on a very personal matter. It is a sad story of love, not harrowing, but in its simplicity and probability, poignant and unforgettable.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

PAUL NASH. By Anthony Bertram. (Faber and Faber; 42s.)

The difficulties attendant upon writing a biography of a contemporary artist are manifold. Mr Bertram has emerged from the ordeal remarkably well. His study is well informed; in this he was helped by the artist's autobiographical writings, his numerous letters to his friends, and not least by the considerable material put at his disposal by the artist's widow. At times his interpretation is controversial and provocative; for instance, it is only almost parenthetically towards the end of the volume that we learn that Nash equated the sea with the male principle and the marshy land with the female in the Dymchurch series; earlier when he was discussing them the author suggested that the land and sea are like the forces of good and evil with the sea always advancing from the left. Undoubtedly in this instance the artist's idea is the richer, and more original of the two. But generally his analysis of Paul Nash's symbolism is sympathetic, perceptive and erudite, and he is particularly interesting when he tries to uncover the sources of Nash's obsessive views and shapes.

Mr Bertram's approach is primarily intellectual, scholarly and considered; it is possible that it has sometimes led him to see in a letter written by the artist describing his painting methods a return to doctrines of truth to material, whereas in fact the artist was probably innocently discussing his craft! He was an evocative, poetic artist whose best works are distinguished by a certain fugitive subtlety which defies the categorical and definitive statement. At this point Mr Bertram accepts the limitations imposed by rational analysis and spares

us the meaningless hyperbole which an artist of Nash's complexity sometimes inspires in less accomplished critics.

This is a book to which all students of Nash's works will constantly feel the need to refer. Unfortunately the limited number of plates is infuriating to the reader who is forced to turn constantly to the Nash: Eates edition. Surely the publishers would have been wise to add an extra guinea to the price of a volume, which is already beyond the popular range, in order to illustrate it more amply.

MARIA SHIRLEY

LISZT. By Walter Beckett. (Dent; 10s. 6d.)

When a publisher embarks on a series such as the *Master Musicians* it is almost inevitable that at least an occasional volume should be written to fill a gap in the list rather than to meet a real need. It would be surprising if Dr Beckett's book on Liszt had completely avoided this charge, for Sacheverell Sitwell has already given us a characteristically *soigné* biography, while Humphrey Searle has published a detailed and penetrating study of the music itself. But there are so many aspects of Liszt's life and work, varied, contradictory even, that a book such as this which succeeds in relating them all and in showing their interdependence is nevertheless illuminating and valuable.

The difficulty of writing about Liszt, though, is that he is such an interesting figure in himself that it is not easy to hold him at arm's length to see him in a historical perspective. Dr Beckett's Liszt is too isolated a figure. It is not enough to admit flaws in Liszt's music, or to write it off as largely a failure. However often Liszt's 'ideas' and 'experiments in composition' failed in his own hands they had a considerable influence upon other composers, and thus have an importance beyond their intrinsic artistic value. Dr Beckett's natural anxiety to mention as many works as possible, however briefly, leaves him no room for an evaluation of the significance of Liszt's composition as a whole, or its impact upon the history of music.

ERIC TAYLOR

## NOTICES

THE SPIRIT AND FORMS OF PROTESTANTISM, by Louis Bouyer (Harvill Press, 18s.), is an English translation by A. V. Littledale of *Du Protestantisme a l'Eglise* which was reviewed in the March, 1956 number of *BLACKFRIARS* pp. 130-132). This, together with JOHN HENRY NEWMAN: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS, edited with introductions by Henry Tristram (Sheed and Ward, 18s.), are books of outstanding worth which will be invaluable to all interested in our separated christian