

## BLACKFRIARS

was passionately interested in his subject and communicates his interest to us. Where this interest is absent, the picture, good though its design may be, in so far as it is deficient in a vital quality, is in quite a different category from the painting in which visual and pictorial qualities combine, and we can consequently call Léger 'merely abstract' with the same confidence that makes us term Frith 'merely representational.' Pure representationalism and pure abstraction are the opposite ends of the same scale.

In the nineteenth century the critic was generally an artist. To-day the artist is almost invariably a critic. Mr. Eliot's poetry and Webern's music are both critical, and in the same way Seligmann and Ozenfant and Villon are critics and not artists. There used to be an old jibe at the critic as an artist manqué. Now the reverse is true. He may provide interesting illustrations of the trend of modern criticism, of successive emphases on line (Ozenfant), rhythm (Masson), colour (Rouault). What he does not provide is art, because art involves an integrity of vision to which the critic with his concentration on theory does not aspire.

It should not be thought from these criticisms that Mr. Read's book is in any way a poor one. It is very good indeed, so good that it is something that every student of modern painting ought to read and think about. But it does emphasise the need for some kind of discernment in the welter of conflicting theory it advances, and if what I have said about it seems curiously out-of-date, I can only plead that honesty is the best criterion in the end.

JOHN POPE-HENNESSY.

## CINEMA

*Man of Aran*, the film produced by Mr. Robert Flaherty, has a setting as strange as his *Nanook of the North*. For it was made in part of a fisherman's thatched cottage on Aranmore, the largest of the three islands that lie beyond Galway. The caste is composed of native Irish speakers, the chief parts being taken by 'Tiger King,' a young Islander, Maggie and Michael Dirrane, Patch Ruan and Bredig Mullin. The film reproduces, in a manner astonishingly faithful, the lives of the men and women of Aran, who depend mainly on fishing and the kelp industry. The rocky cliffs, tiny fields and thatched lime-washed houses, the curraghs that are rowed by the men in *bainins* and homespuns, the perils of an Islander's life—all these are shown to us in Mr. Flaherty's remarkable picture. To those who have never seen these outposts of the ancient Gaelic world, the picture will give a glimpse of civilization more foreign to many people in England than are others to be found in regions far

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more remote. To those who are familiar with the beauty of these rugged islands, far out in the Atlantic, and who have contacted with the simple yet richly coloured lives of the Gaels beyond the mainland, *Man of Aran* will, be a source of the keenest pleasure. For it will recapture for such folk something of the early wonderment and deep enjoyment of the first visit to those rare people in their kindly Island homes.

MAIRIN MITCHELL.

## NOTICES

HIGH RISING. By Angela Thirkell. (Hamish Hamilton; 7/6).

Humour, continuous but quiet, and two immortal characters, Stoker the maid and the small boy Tony. If the Dark Lady moves neurotically in entertaining company, we are grateful to her for provoking the other characters to talk and plot. Mrs. Thirkell has written another welcome diversion, a delightful successor to *Ankle Deep*.

T.G.

FIDDLER OF LOURDES AND OTHER VAGABOND TALES. By John Gibbons. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 3/6.)

The seventeen 'vagabond tales' in this collection make pleasant reading. Without displaying any conspicuous literary merit Mr. John Gibbons never fails to hold our interest if only by his appeal to our less superficial emotions. Mr. Gibbons has succeeded in being human where many might have been merely sentimental.

C.B.

THE STABLE-GATE. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 3/6.)

This anonymously written collection of short stories with a single theme running through them is a charming book. It will enlighten, as well as interest and amuse, the many readers we wish it.

B.J.

HAVING A GUARDIAN ANGEL. Illustrated by Ida Bohatta-Monpurgio. Words by Cecily Hallack. (Washbourne & Bogan; pp. 32; 1/6.)

The pictures have those little details that hold the attention of a child, and the text admirably expresses its inconsequential contemplations and trustful friendliness towards the world of God and Angels.

F.S.