

PUBLICATIONS

A River of Pictures and Peace. By B. E. Baughan. Whitcombe and Tombs, Ltd. Price, 1s net; pp. 40.

'The Wanganui River—oh, yes; I suppose it is very pretty and all that, but I was disappointed in it.' Such is the criticism one hears again and again from those who have seen the far-famed river. After reading Miss Baughan's latest booklet, however, one is inclined to ascribe the fault to the tourist, not to the river. Unless, indeed, the explanation of the charm of this description of the Wanganui River be that unconsciously suggested by the authoress herself, when she speaks thus of the reflections seen in the calm river surface: 'Smooth, too, as satin, and with a satin sheen, the river adds to the beauty it receives, the green world in the water shines with a softness, smiles with an allure, a living lustre, that up there on the bank it has not—as the meditations of a gentle mind are often fairer than the realities that they reflect.' We have had many fine bits of descriptive work from the writer of the *Finest Walk in the World*, but nothing, we think, which quite touches the level of this, her latest effort. Her previous booklets have been faithful and engrossing photographs of New Zealand scenes; this is a picture, composed and painted with a high degree of creative inspiration. From the opening page, which so happily introduces the reader to the Maori myth in connection with the river, through the vivid word-painting, the well-chosen historical allusions, and the touches of delicate humor, to the fine bit of pure literature which provides the climax; this booklet stands on a level of its own. The artistic merit of the many illustrations is beyond question; and it will be a very dull reader who can close the last page without a keen realisation of the beauties which must abide in this famous New Zealand river; and, still more, without having had a glimpse into the innermost sanctuary of all art—beauty with its profound and half-apprehended meaning. We can but echo Miss Baughan's parting message to her readers: 'You will not forget our river, our Lady of Dreams! And oh, for us both, when we are far away, may her memory avail to reopen, though but for a moment, the secret gateway that leads to that fair conception of world-repose and peace unalterable.'

Stewart Island. By Edith Howes. Whitcombe and Tombs, Ltd. Price, 1s net; pp. 36.

The object of Miss Howes in this booklet has evidently been to produce something markedly different from the ordinary guide-book for tourist use. She has divided her subject into six sections:—'Stewart Island,' 'The Sea,' 'The Bush,' 'The Islets,' 'The Birds,' and 'Dawn in the Bush.' The first and last of these sections are couched in verse; and, despite some lines which are not above reproach as to metre, a few rather bold examples of poetic license in the sphere of grammar, and occasional jarring notes in such lines as

'Plaintive made with morepork calls while the night holds sway,'

and—

'Burn with vandal waste thy million lovelinesses,'

the verse is not alone verse, but real poetry. Both selections, but especially that entitled 'Dawn in the bush,' convey a true poetic impression of the special charm of our New Zealand bush. The prose, too, is a vivid, true, and sympathetic picture of the beauties of nature as manifested in this little southern isle. The illustrations are charming, and well adapted to the text. But we cannot refrain from wishing that Miss Howes had given us a more complete picture of the real Stewart Island, which, after all, is more than just a very beautiful scene of natural loveliness. A complete history was of course out of the question in a booklet of such limited dimensions, but surely a hint of the ancient Maori inhabitants and their doings, and

the stirring adventures of the old whaling days, would not have been out of place. The only mention of the Maori is in his ancient name for the island, and the whalers are not referred to at all. At the risk of being suspected of Philistinism, we venture to predict that New Zealand literature will never attain the place we all desire for it, until New Zealand poets and painters begin to work the rich vein of human interest which lies hidden in their country. New Zealand is not solely a land of nature's 'soft magic of streamlet and hill'; it is a land inhabited for centuries by the noblest barbarian the world has seen, and reclaimed from barbarism in an incredibly short space of time by a hardy race of pioneers, New Zealand literature and art has been a mere landscape for too long; it is time we forgot the background for a while and began to paint in the figures which will give human interest to our canvas.

We have also received from Mr. M. O'Kane, printer, Wellington, a small pamphlet (no price stated) on *The Celtic Race and Its Influence on British Life and Letters*, by Professor H. Mackenzie, M.A.; and from the Australian Catholic Truth Society two excellent publications on *The Gospel: The Real Social Remedy*, by Rev. Stanislaus M. Hogan, O.P., and *The Church and Social Study*, by Rev. M. O'Byrne, O.P.

GETHSEMANE

The Son of God! Divine! Omnipotent!
Is't truly Thou Who com'st in rending plight
Well-nigh desert'd thro' the lonely night
Unto Gethsemane? Thy frail form bent
Beneath a vision'd cross; Thy sad heart rent
By man's iniquity! Say is't the height
Of Thy humiliation? Wilt affright
Still further those that will yet well repent
Thy ignominious death? The stars above
That nail yon velvet dimness to the sky
Look down upon Thy desolation; see!
Thy chos'n comrades, they who vow'd to love
The Son of God, unmindful, careless, lie
In sleep! The world but mocks Thy agony!

O God! Thou canst but hate mankind to hear
The passion'd outcry of that garden, where
In anguish hitherto unknown, despair
As cold as death, lies Jesus, bow'd with fear
And misery? He sees, like Thee, too clear
The world's ingratitude, yet must needs bear
For man's redemption, all the shame they dare
To cast upon Him; base and insincere
Shall be His judges; unborn men He came
To save will scorn Him; thousands live to cry
Aloud His name but in derision; few,
So few to love Him; yet no angry blame
Escapes those sacred lips, but 'Father, I
Will drink the chalice! Thine, not My will do!'

Redeemer of our taint'd world! Oh! Why
This strange prostration, loudly asking aid
Of this fair angel whom Thy Father made
For His own Glory? How can He supply
To Thee, a God, the strength Thou need'st to die?
Anomaly of modesty, for here display'd,
Humility's most wondrous miracle is laid
Before us by our Saviour Christ! The weak
Unto the mighty strength bestow! A God
From His own creature has obtain'd the pow'r
Of sustentation! See! A torch-lit band!
The traitor Judas who with Jesus trod
Companion! Jesus! They are come! The hour
Is nigh that will indeed Thy strength demand!

—ANGELA HASTINGS.

Dunedin.

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