

brambles. Perhaps a modern vindication such as the present one will stir the long-dormant spirit of our more sanguine ancestors. The appalling effects of groundless prejudice are aptly cited in connection with the commercialisation of Cox's Orange Pippin, and the virtual disappearance of those excellent varieties, the products of years of careful attention to local needs and conditions, whose very names enshrine the lore-learned workers of forgotten enterprise: *Tom Putt* and *Little Herbert*, *Granny Giffard*, and, here a whole village, *D'Arcy Spice*. The gardeners' calendars at this time of the year begin to prescribe a little armchair planning. It would be good to feel that this winter would produce a few worthy resolutions to restore vineyards to England.

A.S.

THE TRIAL OF PETER BARNES AND OTHERS. (The I.R.A. Coventry Explosion of 1939.) Edited by Letitia Fairfield, C.B.E., M.D., in the series 'Notable British Trials'. (William Hodge; 15s.)

In August 1939 a member of the Irish Republican Army placed a bomb in a busy street in Coventry, where it later exploded, killing five people who chanced to be passing. He escaped, but two men, Peter Barnes and James Richards, who had assisted in manufacturing the bomb, were arrested and after trial at the Old Bailey were found guilty and hanged; three other persons were acquitted at the same time. Barnes and Richards were found guilty by virtue of the well-known rule of English law that, where several persons combine together to commit a felonious act of violence, which a reasonable man would regard as likely to result in a death, all those persons are guilty of murder, if death in fact results, whether they assisted in the act itself or merely took part in its planning. Whatever the moral problem may be, this is a salutary rule in practice.

The straightforward account of the trial, which is the greater part of this book, is especially interesting for three things: the way the evidence was pieced together, the calm, almost sympathetic, manner in which the prosecution conducted its case, and the personalities of the two principal accused. Both were working-class Irishmen, active members of the I.R.A., whose motive in coming to England was to take part in acts of terrorism. But whereas Barnes put up a fantastic story which deceived nobody, and protested his innocence even after the verdict, Richards behaved with soldierly dignity. However loathsome the crime for which he was hanged, he conducted himself during the trial as if he considered himself to be a martyr in an honourable cause.

As well as editing the account of the trial, Dr Fairfield has written an introduction setting out the whole story of the I.R.A.'s efforts at terrorism. Many of the introductions in this series of books are written in the style of the detective story, but the present one is on an altogether higher level.

Without attempting to supply final answers to the difficult questions involved, it sets out with remarkable lucidity the moral problems which arise out of political crimes of this nature.

D. C. POTTER

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS. By Percy M. Young. (Dennis Dobson; 18s.)

Vaughan Williams is such a rich character in his personality, his views, and his many activities, that there is always a strong temptation for critics to discuss these rather than his music, or at best to discuss his music as a reflection of these. This book is to be welcomed because it places the music first and sets out to discuss it objectively and impartially. Unlike many of the composer's admirers, Dr Young is prepared to admit that it is possible to dislike Vaughan Williams' music and to disagree with some of his opinions without being a moron, a degenerate or a traitor. Even so, he insists, it is impossible not to *respect* the music of Vaughan Williams. The object of this book is to show why this is so.

Dr Young has many of the qualities needed for the task he has undertaken: a wide knowledge of his subject; a real sympathy with it; a critical faculty which is not disarmed by partiality; and great experience as a practical musician. Only one thing more was required: an ability to write. It is strange that while Vaughan Williams himself writes so well, in a simple, direct style, most of the people who write about him do so with self-conscious, 'literary' elaboration. One can understand this in the professional critics who have to disguise that they have nothing of any importance to say, but it is quite unforgivable in a man like Dr Young. Certain mannerisms of construction are irritating, but no worse. What is much more serious is the author's habit of confusing his readers and possibly himself by flights of involved but vague and unhelpful philosophic and literary allusion. At best these give an appearance of saying a great deal more than they really do; occasionally they end up as near or complete nonsense. An interesting and useful book, but a disappointing one, because economy and discipline would have made it so much better.

E.T.

A HANDFUL OF AUTHORS. By G. K. Chesterton; edited by Dorothy Collins. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

Though there are many felicities and fireworks here, it is doubtful whether the cumulative effect of these essays warrants their publication in book form. It would be a very great pity if they were to fall into the hands of some young creature unfamiliar with Chesterton's major work, and make him judge and dismiss it all as irrelevant and out of date. For it is with a feeling of 'for old sake's sake' that the reader must set himself to this volume of collected pieces. Throughout its pages he will remember that here is the journalistic output of a mind matured before the first