

attempting its profundity of feeling and thought. This is a pity, for in one at least of his poems he shows a promising technique and a capacity for imagery. P.F.

LA FORMATION DES LANGUES ROMANES. By Pierre Groult. Collection 'Lovanium'. (Casterman; 66fr.)

A brilliant study, in non-technical language, of the evolution of the Romance tongues. Written primarily for the reader whose mother-tongue is French, this book cannot fail to interest all those who, having some acquaintance with modern French, Spanish, or Italian, wish to trace the development of those languages from the Vulgar Latin of the Roman Empire. All the factors which go to form a language, historical, musical, and psychological, are skilfully analysed by the author, whose work can be strongly recommended to all who, while taking an intelligent interest in such matters, have neither the time nor the inclination to peruse larger philological treatises.

S. A. H. WEETMAN.

SHAKESPEARE. By Ivor Brown. (Collins; 12s.6d.)

Another book on Shakespeare. Mr Brown has clearly read a great deal of recent Shakespearean literature, and in his book there is hardly a subject connected with Shakespeare that is left untouched. We find discussion of almost everything, from the Dark Lady to Sir Francis Bacon, from Shakespeare's bawdy to Shakespeare's bank account—there is everything, in fact, except first-hand scholarship or fruitful criticism.

Perhaps it may be argued that this is intended as a popular book. But for a book to be 'popular' there is no reason why it should not at the same time be serious (G. B. Harrison's *Introducing Shakespeare* is an excellent example of a book combining both qualities). Mr Brown's tone and approach, however, are essentially frivolous. We are told, for example, that by 1598 Shakespeare was 'the "Pin Up Boy" of the students and Inns of Court wits' (p. 13): in the realm of foreign politics Mr Brown asserts that 'Spain, after all, had its Fifth Column among the English Catholics' (p. 96): of a list of plays including *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* we are told that 'Shakespeare is slacking off' (p. 169): in *Timon of Athens* 'some of the speeches have the stench of a casualty clearing station in the lists of love' (p. 216) and, by contrast, *Antony and Cleopatra* is approved because 'after Troy, Denmark and the cliffs of Dover, the Near East, where Antony and his queen live their luxurious hours, has an astonishingly clean bill of health' (p. 218).

Criticism of the poetry is dealt with chiefly in a chapter called 'The Hand of Glory'. Mr Brown draws (p. 306) on Mr Polly's rather obscure critical distinction between 'Sesquippeledan Verboojuice' and 'Eloquent Rapsodooce'. In support of the assertion that 'nobody has felt more keenly than Shakespeare the value of "w"' (p. 313)