

The vicissitudes of the glass during the past five centuries are traced and there are useful historical notes on the treatment of the figures. There is a curious slip in the caption of plate xxii where St Edward the Martyr is called Sir Edward Martyr, and there is some confusion in the Index between this Saint and King Edward II. Otherwise both text and illustrations leave little, or nothing, to be desired.

E. T. LONG.

A CALENDAR OF BRITISH TASTE FROM 1600 to 1800, by E. F. Carritt, (Routledge & Kegan Paul; 21s.)

Without desultory turning of pages you know where you are at once with this book, for its sub-title is 'A Museum of Specimens and Landmarks chronologically arranged'. If you are the sort of person who enjoys a swift tour of, say, the Victoria and Albert, you will enjoy wandering through Mr Carritt's 'museum'. If, on the other hand, the mere thought of visiting a museum gives you a sinking feeling, you will hastily decline Mr Carritt's kind offer to show you something of British taste through two centuries.

Lord Macaulay, in his essay on Horace Walpole, has some observations which could be applied to Mr Carritt's 'museum'. 'We wander', says Macaulay of Walpole's *Strawberry Hill*, 'through a profusion of rarities, of trifling intrinsic value, but so quaint in fashion, or connected with such remarkable names and events, that they may well detain our attention for a moment. . . . One cabinet of trinkets is no sooner closed than another is opened.' In fairness to Mr Carritt, it must be said that many of his cabinets contain more than trinkets.

Mr Carritt's 'Calendar', which has been culled from his commonplace book kept throughout a lifetime, provides a pleasant and leisurely way of observing the evolution of British taste in many spheres.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

MEN OF STONES, by Rex Warner. (Bodley Head; 9s.)

Mr Warner describes his new novel as 'a melodrama'. Its action is unlikely enough, culminating as it does in the performance of *King Lear* on the ramparts of an island prison. And the theme its events subserve is on an immense scale. The Prison Governor conceives himself to have divine power, and the absolute authority he holds in his little kingdom is a plain enough analogy of the perils of totalitarian power. *The Wild Goose Chase*, the first of Mr Warner's novels, was frankly labelled 'an allegory', and all his work—and how unequalled it is in contemporary English writing for originality of conception and confidence of style—reveals a constant awareness of the serious novelist's responsibility as an interpreter of ideas. Yet Mr Warner is free

from the aridities of utopianism. His allegories are profound essays in the folly of human pride and in the inexorable law that at last defeats it, but they respect the rights of a person, they never ignore the twists and shifts of situation and character. So it is that against the imposing background of *Men of Stones* there plays the comic light of a Mr Goat, the English intellectual on a cultural mission, or the Quixotic action of a Captain Nicholas, with his immense repertoire of anecdote. Perhaps the climax of the novel is resolved too rapidly: a mad divinity is too peremptorily destroyed. But that is a tiny limitation in a novel that so consistently exposes a radical element in man's tragedy, and achieves it with such unflinching grace of style.

I.E.

EARLIER DIPLOMATIC HISTORY, 1492-1713, by Sir Charles Petrie, Bt.  
(Hollis and Carter; 18s.)

This book is a companion volume to Sir Charles Petrie's well-known *Diplomatic History, 1713-1933* and is written according to the same plan. The author gives us here a clear and detailed summary of events; he underlines such definite trends as may be detected in the policies of the various Powers; and even diplomatic history becomes a little more intelligible than a mere tangled mass of wars and treaties. It is very easy to over-simplify and rationalise in relating the course of events: it is to the credit of the author that he has never been tempted to do this and that he has written throughout, purposely it seems, in a low key. The method has of course severe limitations, but if these are appreciated, if the purposes of the book is borne in mind—that it is not meant to be all-embracing—then it will prove invaluable both to the student of history and to the ordinary reader.

The date chosen as the starting point of this history is, of course, arbitrary—the medieval order was passing away and little but the façade remained—but the year 1492 is significant because it marks the sudden emergence of Spain as a great power, with the conquest of Granada, the expulsion of the Jews and the discovery of America; 1492 saw also the beginning of the Treaty of Etaples between England and France, and left the French monarchs free for their Italian adventures; and in the same year Alexander VI succeeded to the Papal throne. With 1713 comes to an end a period which may well be described as the Spanish era in European history, during which Spain was at first the leading power and then ceased to be so, but continued for long to be so considered. The Treaty of Utrecht, which ended the War of the Spanish succession, saw France established as the chief power of Europe and England well on the way to ascendancy.

The reader will find useful for reference purposes a number of