

events are metaphors from which no concepts can be wrung. Mdmé Magny discusses the question of the author's place in his work and concludes that the more original a work is the more 'depersonalised' it is, in the sense that the more independent it is of the writer's private neurosis. Kafka's work in fact shows us how thin is the crust of civilisation and reason separating us from the unthinkable barbarism beyond: a better Kafka might have shown also how necessary this crust is. The conclusion is that Sartre and Kafka express what has not been predigested by the human mind and in that way their message is the negation of culture, a subtle anti-humanism.

JOHN DURKAN

PORTRAIT OF HORACE. By Alfred Noyes. (Sheed & Ward; 16s.)

The author has set himself to find the secret of Horace's age-long charm in the belief that 'Horace being primarily a poet' can best be interpreted by a poet, and his book is a contribution to the appreciation of Horace; but it would have been a greater contribution if the whole of his interpretation had been of the quality it is in his last chapter which he gives to Horace's prophecy 'non omnis moriar', and elsewhere when what he writes is the outcome of his practical knowledge of the art and technique of poetry. But from the first chapter he is too much preoccupied with the view of those who consider that Horace's relations with the Emperor underwent such change as to denote loss of independence and consistency; and the manner of his refutation, which bulks large in the book, constantly reminds one of Horace's tragic poet who

proicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba
cum curat cor spectantis tetigisse querella.

The author's thesis is that one of the many colours with which Tennyson says poetry glances is a 'subtle and unexpected irony', and his exposition of this, intended as it is to demonstrate that Horace could 'put no trust in princes', is highly subjective and involves some serious errors of fact. Of this there is a conspicuous instance in the interpretation of the ode 1, 37, written when the news of the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra was brought to Rome. Argument based on supposition of what Horace might have felt if some months later he had seen the triumphal procession or heard of the execution of Cæsarion and Antyllus, is merely irrelevant, but to represent the triumphal procession as evidence of Octavian's cruelty is unwarranted, and still more so is the charge that he was guilty of 'the cruel and cold-blooded murder of Cleopatra's young children'. The facts are that the triumphal procession was the traditional Roman custom, and that Cleopatra's three children by Antony, so far from being murdered, were taken into her home by Octavian's sister, as she had taken the younger son of Antony and his first wife Fulvia, and brought up with the children she had born to Antony before he came under the evil influence of Cleopatra: Cleopatra's daughter was

later married to Juba, the enlightened king of Mauretania. But on the strength of an erroneous presentation of the facts, the author argues that while Actium ended the civil strife—into which Octavian was plunged when still in his 'teens—'such a boy', as Cicero wrote to Atticus—it did not change the personal character of Octavian, and proceeds to depreciate his new régime by which 'on the urgency of Maecenas and Agrippa he was apparently attempting to restore much of the Italy which Horace loved. As a highly politic move the murderer of little children was restoring religion and morality to his bewildered people'.

Again in the last chapter but two, the author takes Od. 4, 5, published some seventeen or eighteen years after Actium, for exposition of his view, and instances the passage in two of the ten stanzas 'in which the peasants are inclined to deify Augustus'. He detects irony when Horace puts the 'drinking' first before the libations (in another chapter he suggests that Horace was 'possibly ironical in what he said in the sixth Epode about the Romans drinking till they were sick in honour of one more "glorious victory".') This seems fanciful and far-fetched, but his main point is that 'in the last stanza "deus" is dropped for "dux" and Horace comes back to earth again with the usual formal compliments about the heroes'. But the implication that Horace 'drops' the 'deus' is clearly wrong. To Horace Augustus is 'dux bone', the form of address alike in the first line of the second and the first line of the last stanza. It is not Horace who deifies the Emperor but the peasants who might well, as is said in the next line, include him among the domestic spirits who guarded their hearths and homes.

But if the author had made a better cause for his thesis, it seems a strange elucidation of the charm of Horace who, as Sainte-Beuve says, has been for 2000 years a sort of secular breviary of good taste, poetry and wisdom, to represent him as capable of deliberate insincerity, and merely to gratify his secret self-satisfaction, writing such poetry as he wrote here with his tongue in his cheek. Surely the reply to that is to apply to Horace Browning's terse

Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he.

J. J. R. BRIDGE

ENGLISH BOOK ILLUSTRATION, 1800-1900. By Philip James. (King Penguin; Penguin Books; 2s. 6d.)

Nineteenth century art, and in particular the art of the printed book, would seem a poor theme for a popular book; for the populace have now been taught to despise that century particularly in its typographical arts. But here is a revelation, not so surprising to anyone over thirty-five. The children of the first decade of the present century will be suddenly reminded on opening this book of Kate Greenaway and Edward Lear, Blake and Beardsley too, not to mention Cruikshank's Dickens and Tenniel's *Alice*. All these and many others