

Professor Willson has done his job extremely well. It has all the thoroughness of American scholarship. Everything is there, objectively presented. And yet what emerges? Not a lovable man. Henry of Navarre, a robust opportunist, thought Paris worth a Mass. James VI and I could have made his aphorism, that England was worth a mother's death. Professor Willson blames Mary for her son's defects. 'To her son', he says, 'she transmitted her extravagance, her carelessness, her highly emotional nature easily finding relief in tears, her fondness for pleasure, her capacity for love and hate.' Surely this should have been counteracted by the highly moral training he received from some of the leading Scottish Reformers. And what, one wonders, about the inheritance from his father, Darnley, whom Professor Willson describes as 'not only stupid, but vain, insolent, treacherous and debauched . . . a raw boy dragged to his ruin by evil courses before he ever became a man'?

This book covers a vast area of Scottish and English history. It is done with meticulous care and exactitude. A Scottish reader, though, will regret that a former Historiographer-Royal for Scotland, the late Sir Robert Rait, and a historian of the eminence of Dr Annie Cameron are referred to only as Mr Rait and Miss Cameron.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENVENUTO CELLINI. (Penguin Books; 5s.)

Benvenuto Cellini was unquestionably a great master in his own craft. One can only hope that he was also a great master in the Renaissance craft of lying. Such scandalous stories, such outrageous revelations; surely this is the frankest of all autobiographies. And such a mixture of piety and worldliness, such artistic genius and so much bragging.

Mr George Bull has made an excellent translation into appropriately racy, vivid English. Cellini bursts into vigorous life in these pages and slashes his way around with magnificent bravura. A mere silver crown expended and you can be transported into a Renaissance world of violent death, conspiracy, battles, and, above all, wonderful art.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

BRITAIN IN MALTA. By Harrison Smith, PH.D. (Malta: Progress Press; 26s. 6d. the two volumes, or 13s. 6d. each.)

Great Britain came into possession of Malta at the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the Napoleonic Wars. At first the islands were governed by an administrator directly responsible to the government in London, but in 1835, pursuant to the Letters Patent of that year, a governor was appointed, assisted by a council with a minority

of elected members. A new council, with a larger proportion of elected members, was constituted in 1849, and at the end of 1887 the council was reconstituted so as to give the elected members a majority. Friction, however, developed between the elected members and the government, which did much to destroy what was of value in the constitution, until, by the Letters Patent of 1903, the constitution was revoked and matters reverted to what they had been in 1849.

Dr Harrison Smith, an American, has devoted the first of these two volumes to a study of the constitutional development of Malta during this interesting period, and he has displayed much praiseworthy diligence and industry in assembling a large mass of material relating to his subject. Unhappily, he appears to lack the essential qualification for the task he has undertaken, namely, a sound grasp of English constitutional theory and practice. The result is that he has not always understood the documents which he has read and, proceeding from questionable premisses, his judgements are often at fault. One example out of many must suffice. Speaking of the constitution set up by the Letters Patent of 1849, he says: 'The Crown reserved the right to legislate by Orders-in-Council (*sic*), since once this is not written into the constitution, the Crown could not revive the royal prerogative by merely revoking representative institutions and the constitution; Crown Government would have to re-obtain the source of power from the King-in-Parliament.' He cites in support of this statement an article in a magazine, *Great Britain and the East*, of March 24, 1938. His statement, however, is the exact reverse of the truth, as may be seen from the authoritative pronouncement in the judgment of the Privy Council in the case of *Sammut v. Strickland*, [1938] A. C. 678, at pp. 702 and 704.

Dr Harrison Smith's inability firmly to grasp the constitutional principles and practice involved has prevented him from developing a smoothly running, analytical account of the various constitutional experiments in Malta, and it has tended to obscure his exposition of the reasons why the successive constitutions failed.

In the second volume (which is not a continuation of the first volume, but a separate study) Dr Harrison Smith is more at ease. This volume is devoted to a study of Italian influence, both official and unofficial, on British policy in Malta between 1899 and 1903. This is a subject of some importance, and Dr Harrison Smith's volume is to be welcomed.

Neither volume is easy to read. The author's style is by no means attractive and he frequently adopts the device of beginning a sentence with his own words and completing it with a quotation (often long) from some other author. The literary marriages thus arranged are

often unhappy and sometimes disastrous. The reader must also accustom himself to the curiosities of the phraseology employed; the present writer, nevertheless, was gratified to find the accession of Queen Victoria referred to as 'the ascension of the youthful princess Victoria'.

Yet, despite the foregoing criticisms, there is much of value in Dr Harrison Smith's two volumes, and in particular, every student of the history of Malta will be grateful to the author for the many references to the vast mass of material which he has collected.

GEOFFREY DE C. PARMITER

GENETICS IN THE ATOMIC AGE. By C. Auerbach. (Oliver and Boyd; 8s. 6d.)

This book presents genetics to the layman. In the preface the author indicates her intention of writing without using the symbols and technical terms peculiar to her subject. She has succeeded, and the result is a story in one hundred pages, delightfully illustrated, easy to assimilate and demanding no scientific background of the reader.

Some material in the early chapters is open to criticism. A statement on page six could leave the reader with the idea that X-ray sterilization of men is a common procedure. It is not. Another example on page seventeen is the belted Galloway cow, a polled breed, shown here with horns. These matters do not however affect the validity of Dr Auerbach's conclusions.

The essentials of nuclear division affecting both body and reproductive cells are adequately dealt with and the nature of chromosomes and their distribution in these different cells described. The concept of genes as responsible for the control of inherited characters is outlined and leads to a consideration of the occurrence of mutated genes and their effects. A convincing account of the distribution and inheritance of normal and mutated genes follows.

The ability of ionizing radiations to produce mutated genes is described fully and its significance for the future of the human race assessed. The reader is left with a clear appreciation of the extent of the ethical problem confronting man in the use both of nuclear weapons in war and of atomic energy in peace.

I liked this little book and wished many of the textbooks I suffered in my youth had its clarity of style.

R. W. KIND

SPECIES REVALUED. By Desmond Murray, O.P., F.R.E.S. (Blackfriars Publications; 13s. 6d.)

This book could have been important, because as the author tells us in his preface, a better title for it would be *The Making of Species*, but this name has already been used for a similar book. Unfortunately,