out rest, but in the complete absence of any stabilizing horizontals. Certainly the diagonals give a tremendous breadth to the picture, but because they are not classically placed they produce a feeling of unbalance, as though the ground were heaving and receding under one's feet.

The only modern parallel to these paintings that comes to mind, apart from some of Soutine's is the series of variations by Francis Bacon on the self-portrait by Van Gogh, in which the horizontals have been deliberately distorted and slide down the canvas to give a sickening feeling of instability and illusion, but the comparison is less than apt, perhaps, because of the enormous divergence of the two artists' intentions. Kokocshka's fascination consists in his ambivalent power to exhilarate and confuse the spectator at the same time; Bacon uses diagonals purposely to disturb the spectator in the most intense way.

The landscapes recall historical precedents too, Rubens, Turner, Altdorfer. The breadth of Turner's 'Burning of the Houses of Parliament', the atmospheric insight in his 'Rain, Steam and Speed' and the cosmic energy of Altdorfer's 'Battle of Alexander the Great', not to mention the colour, are all brought to mind in these remarkable paintings. What is missed is the masterly placing of the horizontal intervals which makes Rubens in his last landscapes, such as 'Baucis and Philemon', such a great artist.

It is in the last pictures by Kokoschka that the restraining counter-accent of dull colour is disposed of and a vision which is already incandescent, is transposed into the interior brilliance of the prism. Subtlety is deliberately jettisoned and as a result the large compositions evaporate into decoration, losing precisely that force that a more sensitive colourist, such as Monet, kept.

PATRICK REYNTIENS

Reviews

THE QUEENS AND THE HIVE, by Edith Sitwell; Macmillan; 42s.

The reign of Elizabeth I is a perfect frame for a canvas by Dame Edith Sitwell. Feminine, intricate, gorgeous and terrifying, the story calls out the highest craftsmanship of this erudite and evocative poet. Dame Edith has called her study *The Queens and the Hive*, implying in the latter part of the title the elaborate cellular structure with its female principle, its doomed males, the dripping mass of honey, the myriad poisoned darts. But she has deliberately put the first part of the title in the plural, reminding us that, for a major part of the story, there was a rival Queen-Bee in England, the imprisoned Queen of Scots. A rival in every way, legitimate against illegitimate, married against spinster,

beauty against brains, Catholic against Protestant, tragic against successful, romantic against politic, Mary is almost the mirror-image of Elizabeth, all her characteristics reversed.

There was still more to it than that. Dame Edith has, as she was entitled to do, given us little more than the gorgeous colour and hideous corruption of the epoch. But what prevents this from being mere splendid confusion is the structure of European affairs, of which the colour and the cruelty were manifestations. The vast plot of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation informs the series of episodes which build up Dame Edith's book. The drama of Elizabeth's survival and Mary's destruction is not only part of this vital moment of history but is a decisive element in it. The triumph of the Counter-Reformation and the survival of Protestantism depended upon the retention of England by Elizabeth's government; and it was retained.

It is noticeable how, of the rival queens, it is Elizabeth who attracts the major share of Dame Edith's sympathy. The life of Mary belongs to a category, that of the doomed heroine, destroyed as much by her own internal forces as by circumstance. The character of Elizabeth is unique in its unpredictability, in its triumph of sheer personality, in its success achieved so very much by preventing anything drastic happening. The situation of Elizabeth on her accession in 1558 was precarious in the extreme, but for thirty years she put off the supreme crisis and during those years built herself up into the idol of her nation, exasperating but superb, a feminine masterpiece.

Dame Edith does not add anything essential to the imaginative portrait drawn by Lytton Strachey. She hardly touches upon the constitutional, cultural or religious developments of the reign. The book is, then, history seen by a poet, not as a fascinating map or diagram, but as an immediate affair of flesh and blood. It is the history of a queen seen as a woman, whose person as well as office was menaced by another woman, near in kin, perhaps dear in affection, equal in anointed rank, fearsome at liberty, a deadly peril in captivity. After eighteen years Elizabeth killed her but must pretend that it had not been her intention to destroy her mirror-image. Perhaps it was not only the ravages of age that caused Elizabeth to banish from her household all true mirrors for twenty years before her death.

PAUL FOSTER, O.P.

THE SCROLL OF THE WAR OF THE SONS OF LIGHT AGAINST THE SONS OF DARKNESS, edited with commentary and introduction, by Yigael Yadin; translated by Batya and Chaim Rabin; Oxford University Press; 63s.

This is an edition with full scholarship of one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, originally found in 1947 in the cave at Qumran now known as Q1. The book was first published in modern Hebrew in Jerusalem in 1955 (not 1957 as on the blurb). Professor Yadin is associate professor of archaeology at the Hebrew