

than he has so far arrived at, but he has not achieved that synthesis of heart and brain which would here make him a greater, and a truer, poet.

ELIZABETH KING.

THE SPIDER IN THE ROSE. By Robert H. Hill. (Hilda Devereux; 8s. 6d.)

This is an historical novel dealing with the Walpole plot against the life of Queen Elizabeth. It possesses also some of the superficial characteristics of the detective but the puzzle is too easy to make that line worth tracing. There is also an amount of character drawing, most of it unconvincing; Stanley, the born courtier, is too brittle for flesh and blood and there is too much cloak and dagger about the base plotters. Philip Gamon, the adventurous rustic from Devon, is the central character. Contact with the world develops his mind only fitfully and he shows sad lapses into bucolic simplicity. He remains a bookish type to the end: he shows no signs of susceptibility to the tender passion; all his thoughts are set on saving Gloriana—when he's not reading a sonnet by Shakespeare (though 'he did not even recognise it as a sonnet'). Therefore when he returns to Barnstaple hand in hand with the devoted Anne and we hear the wedding bells ringing across the moors we can only presume that it was leap year.

Francis Bacon's is the portrait you would expect; it has merely been taken out of the gallery, not repainted. He is obviously inspired by his own dictum 'to dwell among things soberly . . . to look into and dissect the nature of this real world'. Here as elsewhere in the book there is too much dissection and not enough sober dwelling. While Gamon is brooding by the banks of Thames—not on love but on the wickedness of plotters, though he's never quite sure about the Jesuits—Bacon is trying to live up to what the professors of Elizabethan Life and Thought have made of him. It makes him painfully self-conscious.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THE WINTER'S TALE. A Study by S. L. Bethell. (Staples; 10s. 6d.)

A book on 'The Winter's Tale' is immediately welcome because it turns attention to an important and neglected Shakespearean play, and Mr Bethell's spirited defence of his critical principles is timely. 'The critic who is self-consciously aware of holding a particular view of life is much less prone to fall into error than he who believes himself "impartial", "scientific", a "pure scholar".' That is excellent. Besides principle there is scholarship which forms the foundation for Part I, and in Part II close and accurate interpretation of the text. After a graceful tribute to Dr Tillyard we know what sort of interpretation to expect; the principle of multi-consciousness and the analogical view are not easy to apply, but Mr Bethell writes clearly and