

ambitions. Mr Knight gives us his view, on the first page of the first chapter, that Byron 'is our greatest poet in the widest sense of the term since Shakespeare', but Byron's literary importance is not his main concern. The theme is that of universal genius, of Byron the Nietzschean superman who 'lived out in his own person the guilt of European history': one is invited to think of him as 'the next Promethean man in Western history after Christ'. Conclusions as momentous as these must be worked for, and it needs to be said that Mr Knight spares himself no labour. His study of Byronic sources is astonishingly detailed and careful: this is not in any ordinary sense a crackpot theory. The overriding objection may be put in this way. No discrediting of journalistic biography, no demonstration of the need for serious reassessment of Byron, no consciousness that Mr Knight has Europe on his side on many important issues, and only England against him, can of itself, or by any cumulative force, establish the counter-thesis.

That great and pioneer book, *The Wheel of Fire*, introduced us to the idea of poetic action, of paradox final to waking life resolved within an inclusive perfection of dramatic structure. But art is what it is; and when we are asked to see in Byron's life, as a matter of fact and not merely of dramatic potentiality, the movement beyond what we usually regard as mortal limits, in particular beyond the opposition of good and evil, we are surely bound to require something of greater intellectual substance than any marriage of Christian morals to Nietzschean philosophy can accomplish.

JOHN JONES

MARY TUDOR. By H. F. M. Prescott. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 30s.)

Some twelve years ago Miss Prescott's *Spanish Tudor* was considered by a distinguished historian to be 'far and away the best of the biographies of Mary . . . a notable book'. He was not alone in this opinion for, quite apart from achieving a wide acclaim, it was awarded the James Tait Black Historical Prize. During the war years the book was forced out of print and has now been re-issued under its present title, revised in the light of recent discoveries, and entirely re-illustrated. It is more than ever a notable book, a thoroughly satisfying study of, in Professor Pollard's phrase, 'the most honest of Tudor rulers'.

This book is the better for being written by a woman, who with delicate understanding, and sustained by a remarkable scholarship, succeeds in presenting Mary very much as she must have appeared to her contemporaries. There is no stress on the terrible nickname; there is instead a careful analysis of its origin, which results in a certain extenuation. Anyone of a normal sensibility, approaching the subject of Mary Tudor with an open mind, must feel sympathy for a lonely and at the same time

warmly affectionate woman, for whom, after years of bitterness and humiliation, there awaited a crown that brought a little happiness, much sorrow and the obloquy of history.

Mary Tudor could have found happiness as a nun, for her religious practice was true; she might even have found happiness as a simple wife with many children, for she loved babies. Her destiny was otherwise and led her along the path of sorrow. Against the splendid pageantry of her age, and its ugly turbulence, Mary Tudor appears in these learned and most readable pages as she was: very much a woman, very much the daughter of her father, misguided, ill-advised, but a good woman, and an honest one.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

WILLIAM LLOYD. By A. Tindal Hart. (S.P.C.K.; 30s.)

JEREMY TAYLOR. By Hugh Ross Williamson. (Dobson; 15s.)

The importance of the Caroline Church of England is today receiving its proper recognition among the historians. It is important that English Catholics should share in that recognition for the Caroline divines are probably more important from the point of view of the historian than their Elizabethan forerunners. In the century-long process of the English Reformation they had the last, if not necessarily the decisive, word; and their influence is heavy, if often unrecognised, upon much of what the jargon of today likes to call the English way of life.

Lloyd provides an interesting contrast with Taylor. The one was a Welsh bishop in England, the other an English bishop in Ireland. Lloyd came of the gentry and was in the right line of those clerical aristocrats from the Principality who figured so largely in seventeenth-century Anglicanism. They were part of the Tudor inheritance and a consequence of the British Crown. Taylor was the son of a Cambridge barber, a scholar and a man of God. The tradition which Lloyd represented came to an end with the Revolution whose success he did so much to ensure. He was the last of the line. Taylor left to his country a more enduring and a more splendid, if less glittering, inheritance. Each, in a different sense, outlived his day and died apart from his fellows, and each was a true child of the Caroline Church of England. Each of them found himself unwillingly swept by the events of the day into the Roman controversy. The moral theologian from Cambridge turned to invective and the politician from Oxford used with vigour the traditional weapons of the Apocalypse and chronology. In a sense it was a trifle old-fashioned, yet Lloyd survived until 1717, and his Anglicanism is in its view of the relations of Church and state, implicit in the whole of Ellis Wynne's prose classic, *Y Bardd Cwsc*, to students of which Dr Hart's book will be of real interest.

While Mr Ross Williamson's book claims to be no more than a sketch