

## Book Reviews

murder of a people is a deliberate policy. The Communist leaders know that their tyranny has no chance of survival in a country of free citizens.

O.B.

A HISTORY OF ENGLAND. Vol. IV. By Hilaire Belloc. (London: Methuen, 1931; pp. 457; 15/-.)

The fourth volume of Mr. Belloc's History is concerned with the years 1525-1612, the crucial period of the Reformation. In its pages the 'majestic lord who broke the bonds of Rome' appears as a blustering, emotional, but essentially weak man, the prey of his appetites, and in his later years, of venereal disease. Elizabeth fares no better than her father: she is, for the most part, under the control of Cecil, to whose political skill and good fortune the success of the Reformation is mainly due. The collapse of the Church is followed by that of the Crown, and the 'deserving noblemen' and wealthy merchants are left supreme on the stage, to the great disadvantage of the common folk. 'Do ye not know,' as one of them said to his tenants, 'that the King's Grace hath put down all the houses of monks, friars and nuns? Therefore, now is the time come that we gentlemen will pull down the houses of such poor knaves as ye be.'

Besides one or two tiresome misprints, there are certain faults which, while they do not seriously affect the value of what Mr. Belloc has to say, are, nevertheless, extremely irritating. In company with Professor Pollard, Mr. Belloc has allowed himself to be misled by the old legend of the base origin of the Tudors. In point of fact, the Tudors of Penmynydd were a respectable family of typical Anglesey squires with a long pedigree and a short purse. They took part—and a prominent part—in the politics of North Wales for at least a century before Owen Tudor.

Sufficient emphasis is not laid on the early promise and popularity of Henry VIII, a fact of some importance. It is not entirely accurate to say that the Bull *Regnans in Excelsis* was 'a complete fiasco.' It was of great importance that Rome had at last after ten years given its decision. The Bull stiffened the Catholic resistance all over the North and made possible the limited success of the Jesuits.

In the main, however, what Mr. Belloc has to say is true enough, and he stands almost alone among the present day writers in his ability to write history which at the same time is history. It is a combination which will give him a permanent place among English historians.

T. C-E.