

with her silken, starry hair
 in golden columns from her head,
 dragon fire lighting up a door,
 three chains like the Milky Way?’

Both examples are from Dafydd ab Edmwnd, the supreme technician.

Granted then that one must do without the basic sound of the poetry, or with the best approximation one can manage, what remains? A very great deal. In general, a real eye-opening, sense-awakening glimpse of a Celtic culture and its poetry in the broad sense; of what one might call a collective imagination as bright as noonday; a continual sharp delight in actions of war and love, and a corresponding keenness of sorrow; an apprehension and use of the Welsh scene that makes English nature poetry seem tired, stodgy or artificial. Pagan? Only to the narrow-minded.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

LORD BYRON'S MARRIAGE. By G. Wilson Knight. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 30s.)

No one has satisfactorily explained Byron's separation from his wife and in spite of all the material now available it seems that no one ever will because one vital document, his own private memoirs, has been destroyed. The fact that his wife saw to their destruction suggests that she had something to hide; on the other hand Byron's own great sense of guilt and frequent statement of it suggests that he was equally at fault. The facts of the story are common knowledge: after one year of marriage that appeared extremely happy, and the birth of a child, Lady Byron, for no apparent reason, returned home to her parents and refused ever to see Byron again. She would give no reason for her behaviour but dropped many dark hints. After about a year Byron left this country never to return, and his wife took the opportunity to allow and encourage the rumour that he had committed incest with Augusta Leigh, his half-sister. Throughout his life and after his death she continued her campaign to blacken her husband's character. Byron's own conduct and his 'confessions' did nothing to refute her charges. However, scholars have for some time now set aside the charge of incest as false and so Professor Wilson Knight sets out to find another cause of the separation. He bases his findings ultimately on the *Don Leon* poems by Byron's friend, George Coleman. From youth Byron had been a homosexual; more accurately he was bi-sexual and had indulged his homosexual tendencies (though it is not at all certain that this indulgence was great). After the birth of their first child he persuaded his wife to 'enact the Ganymede', without perhaps much difficulty as she too was probably bi-sexual. When she realized or thought she realized

that her husband only found in her a substitute for the boy he desired, she returned to her parents. Such is the reconstruction Professor Wilson Knight makes from the *Don Leon* poems which claim to tell the whole story with Byron as narrator. Perhaps he makes out too clear a case, for after all we hear nothing of these unnatural tendencies from Byron's subsequent mistresses who were outspoken ladies. His own protestations of guilt are very general indeed and are not necessarily connected with sex; certainly in some cases they would seem to refer to other sins; George Coleman on the other hand does seem to be obsessed with unnatural sex. Whatever the truth is, Professor Wilson Knight has done his work with the utmost dignity, tact and detachment, but it must be emphasized that this is a piece of biographical detection, not literary criticism. Byron's poetry remains as great as ever, no more and no less.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

WHAT AUTOMATION DOES TO HUMAN BEINGS. By George Soule. (Sidgwick and Jackson; 15s.)

AUTOMATION: FRIEND OR FOE? By R. H. Macmillan. (Cambridge University Press; 8s. 6d.)

These are two of several popular accounts of automation published recently. As a pair they are in striking contrast. *What Automation Does to Human Beings* is an intensely American book, well-meant but by English standards protracted and inclined to superficiality. *Automation: Friend or Foe?*, on the other hand, is a careful and considered survey, based on a series of broadcast talks. Its author, who has recently been appointed to the chair of engineering in Swansea, believes with good reason that discussion of the effects of automation must be based on an understanding of how it works, and he illustrates his points by taking the reader step by step through carefully-chosen examples of automatic mechanisms. The writing is delightfully lucid and succinct, and the book as a whole is difficult to fault. One small correction: the Ferranti Pegasus computer uses punched tape, not punched cards.

MICHAEL HOSKIN

SCIENCE AWAKENING. By B. L. van der Waerden. (Groningen, Holland: P. Noordhoff; n.p.)

It is always exciting to uncover popular fallacies, and in few fields can they be as numerous as in the history of science. What other study can offer *canards* to rival the almost universal conviction that the medievals thought the earth was flat, or the repeated assertion even among scholars that Galileo was the first to challenge Aristotle's dictum that bodies of different weights fall with different speeds? Professor van der Waerden's exclamation, 'How many fairy tales circulate as