

he was one of these few. He lived in rooms above Q's at Jesus and, as he says himself, 'my feelings towards him were such that I spent as much time in his company as I could'. So this memoir gives us just that inside view which was necessary to complete the picture of the man 'full of mature wisdom and instinct with humanity'.

At the same time it is not a flimsy tribute to the personal fads of a great man. The solidity and permanence of his work is appraised and in particular his aims and achievements in establishing the English Tripos which he and his successors justly claim to be a true educational discipline with its insistence on the Classical background and the importance of the Moralists and its belief that 'Literature is not a mere science to be studied; but an art to be practised'. Q's work in all its branches will live both because of his own wholeness and because of the deep roots which he thrust down. He may not have found it necessary to face certain problems—that was not the business of his age. He was a pioneer and he laid his foundations deep and solid. Mr Brittain has shown us where this depth and solidity found their source. The book is excellently produced, with portraits, photographs and facsimiles, and only one regrettable misplacement of a Greek aspirate. Both the author and his publishers have earned our gratitude.

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FEARFUL SYMMETRY: A Study of William Blake. By Northrop Frye. (Cumberlege; Princeton University Press; 25s.)

This study of Blake's relation to English literature is assuredly safe from being classed with 'the obsolete, the eccentric and the merely trivial'. It covers its ground with a thoroughness and objectivity that will preserve it from obsolescence; eccentricity is a relative character, its meaning depending on the particular centre in view, but the study is no more eccentric than the poet, and the poet is shown as writing in a solid mythopoeic tradition; the themes the poet dealt with keep any serious account of his teachings from triviality. Teaching is not perhaps what one first looks for in a poet or a pictorial artist, but Blake thought that every genuine artist was a prophet and vice versa. 'If in the Bible poetry, prophecy and divine inspiration are the same thing, and if in Classical poetry they are almost the same thing, is it not a possible inference that any poetry, even one's own, may be prophetic and divinely inspired? . . . All these movements of thought we have been tracing converge on Blake's identification of the artist's genius with the Holy Spirit.' Those are Mr Frye's words, not Blake's, but Blake would by no means have shrunk from an argument based on such formal identifications of things formally distinct, where his theories of knowledge,

art and life demanded that they be identified. Of those three the first is fundamental to the others. If anything could have made Blake hate Reynolds's theory of art more than what it was in itself, it was its connection with Locke's theory of knowledge, for 'Locke, along with Bacon and Newton, is constantly in Blake's poetry a symbol of every kind of evil, superstition and tyranny'. 'Mental things', Blake wrote, 'are alone Real; what is call'd Corporeal, Nobody Knows of its Dwelling Place: it is in Fallacy, and its Existence an Imposture. Where is the Existence Out of Mind or Thought? Where is it but in the Mind of a Fool?' And so, to be is to be perceived and to perceive is to be; the truly great man is the most exuberant seer; the type of human perfection is the man who participates to the fullest in the divine creative activity.

This idealism, combined with the confusion between, and indeed identification of, art and prudence culminates in evolutionary pantheism. 'The worship of God is: Honouring his gifts in other men, each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best: those who envy or calumniate great men hate God, for there is no other God' (Blake); 'To Blake "There Is No Natural Religion"'. The only reason that people believe in it is that they are unwilling to believe in the identity of God and Man' (Frye). This is the philosophical setting—Blake would have rejected the phrase and said 'vision'—into which he takes the literatures, the myths, the religions of the ages and wrests them to his will. Coherence is the idealist's criterion of truth, objectivity Blake loathed, for he loathed any duality such as that between subject and object; aesthetics, ethics, history, religion, all are blended into an artistic whole. Christian revelation is of course re-written, largely according to Swedenborg. Mr Frye has most ably analysed and elucidated the resultant amalgam of falsehood, heresy and genuine, deep insight, with apparently very little comment of his own. A bibliography would have been a welcome addition.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY. By Margaret Trouncer. (Macdonald & Co.; 12s. 6d.)

This somewhat tempestuous novel is, at its best, reminiscent of *Ouida*, at its worst, of the romantic novelette. It has in its vast extent, nearly five hundred pages, all the ingredients of the novelette. The heroine, Julie de Montcalm, the daughter of a French duke, impoverished by the Revolution, is unable to marry the hero, Gerard Savine, the son of one of Napoleon's marshals who has dispossessed the ducal family. At the beginning of the novel the duke, who has 'chiselled and refined' features, appears in shabby clothes but 'immaculately groomed'. The duchess is not less distinguished in appearance for she has 'Ceres-hair like ripe burnished corn, bril-