

say, a creator of illusions, and he is confronted in the woman with what seems to be the reality of human feeling, though it would appear that there has taken place in her a falsification of the self, at the root of which lies pride. However, the ultimate truth is no easier to discern than it is in life, for in the vision of Bernanos, though there is distortion and at times even caricature, neat simplifications have no part; if appearances are pierced, the mystery of personality is but deepened as a consequence.

For those who value the work of this powerful writer and seek to fathom its import, this book will be welcome.

ERNEST BEAUMONT

THE RETRIAL OF JOAN OF ARC. By Régine Pernoud. (Methuen; 16s.)

Saint Joan, according to Mme Pernoud, 'has the effect on us today of a person who can never be entirely known, of one who can always be seen afresh and who is always capable of arousing the most heated controversy'. That may be true of France. It is scarcely true of England where the national attitude to the Maid has changed from Shakespeare's day when Joan la Pucelle was named a 'devil or devil's dam', 'a high-minded strumpet'. Only a few weeks ago an important French journal commented on the well-known English infatuation for La Pucelle. It was very different five hundred years ago when, as Mme Pernoud shows, the English were the villains of the piece, the French judges their unworthy hirelings. The personality of Joan, her mystery, has conquered the hearts of the Goddams of these days as once her military mission conquered their ancestors.

The giddy Dauphin of Shaw's *Saint Joan* became the anointed king of France, Charles VII. It was nearly twenty years before he took action to have the stigma of 'relapsed heretic' removed from the name of the girl from Lorraine who had brought him to his throne. This he did when Rouen, the scene of Joan's martyrdom, was freed from English occupation at the end of 1449. He gave orders that diligent inquiry should be made concerning the trial of Joan the Maid by the English who 'iniquitously, cruelly and in defiance of all justice put her to death'.

Mme Pernoud's book is a digest of the royal inquiry. Here we can read what people who actually knew Joan thought of her, Dunois, la Hire and the rest. It is, inevitably, repetitive at times but these contemporary statements bring Joan vividly to life. The rehabilitation process means less to us than it did to her contemporaries for we accept Joan as a saint and France's greatest heroine. It meant a great deal at the time for it vindicated the claims of Joan the Maid and prepared the way for her greater glory in this century.

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