

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