

Romanization was a geographical one; the extent of forestland as well as hillside even more than the habits of a pastoral people prevented the development of a 'Villa' system, and therefore of a Roman system of land tenure, and therefore of a Romanized social structure. But this does not imply that Rome had had no impact of the way of life of the chiefs of the Ordovices or of the Decangi or of the western Silures. So much has been learnt recently through the discovery of the hill fort of the third and fourth century Votadini on the summit of Taprain Law in East Lothian. The primary need for early Welsh history is the siting and excavation of some Ordovician Taprain Law.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

BYWYD AC AMSERAU'R ESGOB RICHARD DAVIES. Gan Glanmor Williams. (University of Wales Press; 8s. 6d.)

Here is a book which will add to the already assured reputation of the University of Wales Press. Richard Davies has for some time stood in need of a modern biography built on the foundations laid by Archdeacon Thomas, and Mr Glanmor Williams has put every student of Welsh history in his debt. His book should be of particular interest to Catholics in Wales and should help them to an understanding of the eventual success of the Elizabethan settlement in the Principality. Davies, the son of a priest, and of patrician descent on both sides of his family, represented that alliance between Renaissance scholarship and the new religion which yet had its roots in the traditional culture of his country. The palace at Abergwili provided a suitable setting for his great Renaissance household and court, and Davies' reputation for scholarship kept him in touch with the circle round Parker. He may very well be the origin of Spenser's Diggon Davie in *the Shepheardes Calender*. In the Welsh version of the New Testament and the Book of Common Prayer his influence extends to our own day.

As there is no doubt that Mr Williams' book will remain for some time the standard work on the subject, it may be permissible to suggest that before the next edition two minor points may merit consideration. To begin with, the author fumbles on pages 2 and 3 over the question of clerical concubinage at the beginning of the sixteenth century. I should have thought it improbable that his parentage should necessarily have tended to draw Davies to the Protestant side. There would seem no reason on page 23 to use the English 'John a Lasco' to designate (in Welsh) the Polish 'Jan Laski'.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that for the ordinary reader who wishes to grasp the spirit and method of the Elizabethan settlement at its best, and so at its most effective, a book such as this is of far more value than the average desiccated outline. For instance, the attitude of the

conforming magistrates and local officials of his diocese is most interestingly illuminated by the two extracts from Davies' funeral sermon on Essex (pages 57 and 58).

'(They) walk after the pleasures and riches of this life, apply all their power to further and continue the kingdom of Anti-Christ, defend papistry, superstition and idolatry, pilgrimages to wells and blind chapels, procure the wardens of churches in time of visitation to perjury to conceal images, rood-lofts and altars. . . . God's chosen officers in this blessed time of light and knowledge of the Gospel of Christ will neither enter themselves into the Kingdom of Heaven nor suffer them that would.'

Both extracts deserve, perhaps, a wider comment and analysis by the author.

T. CHARLES EDWARDS

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA. By Sigrid Undset. (Sheed and Ward; 16s.)

The temptation to write almost in terms of fiction when dealing with any very strongly characterized figure over whom history and legend have woven an enclosing veil was not quite resisted by the great Scandinavian novelist, Sigrid Undset, when she compiled her biography of St Catherine of Siena.

The effect of her work is less dislocating to credulity than that made by Werfel's *Bernadette* because the novelist has been to some extent restrained by the biographer: but those readers familiar with Edmund Gardner's thoroughly documented history of the saint will miss, in this newer work, the notes, the bibliography, the fine illustrations, and, most of all, the informative chapter headings which did so much to clarify Gardner's monograph on the tangled history of Italian religion, politics and letters in the epoch that immediately followed the age of Dante.

Mrs Lund's very readable translation of the Norwegian text is given like any circulating-library novel without note, bibliography or index, and the single page, headed 'Contents', offers a barren list of untitled chapters, which is no sort of use to the reader wishing to find his place again in the book he lays down for an hour.

That Sigrid Undset had access to the best authorities when compiling her sympathetic narrative is clear, and it is possible that some texts discovered since Professor Gardner wrote may have reached her hands. One instance of this possibility occurs on page 193 where, by an unfortunate transposition of paragraphs, Sigrid Undset appears to record two separate occasions when Gregory XI disguised himself in order to visit Catherine Benincasa at the Palazzo Scotti in Genoa when on his