

deserve really serious consideration; is not so much partisan as anti-partisan. The criticism levelled at the Labour Party should sometimes be shared among their partners in the Coalition Government, as in the case of the Education Act, which was implemented in its original form by Mr Butler and only slightly altered by the Socialists. Nevertheless, one cannot help feeling that Mr Gollancz and his bitter band of socialist intellectuals are only reaping the tornado from the gales they sowed as Romans.

MAURICE McLOUGHLIN

THE CROWN OF LIFE. By G. Wilson Knight. (Oxford University Press; 18s.)

One type of literary criticism, claiming the accuracy of scientific method, demands that the critic should go to his task with a mind completely empty; he should then dissect the work under consideration and make judgment solely on his findings. But every judgment demands two terms, and dissection will only give us one; we find the other term not in an empty mind but in a basic scale of values. To judge Shakespeare against himself alone is less than worthless. It is impossible. He must be judged according to principles.

Professor Knight, or any other modern critic, is compelled to write within a 'climate of opinion' which tends to minimise the value of principles and singles out the attitude 'which evades dogma and lives broadly in the spirit' as the most praiseworthy characteristic of Shakespeare's age. So in reading *The Crown of Life* one receives the impression that despite the author's principles this background is responsible for much obscurity. Although the book is mainly concerned with mysticism and the mystical significance of the later plays we are never sure what mysticism is. Again, we read that 'art is an extraverted expression of the creative imagination which, when introverted, becomes religion. But the mind of man cannot altogether dispense with the machinery of objectivity, and the inwardness of religion must create, or discern, its own objective reality and name it God'. In this manner absolute values are diluted and obscured in their formulation, and we find profound truths jostling startling half-truths: 'the Christian cross is only the symbol of the greatest of tragedies'; 'God himself is part of history'. Professor Knight describes the 'Shakespearean Renaissance' accurately, but cannot bring himself to lay down definitively the principles which lie behind Shakespeare's discriminating treatment of *Il Cortegiano* and Prospero's final renunciation. 'Today', he says, 'we have lost contact with mystery'; but that is because we have lost contact with dogma. Thus, while it would be far from just to call Professor Knight's criticism unprincipled, it does appear that the craze for 'non-sectarian' criticism and the cultivation of the mind that is so broad that it loses depth have blinded him to the full richness of his own interpretation and to some degree marred the clarity of his work. This must not detract

from its value. He has worked at a deeper level than Quiller-Couch ever found necessary and he pursues a course parallel to that of Doctor Tillyard but with deeper ramifications.

Poetic experience and poetic language are more clearly defined. 'Poetic language is itself an incarnation not a transcription of thought'—a profound and valuable statement that merits long consideration. Poetic experience means 'a seizing on truth beyond the writer's personal thinking through submission to the object'. This is more than the simple distinction between subject and object. It raises the whole question of the relation and fusion of subject and object and the result of that fusion so that 'the depths of personality blossom impersonally'. There lies the secret of Prospero's renunciation—losing one's life to save it—and this theme deserves to be developed. Perhaps not only the work of Proust, as M. Maritain has said, but Shakespearean criticism 'needs the inner light of a St Augustine' to be written as it should. Without such inner light we find Shakespeare's nationalism raised to the same level as his more universal doctrines.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THERE SHALL BE NO VICTORY. By Axel Heyst. (Gollancz; 16s.)

Two books by Mr Axel Heyst were published in London in 1940 and 1941, and gave rise to some controversy. This new volume with its sub-title, 'Diary of a European', consists mainly of extracts from a diary kept between 1939 and 1944, supplemented by observations and meditations on war, and further remarks written at the time of Germany's collapse. The long lapse of time between this and the earlier publications is due, says the author, to the reluctance of British publishers to issue 'what might be harmful to the cause of Allied unity'. 'Such a book had, in fact, precious little chance of being published in war-time Britain.' The author frankly confesses that the MS was promptly returned as 'untimely', 'unduly pessimistic', or 'too gloomy'. The official propaganda of the Western Powers led to a sense of frustration and embitterment among writers, who had to wait for a more favourable time.

The arrangement of the book is very confusing. It is divided into ten chapters covering the years 1939 to 1945, according to subject. The diary is split up under those headings, and so loses its continuity, while the additions added later add to a curiously artificial impression.

The best part of the book is the end, where the author strikes a really inspiring note. Our culture, he says, can never be rebuilt on a basis of materialism, or by a crusade to raise the standard of living. A new faith can be built only on a spiritual basis. We need new cloisters, new schools of contemplation, and new universities, which will teach internationalism. The great crisis, of which this war was but one expression, is of spiritual origin. Unless a true balance is