

Yet it would repay the labour. Our author, after minutely discussing the earlier plays written round the title before *Irene* herself, and then examining Johnson's rough draft of his play, shows us how full of interest is its text, and what light it casts on Johnson's own ideas at the time he wrote it. He even discovers in one of the lesser characters an embodiment of the qualities Johnson thought he had found in his own beloved 'Tetty'.

But it is the second of the essays which is the most novel and striking one. Mr Bronson is one of the first to draw upon the recently disinterred Boswell Papers, as yet little known in this country, but existing in a limited edition de luxe of eighteen volumes in America, of which a more popular impression is said to be in preparation. In 'Boswell's Boswell', we are given copious extracts from Boswell's private journal, in which we see that strangest of men as he really lived, and are able to live each scene together with him. And in its 'appalling frankness' that day by day record is one of the most singular self-biographies given to the world. Mr Bronson's analysis of Boswell's temperament merely scratches its surface, and gives us an appetite for more.

ROBERT BRACEY, O.P.

THE STATE OF MIND OF MRS SHERWOOD. By Naomi Royde Smith. (Macmillan; 7s. 6d.)

Mrs Sherwood, author of *The Fairchild Family* and of nearly four hundred books besides, died in 1851. Hers was surely a monumental achievement, and Miss Royde Smith has had the good idea of inspecting the monument. There is nothing more revealing than the popular reading of a former generation, and here we have a brisk and professional guide who is able to disinter much that is amusing, and still more that is startling, from the millions of words in which the tireless lady expressed her moral and theological opinions.

Nothing is easier than to laugh at these hortatory novels, whose setting ranges from India to Staffordshire vicarages, whose characters include malign monks, worthy clergymen, reforming English ladies on the Continent and children—always children, to be taught, to be threatened with the certain doom that awaits disobedience and even frivolity. But there is more to Mrs Sherwood than an Aunt Sally upon whom a later age can revenge itself with laughter. She is the embodiment of Victorian morality, of that Manichean mistrust of created good which haunts the children's books of a period she did much to influence.

Miss Royde Smith has provided valuable material for the sociologist, not to say the psychologist (what might he not make of Mrs Sherwood's preoccupation with corpses, with lingering disease and parental ferocity?). And her analysis of the anti-Catholicism which became an obsession with Mrs Sherwood's advancing years is a valuable sidelight on what became a convention—taken for granted nowadays, but too rarely related to its origins. The famous conversation in *The Fairchild Family* strikes the note:

'Mamma', said Henry, 'are Roman Catholics Christian?'

'The Roman Catholics, my dear, are called Christians', said Mrs Fairchild, 'but there is much in their religion which the Bible does not approve. . . . You know that the French are Roman Catholics, and that they formerly were governed by a very powerful king—so now go on with your reading, Henry'.

But however vigorously Mrs Sherwood might insist on 'correct doctrine', her theological views—and certainly her animosity for the papists—are part of a process that is as much economic and social as doctrinal. Truly does Miss Royde Smith remark that the work of Mrs Sherwood 'hammered down the moral structure which eventually produced the commercial prosperity of the Victorian age'.

Let no one suppose, however, that this is a dreary piece of research with the redoubtable Mrs Sherwood as a peg for an author's opinions. It is rather an exquisite piece of writing, giving full credit to Mrs Sherwood's achievement and illuminating it with a wit and discernment that Miss Royde Smith's readers have come to expect of her. And in an age of shoddy books at high prices one must congratulate the publishers on the production of two hundred pages of excellent printing, with four contemporary illustrations, for the sum of seven and sixpence.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE. Hobhouse Memorial Trust Lecture, by Charles E. Raven. (Oxford University Press; 2s.)

In this lecture on the conflict between Religion and Science, Canon Raven tries to maintain that the opposition between them arose only when the religion of the Gospels was changed by the Church, especially in the Creeds which arose out of the Trinitarian and Christological controversies and by the influence of St Augustine. This book cannot be recommended as a positive contribution to the discussion, since it contains too many generalisations, too much muddled thought and too much inaccurate terminology. The author shows plenty of good will, but that is not sufficient to compensate for the poor quality of the intellectual content of the lecture.

D. M.

THE JUST VENGEANCE. Dorothy L. Sayers. (Gollancz; 5s.)

The Just Vengeance, as Miss Sayers rightly insists in her introduction, is written 'for performance in a cathedral rather than for reading in the study'. It is in fact difficult for the reader from the mere text, with its sparse 'directions' and little or no indication, in particular, of the musical setting of the sung passages, to form any concept of the play as a whole.

The dialogue itself is mainly 'echoes from many other writers', as if Miss Sayers conceives her theme as the background to some fantastic jig-saw puzzle, her own task being to select and fit on the appropriate pieces. It must be owned she manipulates them adroitly enough: and if occasionally there is a hint that the 'pieces' dictate the play and that natural satisfaction of the intellect takes precedence of the act of worship of God, it is no more than a suspicion.