

art and life demanded that they be identified. Of those three the first is fundamental to the others. If anything could have made Blake hate Reynolds's theory of art more than what it was in itself, it was its connection with Locke's theory of knowledge, for 'Locke, along with Bacon and Newton, is constantly in Blake's poetry a symbol of every kind of evil, superstition and tyranny'. 'Mental things', Blake wrote, 'are alone Real; what is call'd Corporeal, Nobody Knows of its Dwelling Place: it is in Fallacy, and its Existence an Imposture. Where is the Existence Out of Mind or Thought? Where is it but in the Mind of a Fool?' And so, to be is to be perceived and to perceive is to be; the truly great man is the most exuberant seer; the type of human perfection is the man who participates to the fullest in the divine creative activity.

This idealism, combined with the confusion between, and indeed identification of, art and prudence culminates in evolutionary pantheism. 'The worship of God is: Honouring his gifts in other men, each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best: those who envy or calumniate great men hate God, for there is no other God' (Blake); 'To Blake "There Is No Natural Religion". The only reason that people believe in it is that they are unwilling to believe in the identity of God and Man' (Frye). This is the philosophical setting—Blake would have rejected the phrase and said 'vision'—into which he takes the literatures, the myths, the religions of the ages and wrests them to his will. Coherence is the idealist's criterion of truth, objectivity Blake loathed, for he loathed any duality such as that between subject and object; aesthetics, ethics, history, religion, all are blended into an artistic whole. Christian revelation is of course re-written, largely according to Swedenborg. Mr Frye has most ably analysed and elucidated the resultant amalgam of falsehood, heresy and genuine, deep insight, with apparently very little comment of his own. A bibliography would have been a welcome addition.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

*SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY.* By Margaret Trouncer. (Macdonald & Co.; 12s. 6d.)

This somewhat tempestuous novel is, at its best, reminiscent of *Ouida*, at its worst, of the romantic novelette. It has in its vast extent, nearly five hundred pages, all the ingredients of the novelette. The heroine, Julie de Montcalm, the daughter of a French duke, impoverished by the Revolution, is unable to marry the hero, Gerard Savine, the son of one of Napoleon's marshals who has dispossessed the ducal family. At the beginning of the novel the duke, who has 'chiselled and refined' features, appears in shabby clothes but 'immaculately groomed'. The duchess is not less distinguished in appearance for she has 'Ceres-hair like ripe burnished corn, bril-

liant gentian-dark eyes, a fine aquiline nose, a proud bosom'.

In the course of this lengthy novel, which covers some fifty years after the French Revolution, Julie de Montcalm endures many vicissitudes. Suffering, nobly borne, causes the poor girl to look thin and almost 'brittle', or, as an English officer 'who twirled his drooping moustachios' said of her, 'like a slender aristocratic ghost in wonderful clothes'. Suffering also changes the hero who, unable to marry Julie because of both families' hostility, seeks to become a priest and comes to look like 'a distinguished ghost in his long black cassock and flowing cloak'.

Reduced to half its length, this novel might have been a charming romance. As it is, there is too much in it. And the reader has often to endure many pages of biased and sometimes misleading history which has nothing to do with the plot. There are passages which are regrettable, and too frequently the authoress obtrudes herself on the reader's attention.

One could desire more accuracy in the use of words. Can even a duchess sweep a 'dazzling' curtsy? May one describe her gowns as 'wonderful'? Should a lady have 'a wee shut-eye' in front of the fire? And could Julie really be 'soporific'?

Those who have enjoyed Miss Trouncer's previous novels and biographies will be delighted by her latest work. Others may reflect on the paper shortage.

K. M.

ENGLISH HOME-LIFE, 1500-1800. By Christina Hole. (Batsford; 15s.)

This is among the more successful of Messrs. Batsford's books. Miss Hole has set herself with great success to give a picture of the ordinary home-life in the English countryside between 1500 and 1800. Such a book might easily be scrappy and disjointed; instead it is a closely-knit and coherent account. To cover three centuries in less than two hundred pages inevitably involves compression, yet the narrative flows, steady and unhurried, to its conclusion. The illustrations, as might be expected, are admirable. In the last chapter, 'To Church on Sunday', which describes the religion of eighteenth-century England, full justice is done to the very genuine strength of religion in Hanoverian England. At the same time to say that 'most people went regularly to church on Sunday and received Holy Communion two or three times in the year' is most certainly not true of all rural parishes in that period. Also Miss Hole is wrong in supposing that the Methodist movement in Wales was the result of the labours of Wesley and Whitfield in England. It had an earlier and separate origin.

T. CHARLES-EDWARDS.