

and often colourful. Some irritating blemishes are an excessive use of Stuart as a laudatory adjective, Scotch for Scottish, a reference to Scottish 'Counts', Lindores and Requiem quaintly mis-spelt.

Regretfully it must be said that Dr Brégy has missed a chance to do a real service to her heroine. Almost the last words of the book are 'Mary, Queen of Paradox, despised and rejected by men, limping to martyrdom at Fotheringay with such "smiling cheer" that many have thought she achieved sainthood at the last'. Dramatic words, even moving, but in actual fact a feeble way of summing up the tremendous contemporary Catholic reaction in England and abroad to Mary's execution, and its impact on later generations. The Queen of Scots is much more than a romantic historical figure. It was the loyal remnants of the Elizabethan Catholics who first proclaimed her real greatness when they said, as they did in an official defence of Mary published in Cologne in March, 1587, 'Long live the Martyr Queen with Christ for ever'. Briefly and contemptuously they dismissed the calumnies that overshadowed Mary's life and concentrated on her tragic end which merged into her glorious beginning. It is a pity that Dr Brégy did not follow their example.

An original feature of this literary biography is a 'dramatis personae', which will be helpful to readers unfamiliar with Mary's story. A bibliography of uneven value makes no reference to a recent Historiographer-Royal for Scotland, Sir Robert S. Rait, which is indeed regrettable.

K.M.

LEINSTER, MUNSTER AND CONNAUGHT. By Frank O'Connor. (The County Books, Robert Hale; 15s.)

AN IRISHMAN'S DIARY. By Patrick Campbell. (Cassell; 8s. 6d.)

No one would expect a guide-book by Frank O'Connor to be usual, and this account of the three Provinces has some of the merits and most of the defects that make of him so brilliant and so exasperating a writer of prose. So determined is Mr O'Connor not to fall into the category of the tourist that he abandons many of the starred items; his favoured territory is the hideous little town where he can blaspheme, the ruined palladian mansion or the by-roads of Swiftiana. This means much unexpected information, some expected abuse, and a nice discernment in describing plaster ceilings in a Dublin orphanage or the poetry of Merriman.

It is unfortunate that chronic indignation and a perversity of judgment about a whole range of subjects, literary, political and religious, should make Mr O'Connor's book so lively an irritant (though 'stimulant' may sometimes be the word). It tells us much about himself, but less about Ireland.

Mr Campbell is a professional humourist, and his collection of pieces from the *Irish Times* is a pleasant reflection of Dublin life (with occasional expeditions to Leopardstown or the Curragh) seen as it were from the bar of the Gresham Hotel. But his humour is never forced, and he mingles irony with wit, pity with satire, finding human nature infinitely funny and lovable at the same time. In Ronald Searle he has a fitting companion, whose angular illustrations match all his moods.

I.E.

SIR TOBIE MATHEW. By David Mathew.

EDWARD GARNETT. By H. E. Bates. ('Personal Portraits', Max Parrish: 6s. each.)

It was an excellent idea to invite distinguished writers to contribute to a series whose common denominator is simply 'the biography I would most like to write'. The latest two volumes, so different in subject and treatment, are brilliant examples of a literary form rare enough in English to be remarkable. For Mgr Mathew, his ancestor is a perfect subject for his special gift of evoking a society and the men that made it. Sir Tobie, son of the Archbishop of York, friend of Bacon, a figure at the Court of Charles I, convert and priest: he has grace and intelligence, and a suggestion of mystery that allows his biographer to speculate about the hidden springs of a character at once complex and compelling. In eighty pages we are given a portrait of astonishing detail and depth, and once more we are aware of Mgr Mathew's resource in illuminating a figure of history with affection and serenity of judgment.

Mr Bates writes of a friend to whom he owes much, and his portrait of a disinterested critic who used his skill to assist young writers is the work of gratitude and love. As one might expect of a novelist of Mr Bates's achievement, Garnett is described with accuracy and with a full regard for the oddities of manner and dress that marked him. 'He was that rare person whose whole life was in the work of others', and that life is generously recorded by one of his inheritors.

The publishers deserve a word of thanks for a delightfully produced series, abundantly illustrated and moderately priced.

I.E.