

to harmonious union of all elements in *Weir of Hermiston*, an embryo tragedy, fragmentary, but a perfect work of art. This is done by means of first class criticism. 'psychological' and 'documentary' well co-ordinated. It would perhaps be ungenerous to ask for a closer investigation of the parallel with Charles Lamb's childhood worship, but there is one tantalising loose end. Stevenson's love of the open air seems oddly English—almost pipe and brogues—and that doesn't seem to fit in. Perhaps a Scotsman could explain that as successfully as he put Stevenson right in the Scottish tradition of Henryson interiors and Dunbar's Edinburgh. This is quite excellent and Englishmen must be grateful. Finally the brief chapter on the poems and essays throws considerable light on the earlier part of the book and repays careful reading.

G. A. MEATH, O.P.

MEREDITH. By Siegfried Sassoon. (Constable; 15s.)

No doubt there are many who will be induced to read this biography because of recollections of previous diversions from the pen of Siegfried Sassoon. For who could forget the thrill of reading the 'Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man' and its sequels? The Sassoon-enthusiast who may have read little of Meredith's works, or who is perhaps aware of him only as a novelist whom one really must read some day, need have no qualms. What Mr Sassoon did for fox-hunting, he does equally effectively for Meredith. Mr Sassoon writes of the creator of *Evan Harrington* and *Diana of the Crossways* with the discriminating enthusiasm of one who has been a 'Meredithian' since his youth. He writes, too, of his subject with a sensitive understanding of the nostalgic quality in Meredith who 'can make us remember what it felt like to be young, can recover for us the rapture and dizzying uncertainty of first love, can make us breathe the air of early morning, and bring back the forgotten strangeness of mountains looked at long ago'.

The course of Meredith's life and literary development is traced with sympathetic care. And, as one would expect from a 'Meredithian' with such a reputation as a clever craftsman in the art of writing, Mr Sassoon gives critical studies and appreciations of Meredith's novels and more important poetry. 'The star of Meredith'. Mr Sassoon asserts confidently, 'burns and is alive with constant fire'. In this study of the great Victorian novelist, Mr Sassoon has achieved his purpose in revealing that 'star's' brilliance to a public from which it has long been obscured.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

HUMAN ECOLOGY. By Thomas Robertson. (MacLellan; 21s.)

The aim of this book, in the author's words, is 'to make a scientific approach to social phenomena and is a plea for a better and more extensive application of the scientific method'. The particular scientific method to which he refers is adapted from that branch of biology known as 'ecology, mutual adjustment between organism and environment.