

had to face Select Committees which put such questions as this (by Lord W. Graham): 'But if the public taste is not prepared for these pictures, might it not be possible that the public would call them trash?' Mr Hale shows what was done, not only by Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites, but also by collectors such as Eastlake and Dennistoun, and by guide-books such as Palgrave's *Murray*, to open English eyes to the greatness of Italian art from Duccio to the age of Raphael.

The notion of 'the Renaissance in Italy' emerged first in the seventeenth century, in the writings of James Howell, Historiographer Royal to Charles II, and in Sir William Temple's *Essay on the Ancient and Modern Learning* (1690). What strikes one most in the attempt to explain the phenomenon is not the obviously emotional and 'subjective' evocations of William Roscoe or John Addington Symonds, but the vacillating formulae offered. Various hollow hypotheses are bandied to and fro—the fall of Constantinople, the growth of political liberty, the beneficent sway of enlightened despots—leaving us with a strong impression of the extreme fallibility of all historical theories, and a depressing picture of how long-lived the more superficial among them may be.

F. T. PRINCE

MANZONI AND HIS TIMES. By Archibald Colquhoun. (Dent; 21s.)

Mr Colquhoun has done good service both to English readers and to Italian letters by making available, first a modern translation of the greatest of Italian novels, and now a biography of its author. Much, of course, has been written in Italian on this subject and Mr Colquhoun's intention in this book is not to add to Manzonian studies but to introduce to the English public the retiring figure of the most universal writer of modern Italy. To some the man will seem disappointing, less interesting than his novel may have led them to expect. There is certainly nothing colourful about him; nothing of the trenchancy and flamboyance of a Stendhal. He was a quiet man of the study and garden, twice married and with a number of short-lived daughters and unsatisfactory sons.

This biography is very readable and well serves its purpose. It will not, however, entirely satisfy all those who share Manzoni's religious convictions. The most important feature of the latter's life is surely its religious orientation and it is to be regretted that Mr Colquhoun does not treat this subject at the depth it deserves. It is, moreover, clear enough, notwithstanding his discretion in this respect, that the biographer shares to a certain degree a common failure to appreciate the complexity of Catholicism, tending to imagine the faithful as servile beings condemned to intellectual sterility. As Manzoni was free from

any suggestion of what is known as clericalism, had a fertile mind and acted as he thought fit in temporal matters, Mr Colquhoun obviously has difficulty in reconciling the Italian writer's religion with his own preconception of orthodoxy.

As this book is a biography, we have no right to expect critical analyses of the works. Thus, Mr Colquhoun is no doubt justified in making his chapter on *I Promessi Sposi* purely peripheral, more or less devoid of any discussion of the novel itself. Some readers may feel, however, that the omission is damaging, as *I Promessi Sposi* is really the most complete manifestation of Manzoni that there is. It is a great work. While it is lacking in power and intensity, the power and intensity of a Dostoevsky or a Bernanos, it has what their work has not: serenity and as perfect an equilibrium as I think can be found in imaginative writing; it unites a deep Christian feeling with a fine humanity. It is essentially a work for those approaching or achieving middle age. On the adolescent it is unlikely to make much impression; he will probably be bored by it and think it oversentimental and unrealistic. Perhaps too many English people try to read the book too early in life and are thereby deterred from making a further attempt in maturity. Perhaps, too, only those who know and love Italy and the Italians can thoroughly understand and appreciate it.

ERNEST BEAUMONT

ESSAYS WITH A PURPOSE. By Salvador de Madariaga. (Hollis and Carter; 15s.)

This is a volume to be tasted from time to time, and not digested at one sitting. It comprises seventeen articles, lectures and broadcast talks, all prompted 'by some event or some requirement or some commission', and here collected under four headings: Political, Linguistic, Spanish and General. Five essays treat of urgent political problems of the present-day world: the martyrdom of reason and liberty, the decline of the Liberal spirit, the true nature of national sovereignty, the place of the artist in society, and the relation between freedom and science. Of the essays on Spanish themes, 'Spain and the West' analyses in a few masterly and telling pages the chief contribution of Spain to the increasingly mechanized West—the predominance of the human: in 'Spain and the Jews' the author dispassionately examines the nature and causes of anti-semitism in Spanish history, and in the remaining two essays defends bull-fighting (a *spectacle*, not a *sport*), and reflects, rather discursively, on the influence of Virgil in Spain. Other essays are concerned with language and linguistics, the written, spoken and broadcast word, the weaknesses and potentialities of broadcasting, leisure and the