

for most of the time touring Europe and America. Ō-oka used to be known before the war chiefly for his critical studies and his translations of the works of Stendhal. He was with our army in the Philippines during the disastrous latter part of the war and was taken prisoner by the Americans; he made a name for himself as a novelist on returning to Japan by an account of his experiences before and during his captivity, written with a Stendhalian precision. His chief claim to fame, however, lies so far in a much more imaginative use he made of those experiences in a later novel called *The Fires in the Plain*, in which the cannibalism of starving soldiers is somehow made to link up with the Christian doctrine concerning the Mass. This may sound shocking to Christians, but the extraordinary force of the presentation would seem to prove that the analogy established in the novel is a valid one. It is, in fact, the only novel written in Japanese to date in which the Western idea of God is represented with anything like the power the idea has in Europe. The novel is soon to appear in a translation in France.

Compared with this, the rest of the better sort of novels produced since the war strike one as being more remarkable for the promise shown than for any actual achievement. This may be thought a poor haul in contrast to the

vast amount of words written and pagee printed which constitute post-war Japanese literature; but, then, modern Japanese literature itself is one of promise and not yet of achievement. It began by trying to render in the Japanese language ideas taken from the West; and it is only now that, after fifty years of experiment, those ideas have begun to take root in the strange Japanese soil. One might bear in mind another factor: that for the last twenty years or so, literary criticism has always been ahead of fiction and poetry in Japan, and that it is still so today. For every promising novel one could cite at least three works of literary criticism that are finished products of this particular genre. But there again, one has to explain who and what are the authors and books discussed in any given piece of criticism, and one would be in danger of losing oneself in the necessary explanations. One might mention at least two studies of Mozart's music written since the war by literary critics, and one on Balzac; but they would need the space of another article for adequate exposition. The one thing really needed in this business of introducing modern Japanese literature abroad is a whole series of translations undertaken by English and American writers with sufficient knowledge of modern Japan.

Kenichi Yoshida

“THAT MAN OF BLOOD, CHARLES STUART”

THE belief that history can repeat itself is not in favour, and we are not supposed to believe in a “march of history” either. Nevertheless we do slyly think in terms of such things because, unreasonable and unlikely as they are, acceptance of them makes history the more followable and therefore credible. And whatever thinkers may say, the evidence for parallels and recurrences of pattern, not explainable by coincidence, is very abundant, nowhere more so than in the sad company of European kings with whose fates dynasties have been eclipsed or terminated. The career of Nicholas II of Russia in our time conformed perfectly to that kind of crowned unsuccess and tragedy which was made classic in 17th century England. Charles I was the archetype of the mild, blinkered,

respectable, courageous, royal blunderer, whose appearance in a nation's story is an infallible storm signal.

Miss C. V. Wedgwood has written a first-class study* of the four and a half years of Charles's reign from 1637 to the end of 1641. She opens with a “portrait of the age” drawn with a sure hand on a broad canvas, and she then proceeds to the events of the last years of peace before the Great Rebellion. The first part of the book is ominously entitled “The Happiest King in Christendom,” which was how Charles described himself to his nephew the Elector Palatine. The heading of the second part is plain, “Challenge from Scotland.” Then

* *The King's Peace*. By C. V. WEDGWOOD. Collins. 25s.

Miss Wedgwood's unusual dramatic skill appears in the third and last sub-title, "An Army in Ireland." This concluding section is much the largest of the book and most of it lies in England and Scotland, so much so that the reader is often puzzled by the heading under which its seven chapters are assembled. But the riddle is answered and justified. For the army raised by Strafford as Lord Deputy in Ireland was the great, and, if not the dominating, the most vexing and complicating factor in the background. This army might have solved the King's military problem in the North, but its existence was one reason why he could not make peace with his Scottish subjects, and it lost him thousands of obedient followers South of the border. At the trial of Lord Strafford in 1641, it was asserted that the minister had urged the King to use the army for the conquest of England. The charge was untrue and failed as it deserved, but a belief that something like it was true persisted. Here was to be found one of the deepest causes of Strafford's execution, that appalling act of injustice for allowing which the King (a little to his honour) never ceased to reproach himself. It is impossible to know what were Charles's own final intentions for the army in Ireland, because the instrument suddenly and fearfully broke in his hands. The triumph of Parliament over Strafford was a triumph of English and Scots over the Irish nation, and this meant more than was realised. No one had thought about Irish nationalism, least of all Charles, in his reckless intrigues with Lord Antrim and Sir Phelim O'Neil. The last consequence of having raised the army in Ireland followed its disbandment in 1641, and this was the Irish Rebellion, "disordered, elemental, desperate," a last stand against Protestant ascendancy. No one could control a rising of its fierce, primitive character, but the King was widely considered responsible for its outbreak, and in a way this was true.

THE outcome of these anguished mid-century years depended on many things but chiefly on two: the character of Charles I and the religious controversies of the time. The political conflict might have been largely avoided, and even used to strengthen the crown, if there had not been a religious conflict to intensify it, and if Charles had not had the true-to-form second-rate man's distrust and

impatience with weightier minds than his own. His position was in some ways not unlike that of his brother-in-law, Louis XIII, and like the French King he had Ministerial agents capable of the immense task of erecting a centralised grand monarchy. But while Louis knew himself to be lacking in the will and ability needed for absolute and unaided kingship, Charles was misled into believing he could be independent of all advisors by his fatal array of talent. He was the equal of anyone in thinking of ingenious intrigues, though he was too ignorant of the world, and much too lazy, to carry them out successfully. He had unusual power to charm. He was a generous and discerning patron of art, and to read of his exquisitely produced masques is to regret that one was not invited to attend them. In some ways he resembled another of the modern doomed sovereigns of Europe, the German Emperor William II. Like the unfortunate last Hohenzollern he was deceived by his own cleverness into believing that he possessed sagacity and statesmanship. So, while Louis the tortoise had the sense to obey Richelieu in most things, whether he wanted to or not, the politically hare-brained Charles lost both Strafford and Archbishop Laud, having never used either of them to full advantage.

There is no villain in the story. In the 17th century, that regal age when men already corrupted by power went to school to Machiavelli, Charles was the superior of most sovereigns in personal virtue and even in public honesty, while, in his extreme reluctance to apply torture or to inflict the revolting capital punishments of the time in order to obtain popularity, he was far above his brother kings abroad and his Parliamentary opposition at home. He seems not to have assassinated anyone. It is unlikely that any of his deceits and shifts (except in the Irish affair) really shocked the moral sense of his enemies. His main fault was an underlying silliness. Not the least of Miss Wedgwood's excellencies in this book is her sure and subtle and frequent indication that, despite his sincere and noble attachment to the Church of England as he understood her, and despite his impressive bearing on all occasions, Charles I was in large measure as frivolous as his eldest son. In a key passage she says:

His casual attitude to his council, his unwillingness to listen to disturbing information, his hunting three

or four times a week, the long hours spent in pursuit or enjoyment of works of art, or in theological discussion—all tell the same tale: he was not interested in practical administration. He idled away the opportunities of his reign, while his two ablest ministers . . . exchanged their troubled letters.

QUEEN HENRIETTA MARIA had inherited none of the astuteness and genius for opportunism of her father, Henry IV of France and Navarre, but she does seem to have inherited all his “gladness of character.” Like her husband, she is an archetype, standing at the head of a line of tragic and fatally meddling consorts. But there is a difference between her and her successors. It is difficult to sympathise with the pitiful last Tsarina; impossible to admire poor Eugénie; and very easy to see Marie Antoinette through sea-green eyes; but we are always left with the impression that Henrietta Maria was irresistible. The evidence is that she was a “*jolie laide*” of the most seductive kind. She was calamitous. She never seems to have given her husband good advice, and rarely failed to give him some advice. The example of her brother Louis XIII was lost on her, and because she did not like Strafford personally, she did not strengthen the King’s natural inclination to rescue the English Richelieu from the brutal spite of his enemies. Charles recognised his private betrayal of Strafford, but may always have been blind to the political folly of allowing his execution. Henrietta Maria was certainly unconscious of what this could mean.

She must not be blamed too much. It was only at the end of the 17th century that men could grasp what had happened in the political world during the age of the Thirty Years War. The political tendency had been towards grand monarchy, and the wars of religion had tended to accelerate the process. In England, for various fortuitous reasons, the religious conflict had strengthened an opposite tendency, and it must have been impossible to see that this was a permanent tendency, until the age of the French wars. This fact probably explains a good deal of James II. His work at the Admiralty proves that he was not an idiot, but he was unable to grasp the improbable situation which arose from Charles I’s failure to be the English Louis XIII. Charles II had delayed his purpose so it fell to his brother to be our Louis XIV. He was condemned to try to carry out the great 17th century dynastic effort in a

HER GREATEST NOVEL

Storm Jameson’s THE HIDDEN RIVER

Book Society Choice

‘Unquestionably the greatest of Storm Jameson’s novels, *The Hidden River* will be enjoyed both for the exquisitely poised excitement of its story and the brilliance of its technique.’

DANIEL GEORGE in *The Bookman* 12s. 6d.

NEW EDITION

W. B. Yeats’ AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

A one-volume edition of Yeats’ various autobiographical works, carrying his account of his career down to 1923, the year he received the Nobel Prize. It embodies the last corrections he made shortly before his death. March 11. 21s.

POETRY

BALLADS OF A BOGMAN

Sigerson Clifford

Verses by an Irishman who remembers with affection the way of life in a valley where the story-teller by the peat fire still commands a wider audience than the wireless set on the pub counter. February 11. 8s. 6d.

MACMILLAN

country which the religious quarrel had unpredictably flung back on to its medieval institutions. The failure of our *rois soleils* and our Richelieu is our greatest stroke of historical good luck. We missed thereby having a Louis XV, and we were spared a guillotine, and, who knows, we may yet be led by it to discover the still hidden art of sound democratic rule.

MISS WEDGWOOD'S book defies criticism most of the time. The writing is strong, clear, delightful throughout, and her sense of character provides light upon light on the opacities of an extraordinarily complicated past. The book might have been more valuable if she had related the situation of the British throne to that of European monarchy in general, and if she had examined the relation, or unrelation, of the religious quarrel in the British Isles to that which prompted the Thirty Years War on the Continent. In one passage there seems to be a rather bad slip. One of the most remarkable men of 17th century England was Algernon Percy, Lord Northumberland, whom Charles, with characteristic foolishness, alienated from his cause. Miss Wedgwood asserts that this man abandoned the royal party after Strafford's execution, and she suggests that part of his reason for so doing was contemptuous disgust at Charles's betrayal of his chief and best minister. She adds that Northumberland and Strafford were friends. Surely this is wrong. Northumberland might have been expected to be Strafford's friend after the support he had received from him, but the fact

remains that he gave evidence against Strafford during the latter's trial, a deed which understandably hurt and angered the King. Afterwards Northumberland wrote to a friend that he had lost royal favour because he had not perjured himself for Strafford, as the King wanted. None of this sounds remotely like friendship of any kind for Strafford, or suggests that for his sake Northumberland threw over Charles—but I am prepared to be corrected by the author of this deeply studied record.

It is good news that *The King's Peace* is the prelude to further books in which Miss Wedgwood intends to relate the course of the Civil War and the Republican Commonwealth. The end of the first act, as it is presented here, again shows that Miss Wedgwood is a narrative artist in the first rank. The moment is November 1641. The Irish Rebellion is producing barbarism in the sister island, and the King thinks little of it. He has paid a disastrous visit to Scotland in which, so he believes, his personal charm has again conquered all hearts for him. Pym has just obtained a narrow majority in the Commons for the Grand Remonstrance. The curtain comes down on a last glimpse of Charles I enjoying one of his many refreshing moments of optimism and confidence:

Early on the morning of November 23rd, 1641, while the Members of the House of Commons slept off the effects of their late night, the King and his following were once more upon the road, a distinguished, orderly, elegant cavalcade, moving towards London.

Christopher Sykes

TOYNBEE AND THE HISTORICAL IMAGINATION

THE last four volumes of Mr. Toynbee's work* confront the reviewer with formidable difficulties. They are the culmination of a gigantic effort, gigantic both in quantity and quality, the like of which no other contemporary has dared to undertake. Thus it is impossible to try to assess the value of Mr. Toynbee's last volumes without raising the general question as to the intention and achievement of his work as a whole.

This inevitable expansion of the scope of the reviewer's task raises, however, a deeper difficulty still. We can do real justice to somebody else's intention and achievement only on the condition that his intention and achievement is commensurate with our own. We can judge what others have tried to do and have done only if we ourselves have tried to do, or at least have dreamt of doing, what they have done. What transcends the limits of our own intention and achievement, we can praise or condemn but cannot judge; for our inner experience has been prevented by its self-

* *A Study of History. Vols. VII-X.* By ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE. Oxford University Press. £7 10s.