

an appreciation (in the vulgar sense) of Dr. Edith Sitwell as great poet.

Professor Bowra has written a separately published essay (again 'appreciative') of Dr. Sitwell's verse. He wrote a book on 'Symbolism' in poetry in which his main term remained so undefined, and was applied so variously, as to be of little use as a critical instrument. His reputation is based on his ability to write as a critical authority on the poetry of other languages, including Russian. He has given no evidence of any powers as a critic of English poetry.

Lord David Cecil made his *début* as a biographer. He has written a book on Hardy's novels that has been dealt with in these pages (Vol. XI, No. 3). He has also written about other novelists. What grounds, one wonders (other than his having succeeded to a Chair of Poetry at Oxford), would his warmest admirers urge to establish a presumption of his fitness to judge of poetry—and of contemporary poetry?

Mr. John Hayward is known as a specialist scholar who has done some editing. He wrote the British Council booklet referred to above, *Prose Literature since 1939*, in which, to quote our own comment, he presented the 'currency-values of Metropolitan literary society and the associated University *milieux* as the distinctions and achievements of contemporary England'.

Mr. George Rylands is known as an actor-producer of Elizabethan drama.

Of Mr. Basil Willey it can at least be said that he holds a Chair of English Literature. But it must be at once added that the books on which his reputation rests are remote from literary criticism, and offer no grounds at all for attributing to the writer any practice in the judgment of poetry.

It seems to us eloquent of the state of affairs that has been discussed here that the Arts Council of Great Britain, undertaking to use for the encouragement of poetry in this country the resources at its disposal, should have been able without bracing itself for a storm of protest or ridicule to invest with supreme critical authority a Panel so composed. It seems to us that, given for fellow-members any five of this Panel, no critic truly qualified would have consented to serve on it. And it seems to us that, even if by chance the distribution of the prizes should be such as to tend to the encouragement of such genuine creative gifts as may be found among the competitors, more harm than good will have been done to the cause of English poetry, which is inseparable from the cause of English criticism.

But, it will be asked, what other kinds of appointment could those responsible have made? They had to find persons of some formal standing whose names were known. Things being as they are to-day, what Panel both acceptable and truly qualified could one have chosen for them? And would things have been so much better in the time of Edmund Gosse? In fact, hasn't one to go back to the time of Leslie Stephen to find an England in which

the qualified authorities could be counted on to be sufficiently known and respected? (Though it must be remembered that Gosse knew and respected Henry James, whose refusal to countenance the 'associational process' was commented on in *Scrutiny* XIV, 2. The successors of Gosse would certainly not be inclined to parade respect for a similarly anti-associational contemporary genius, and they would be the reverse of inclined—or qualified—to promote his recognition.)

Yet there *is* something new in the contemporary situation. It is that to-day those whose views tell decisively in the organs and institutions of taste and cultural authority aid and abet, less and more innocently, the systematic suppression of criticism. *The Criterion* (except for marginal sneers in the back pages) never mentioned *Scrutiny*. It is not an accident that *The Times Literary Supplement*, which conscientiously reviews the most insignificant periodicals, never gives *Scrutiny* the shortest notice. Yet there is now a general recognition in all the literary and academic centres of the English-speaking world, and wherever English literature is studied, that *Scrutiny*, whatever its faults and shortcomings, has for seventeen years maintained a strenuous and lonely pre-eminence in the language as representing the function of criticism.

THE SHAKESPEARE INDUSTRY : PROGRESS REPORT

SHAKESPEARE SURVEY 2, edited by Allardyce Nicoll (Cambridge University Press, 12/6).

There is no fall in the level of productivity in the Shakespeare industry. If one were not directly conscious of the continued output of books—scholarly, critical, popular and merely eccentric, such an enterprise as *Shakespeare Survey* would be an effective reminder. Described as an annual survey of Shakespearean study and production, it appears under the highest auspices, sponsored jointly by the University of Birmingham, the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and edited by Professor Allardyce Nicoll with the assistance of an advisory board which musters a fair selection of the familiar distinguished names. This, the second number, contains articles ranging from bibliography and the history of the Elizabethan playhouse to accounts of recent stage production, Shakespeare in France, critical articles, and 'The Year's Contributions to Shakespearean Study'.

But if we ask what precisely is Shakespearean Study, and what is its relevance, the answer seems to be so general as to be almost meaningless. *Scrutiny* has always insisted, and at the risk of wearisome repetition it must be said again, that scholarship, to be profitable and alive, must start from a critical interest and answer