Book Reviews

A History of Scotland by Rosalind Mitchison. Methuen and Co., London, 1970. Pp. 468. £3. Paperback £1·40

This is a new and notable history of Scotland. It is written with vigour and clarity, which makes the reading pleasant, and with a breadth of view and sanity of judgment which make it profitable. If there are inequalities and omissions, these are faults which a book of such excellence can get away with. There is a useful appendix on 'Materials for the further study of Scottish history', which includes, besides an extensive, annotated reading list, encouragement to gain the feeling of past history from Scotland's natural features, castles and domestic architecture, folk music and the works of craftsmen. The author might have added the people themselves, whose speech and life, in the quieter places, still recall the ways of their forbears.

The book's focus is on Scotland's national development from the early centuries of the era to the present, but in effect from the early eleventh century. It is concerned in the main with the central institutions of government, with politics and the church and the law, but Mrs Mitchison presents her narrative of events in a continuum of social, cultural and economic life.

Roughly half of the book is devoted to a detailed study of the years *c.* 1550 to 1707. This generous allocation of pages to about a sixth of the period covered by the book necessarily cramps the earlier and later periods and is partly responsible for certain deficiencies in the later chapters. But the years from the late sixteenth century to 1707 were stirring and important times which saw the end of much of the old Scotland—the supremacy of the Catholic Church, the Auld Alliance, the Stuart dynasty, the independent kingdom and parliament of Scotland—and the beginning of much that was new. Mrs Mitchison tells the story of these events superbly well, illumines a number of problems and incorporates the results of recent research. Few general histories succeed in bringing out so clearly as this book the significance of those forgotten religious controversies that split the kingdom apart and sent the Stuarts packing. She explodes a number of cherished myths, and in particular cuts down to size the exaggerated accounts of the sufferings of the Covenanters in the later Stuart period.

After the passions of the seventeenth century died, religion ceased to control the course of Scottish politics, but its influence was never far from the surface. Mrs Mitchison draws attention to the divisive tendencies constantly present in Scottish presbyterianism, the readiness obstinately to proclaim one's own truths as against the errors and heresies of the rest, even when it involved considerable personal sacrifice, as it did in the Disruption of 1843. But, curiously, the creed that was born in revolution

in the sixteenth century sank into political passivity in the eighteenth, and was rarely found in alliance with radical social or political movement in the nineteenth century. Instead, the activists are found in the Liberal party and later in the Socialist movement.

In Mrs Mitchison's history there is a down-to-earth realism, untainted by any hint of predestinarianism. History is understood to be the result of the actions and decisions of people acting individually or corporately, not of some unseen force pressing men willy-nilly towards their destiny in a Tolstoyan fashion. The men and women who produced the course of events we know as Scottish history are here as living and clearly apprehended people. Mrs Mitchison presents us with well-drawn character sketches of many of them, as well as brief biographical notes at the end of each chapter. Here one might put in a plea for the inclusion in this excellent 'Who's Who', of the poets and entrepreneurs as well as the preachers and politicians, and for its continuation after the early nineteenth century.

Among the rulers of Scotland, James VI emerges in this account with enhanced stature and relatively amiable qualities. Longer life and an English kingdom gave him advantages his predecessors lacked, but it was his personal ability and his intimate knowledge of his Scottish subjects that made him a better monarch than any of his Stuart descendants. Mrs Mitchison points out that it was in his reign that the problem of law and order in the Highlands and the Borders began effectively to be solved, though in the Highlands on the precarious basis of the loyalty of the Campbells of Argyll. The immense territorial rewards granted by the Stuarts to that house did not prevent the 8th Earl from leading the opposition to Charles I in 1638 and setting in train a civil war that destroyed both King and Monarchy. The statement made on page 171 that the Kintyre lands were a reward for the 7th Earl's services in hounding the MacGregors after Glenfruin may mislead. The Crown rents were fixed at a low rate because of this service, but the grant of the tenancy of these extensive lands was an acknowledgement of the many like services which the Argylls had performed as agents of the Crown in its war upon the overmighty Macdonalds, who had formerly possessed Kintyre. Gregory's *History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland*, one of the best authorities for these events, might well be added to the Further Reading List.

Of the Union of parliaments in 1707 Mrs Mitchison has no doubts that it was necessary at the time (The Scots 'were poor and rapidly getting poorer') and would become gradually more advantageous to Scotland. One must admit that the union of the Crowns had made closer political and economic co-ordination between the two countries inevitable. It had, for one thing, weakened Scotland's economic independence by making her break off relations with her former European trading partners. It was difficult to find a position of equilibrium between complete independence and complete union. But Scotland surely surrendered her parliament too hastily. Half a century later the Manx lost their independent sovereignty but retained their own legislature. Without it, and the control that this has given them over their internal affairs, the island

might well be as neglected and depopulated as any of the Hebridean islands with which Mann shared a common tradition of language, culture and government. The Union of 1707 speeded up change of every kind in the succeeding century. These are described in chapters which are admirably concise and lucid.

The last chapters of the book discuss Scotland in the age of the Industrial Revolution and of world-wide markets. Rural society, shaken by these events and by such catastrophes as the great potato failures of 1846–7, shed its redundant population and slid into a decline which is still going on. Urban society suffered the moral and physical maladies that over-rapid growth always brings. The author discusses the problems of health and housing, local government, education, the national movement, economic production and much else with a wealth of information and admirable clarity. But somehow, in these last chapters, one is conscious rather of problems and topics being discussed than of a structured society in the midst of change. One misses too the sense of a wide and airy land where communities have their diversities of occupation and character and speech. Cultural elements receive little attention, and in the economic field one would expect to read of fishing, distilling, afforestation and tourism. If one makes these complaints of the book's treatment of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is perhaps because Mrs Mitchison has taught us, in the main body of the work, to expect the highest standards. Few books on Scottish history have appeared in recent years that will better repay the reader's careful study.

ERIC CREGEEN

The Spade in Northern and Atlantic Europe, edited by Alan Gailey and Alexander Fenton. Ulster Folk Museum and Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, Belfast. 1970. Pp. xiii+257, 248 illustrations+33 plates. £1·65.

In English the spade is a cypher for something clearly understood. No one, reading this collection of papers, will be able to think of the spade as being simple and unambiguous. Perhaps it is typical that it was John Knox himself who chose to translate the Latin proverb and to call 'a spade a spade' in a country where that instrument is so varied in its form and uses.

This score of essays on tillage by the spade, paring and burning and peat cutting, is presented in the hope that it 'will be the first of many topical, regional European ethnological handbooks in the English language'. The conference at which the papers were presented was partly to counter-balance the emphasis on the plough in the international study of cultivating implements, and time and again we are conscious in the contributions of an evolutionary sequence: digging stick—spade—plough, accepted by some, rejected or ignored by others. For although the title and central object of these studies is the spade, the contributors are variously concerned with it. Some are

concerned with the history of agricultural implements, others with the techniques of rural economy, others with the social organisation of the implements' users. It is hardly surprising that in the rigid framework of British education, ethnology has found little space, but one of the compensations is that a book such as this has interest for a wide audience of students of many disciplines.

The introduction by Professor Estyn Evans is itself a most interesting collection of stimulating thoughts, particularly about the general theme of the relationship between tools and environment. It shares with my other favourite among the contributions—Jewel and Dodgshon on south west England—the quality of being unsatisfying without being unsatisfactory, of suggesting more problems and connexions than it resolves. In a way, this contribution on the South-West of England is the most surprising for, if Scandinavia and 'Celtic' Europe are locations central to the theme, then this is peripheral, and it might have been thought that its interest would be marginal. It makes very clear that the distinction must be drawn between an agricultural practice and the tools used for it.

The spade is one of several tools frequently used to remove the fibrous swards found in north-west Europe which develop into peat when they become waterlogged. But is it merely adapted to this function, or was its initial invention made necessary by the problem? Is it an implement resorted to only in areas too poor or backward to afford a method less demanding on human physique? Such problems demand several approaches: speculation, historical analysis, taxonomic description of surviving examples, and there are examples of all of these. The two largest contributions are by Dr. A. T. Lucas and Alexander Fenton, and relate to paring and burning in Ireland and Scotland respectively. Fenton's contribution particularly is exemplary as an appraisal of surviving evidence on spades, their use and makers, while Lucas, under the modest heading 'preliminary survey' collects the surviving literary evidence regarding paring and burning, leaving the peat spades to John O'Sullivan by whom they are admirably described.

The surface mat of vegetation was disturbed by the spade either to facilitate the cultivation of the land, or to obtain this fibrous mat to use for fuel or building. To the extent that the turf was sought for its own sake, the tool used for its removal would be more specialised. We thus have some extraordinary implements used to cut roof material or wall sods. At times in this proliferation of types, one sympathises with the nineteenth-century writer, quoted by Fenton, who found 'a profusion of spades . . . of many different shapes and sizes; but the only excellence I could discover in them was that they were agreeable to the fancy of the owner'.

Such accumulation of information is vital, however, and we are grateful to have it done. Perhaps from it we shall be able to have some agreed definitions and derivations. How do we distinguish spades from shovels? Professor Evans (p. 2) does so on the basis of the broader blade necessitated by the latter's lifting and throwing function, while Fenton (p. 157) bases the distinction on the 'thrust with the arms alone'. If this is the case, what is the position of that intriguing implement, the breast-plough?

One of the many things that emerge from this collection is that the quaint is not necessarily the antique. It is tempting to see some of the more extreme spade forms, especially those used in cultivation, as an early stage in the evolution of agricultural implements—the breast-plough and cas-chrom as low branches from the family tree of the plough, preserved in those areas too poor to support draught animals. Fenton has already established the likelihood that the cas-chrom was a comparatively late introduction to the Western Isles, and now Dr. Gailey argues persuasively that the 'Big Loy' of Ireland needs power-forging and is therefore probably post 1788. To this we must add that in Sweden, Ireland and Scotland they are agreed that the breast-plough, far from being a pre-historic survival, was imported from England as one of the tools of the agricultural improvement. Stripping the surface with a spade is older than the use of the breast-spade (even in Devonshire which claims to be the home of the practice as well as of the name sometimes given to it), but it was initially done, as might be expected, using a spade whose shaft has a rounded end which is pushed against the knee—as in shovelling or the present-day use of the 'playing-card'—shaped spade used for lifting lawn turfs in the South downs. Although the breast-spade was developing earlier, the first examples are not found in the West of England till the eighteenth century. The name, Jewel and Dodgshon tell us, is derived not from the method of pushing but from the purpose: 'Breast-spade' or 'spining-plough'—both these anatomical-sounding names are dialect words for a 'slice' or 'turf-cut'. One wonders how precisely this dialect usage may be located, for it may confirm the area of origin. Few other names are so popular. A doubt still nags, however: why should the name 'breast-spade', meaning 'slicing spade', not be used of paring spades in general, but only of those with a long cross-handle used against the thighs—or are there examples in the West of England of plain-shafted spades being known as breast-spades? The same two authors destroy another group of fanciful explanations—this time of 'beat-burning'. This apparently descriptive expression, either of controlled burning or the action of the mattocks involved in raising the sod, is revealed as another dialect word: 'beat-burning' is simply 'turf-burning'. These two common expressions, deriving from the West of England, point to the late introduction to Ireland, Scotland and Scandinavia of what might otherwise have been taken to be practices indigenous since prehistory.

Burning is one of man's oldest techniques for regulating vegetation. It is also widespread—some would ascribe the wide extent of the prairies to more or less controlled burning of the vegetation by Indians. But how big a step is it from firing the undergrowth in a 'slash and burn economy' to stripping it, roots and all in order to burn it? Is this technique limited to North West Europe, and if so when and why did it start? The digging stick was useful in the cultivation of ashes: did it grow through the spade to the plough as those ashes became less tractible? Estyn Evans calls for 'appropriate caution', and introduces the sort of accumulation of knowledge which is the only satisfactory basis for discussion.

This book is valuable not only for its careful collection and documentation of rare

and elusive knowledge, but also for the stimulus it will provide to future work and thought. Estyn Evans and Grith Lerche both discuss the amount of turf involved in burial mounds and houses, and the land required to produce it which 'presupposes large areas of open grass land in the Bronze Age, and also perhaps a more stable agriculture than archaeologists are normally inclined to argue'. Trefor Owen's contribution on Wales points out that 'peat cutting forms only a small part of the broad field of human activity which included the cultivation of the soil in all its multifarious aspects, the husbandry of animals, and the running of the household'. Fenton also reminds us of some wider implications sometimes forgotten. In a climate such as Scotland's, fuel and the work of transporting it may be as demanding of human effort as is water in India. Fenton cites examples of farm workers building their 'huts on the moor so as to be near peats and turf. The importance of a fuel supply in relation to questions of settlement patterns and depopulation before about 1850 can scarcely be overestimated'. But it has frequently been ignored.

The book is paper-bound—one hopes that it will be robust enough to withstand the repeated usage that most scholars' copies will receive.

M. J. STANLEY

Gamle Teglværker (Old Tileworks) by J. Rasmussen and O. Meyer. Copenhagen 1968. Pp. 96 28·15 Danish Kroner.

This is a picture book, with photographs by O. Meyer, and text, in Danish and English, by J. Rasmussen. It is published by the Tile Industry's Technical Service, as a record of a completely functional form of architecture that is on the point of disappearance due to the introduction of new techniques.

The buildings illustrated are all less than 80 years old, and all share in a certain makeshift, though none the less functional, quality because of the changes that have taken place in their short life. Brick and tile making techniques were introduced to Denmark by brickmakers brought in from Lombardy in the twelfth century. The clay was dug in autumn, and in spring was mixed with sand and water, and puddled by the feet of oxen and horses before being moulded in wooden frames. Sun-drying for about three weeks was followed by baking.

The oldest method left no structural remains. It involved piling the bricks in a conical clamp in the open field, with charcoal in the interstices. The whole was coated with clay, and baked by fires of peat and wood for four or five days. The clamps were then covered with earth and allowed to cool off gradually. The next step, involving the same technique, was technologically more advanced only in its use of a four-sided built furnace, open above, with stoke holes at the sides. One example of such a furnace has been preserved at the Historical-Archaeological Research Centre at Lejre, in Zealand.

It was not until after the German Hoffmann invented the ring kiln in 1864, however, that tileworks of the type under discussion, with their associated drying-sheds, began to appear. This kiln may be circular or long, and is so arranged that baking goes on all the time, though the firing zone is shifted in a regular sequence. Continuous production was possible, therefore. The oldest Danish ring-kiln, built in 1870 at Nivågård, is still in use. The latest development, since 1960, has been the introduction of the tunnel kiln, in which the bricks are baked whilst being transported on waggons through a baking zone. This type has spread rapidly, and as a result, the days of old-style tile-works are over.

The most prominent architectural feature of the tile-works was the arrangement of drying-sheds with roof ventilators and sets of adjustable louvres on the side walls. Sheds placed close to the kiln could use surplus kiln-heat to aid natural drying, and so three- or four-storeyed sheds developed to make maximum use of this aid. Now drying is in oil-heated chambers. The influence of material on design is illustrated by the fact that the drying sheds were mostly built over a five foot module, because of the load-bearing limits of shelves full of wet bricks.

The flow was very simple, from the clay pits, through the moulds, into the drying sheds, into the kiln. Architectural variation was largely due to changes in the type of kiln, and to efforts to speed up production by taking advantage of kiln heat for drying as well as firing.

The purpose of this note is partly to review an interesting and attractive book, but also to draw attention to a class of buildings which in Scotland, at least, has not been much observed or studied. Many brick and tile works in Scotland have vanished, leaving no trace beyond the bricks, roofing tiles, and drain-pipes they produced. There is not an old tradition of building in brick in Scotland, but the use of red roofing pantiles spread through the countryside, especially around the Firth of Forth, from the late eighteenth century, as part of the new farm-building phase that accompanied the Agricultural Revolution. Possibly the towns around the Forth had tiles earlier, imported from the Low Countries, but the new phase was based on the products of native tile works, whose history has been largely unwritten.

Though late in the day, it is still possible to find places like Blackpotts Tile-works, Whitehills, Banff, which has been working since the mid-nineteenth century. It is the kind of small-scale industrial building that Rasmussen and Meyer's book describes, so close in many respects that it might have been lifted from one country to the other. It is a fine example of functional architecture that nevertheless retains an attractive appearance. Such buildings deserve to be put high on the list of priorities for surveying and recording, and an effort would be well worth making to preserve one good example.

ALEXANDER FENTON

The Development of Farm Buildings in Western Lowland Staffordshire up to 1880 by J. E. C. Peters. Manchester University Press 1969. Pp. 284. £3·60.

The Manchester University School of Architecture has been active in surveying and publishing material on vernacular buildings since a programme of regional surveys started in 1946. The present volume is a valuable addition to the series inspired by the Manchester School, and is a pioneering work in the study of farm buildings, a subject rarely treated by architectural historians and hitherto never examined in such detail. The farmhouse itself, as well as accommodation for the manpower, has been largely excluded, however.

Dr Peters sets the scene by a historical examination of changes in building materials in relation to the main re-building phases from the late sixteenth century onwards, set alongside developments in agriculture, with particular reference to the Enclosures, and forms of landownership. These are the kinds of factors, reflected in stock accommodation and feeding facilities, and in food processing equipment, that give the character of an evolving, functional, working tool to the farm-buildings, not only in Staffordshire, but wherever they are found.

A chapter on the siting of the farmstead, as part of a group or as an isolated unit, gives further historical perspectives. In this area, the bulk of the farm-sites occupied between 1720–1880 (a period that covers almost all the farms surveyed) were grouped in villages or hamlets, though by 1880 three-fifths of the working farmsteads were isolated. Perhaps because of this the building of field barns standing alone and often in conjunction with foldyards, was fairly frequent from about the mid-seventeenth until well through the nineteenth century.

Farmstead layouts range from the old and in British terms very widespread straight line, to the late eighteenth century L-shaped, and the nineteenth century three- and four-sided arrangements that are the hall-mark of estate building, when conscious thought was being given, as part of the general pattern of agricultural improvement, to the provision of shelter for cattle within the building layout, and to facilitating the collection of manure, usually in a single heap. These two factors probably played a greater part than any other in bringing about the three- and four-sided layouts. At the same time, evidence of increasing status is seen in the relationship of the dwelling-house to the farm-buildings, and in the nature of the access to it.

A further considerable part was played by the barn, which as Dr Peters points out, was the most important building on the farm, around which the whole of the farmstead was theoretically planned. The form of the barn reflects changes in techniques of grain and straw storage, in threshing methods, in access for farm wagons, in food preparation, and in temporary needs such as its use for folding sheep during shearing. Several examples have cornholes or corn-bins of brick, stone or timber for the storage

of flail-threshed grain. It is of interest to note that the adoption of the stationary and portable threshing machines apparently led to an increase in the practice of storing sheaves in ricks, to be brought in and threshed as required. Mill-barns can, therefore, be smaller than those of earlier times, when it seems to have been normal to keep most of the crop inside. Generally speaking the barn became in course of time less of a store and more of a processing centre, when its success in functional and architectural terms could be judged by the ease and economy of movement by which its products could be got to the consumption or transport points.

Stable sizes were related to farm sizes, and to needs in ploughing and transport. Where the farm was part of a group, more horses might also be required because of the greater distance to the fields.

The longest chapter in the book is devoted to accommodation for cattle. As with the stable, a considerable amount of space is given to typology, and the positions in which the animals were tied. Shelter sheds as well as foldyards and cowhouses are dealt with. It is perhaps the construction of cowhouses, with their feeding and cleaning organisations, their forms of ventilation, the separation of milk-cows and feeding cattle, their relationship to feed-preparation and storage rooms, the forms of the partitions, racks and mangers, the presence or absence of a loft, that was given most attention by estate-owners, farmers, architects, and theorists in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The book ends with a discussion of the cart and implement sheds, the granary that was often built above the cart shed (though at an earlier date in the house itself), the pigsty, the poultry house which was often an ill-lit loft in the farmstead, the dovecot, and occasionally the smithy.

The raw material on which the book is based is of two main kinds. First, architectural surveys of existing farmsteads of which a cross-section is given in thirty-three figures, supplemented by twenty photographic plates (unfortunately rather poorly reproduced). Second, intensive study of printed and manuscript sources, local and general, that have been ably used by Dr Peters to interpret the three-dimensional changes in the buildings surveyed. These changes are to a great extent capable of being expressed in typological sequences and analysed statistically as well as being plotted on distribution maps, and Dr Peters has done this systematically, throughout the book, compressing his material into manageable form.

As an exercise in seeing what can be got out of a strictly limited area, the book is of considerable interest and value. Since it deals primarily with a period during which parallel developments were taking place over much of Britain, it also has relevance for a very much wider area than Staffordshire alone, and will greatly ease the progress of students engaged in similar research elsewhere. Finally, as a by-product, it provides a useful index to the literature on estate building and development, suggests (but does not expand on) the diffusion of ideas on farm-buildings through estate-owners and factors, and gives a hint of how features of Staffordshire farm-buildings may be reflected as far north as Sutherland, where the Marquess of Stafford also had an estate.

When such links occur, it is clearly worth while for students of Scottish farm architecture to look beyond the Border.

ALEXANDER FENTON

The Names of Towns and Cities in Britain by W. F. H. Nicolaisen (editor), Margaret Gelling and Melville Richards. Batsford, London, 1970. Pp. 215. £2·50.

It is rare today to have the opportunity of purchasing a book on the subject of place-names which is aimed not only at the scholar but at the general reader. Kenneth Cameron's *English Place Names* (Batsford, London 1961) and P. H. Reaney's *Origin of English Place Names* (London 1960) are two examples of this in the last decade, but their scope is limited, naturally enough, to England. Apart from the English Place Name Society's excellent annual publications, which are the work of years of research, and aimed at a more restricted readership, the bulk of volumes on place-names cover relatively small areas dealt with intensively enough to be complete in themselves, like the late Hugh Marwick's *Place Names of Birsay* (Aberdeen 1970) and G. O. Pierce's *Place Names of Dinas Powys Hundred* (Cardiff 1968).

This book departs from convention by investigating names from England, Wales and Scotland in one volume, with scholars from all three countries contributing to the corpus of information and co-operating in the selection of items. The Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland—of whom Professor Richards is the Chairman, and Professor Nicolaisen a former secretary—was the prime mover for instigating this volume, after a meeting in Nottingham in 1965. A good deal of the credit for the publication of this work must therefore go to the Council for Name Studies, who are attempting to encourage and co-ordinate place-name research in these islands.

The Names of Towns and Cities in Britain is obviously aimed at a wide public, since its introduction is short and readable, and the alphabetical layout makes for easy use. However, it departs from convention in place-name publications by examining names not 'primarily dictated by linguistic considerations but by extra-linguistic criteria'. For England, towns with over 10,000 inhabitants have been included, but in order to have a fair representation for Wales and Scotland, the figure of 5,000 was adopted for these countries. At the same time, it was obvious that certain centres which could not qualify on the grounds of population were nevertheless important enough to be included, such as small towns which served as county towns or administrative centres of a similar kind. Thus, for Scotland, Stonehaven KCD, Portree (Skye) INV and Banff BNF are included. Settlements of under 1,000 inhabitants were not admitted since this number, in census terms, constitutes the lower limit for a settlement called a 'town'.

As a straightforward dictionary of British town names, this volume has a definite attraction not only for the academic world but also for the general reader. The authors

have been at pains to emphasise the fact that these place-names are treated as names rather than as words or 'linguistic units'. Most of the items are liberally supplied with early spellings in order to indicate to the general reader the complexity of name-change throughout the centuries. But the main public interest will undoubtedly be in the derivations of each name, and in this respect there is an emphasis on the nature of the name with regard to site and situation, historical implications, social significance, together with its place within the linguistic stratum to which it belongs. In all this, the onomastic 'shorthand', so much a part of publications like those of the English Place Name Society, has been entirely omitted: indeed, the only glossary of abbreviations consists of a list of county names reduced to a three-letter system conforming to current Scottish and Welsh practice in place-name writings. Readers of a more academic turn of mind may therefore find fault with the complete lack of references. Certainly, one can think of those who would very much like to know the references to, say, Dornoch SUT in 1199 or to Bracknell BRK England in 942. Nevertheless, to present this volume as a popular gazetteer requires the omission of all such information, however desirable it may be to the professional scholar.

The list for general reading (p. 29) is very short indeed, although all the works mentioned are available in the majority of good public libraries. Again, one would have liked to have seen a more comprehensive bibliography, especially for Scotland, which is represented only by Watson's *History of Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*, and by the 'Notes on Scottish Place Names' in *Scottish Studies*.

In summary, this book must be considered as unique of its kind. Its scope and format are unprecedented, and its content is both accurate and concise. The three co-authors are, of course, experts in their respective fields and must be congratulated on the publication of what, we hope, will be only the first of many volumes of this kind. At £2.50 this book is certainly good value, and must surely emerge as a standard reference book on many household bookshelves.

IAN FRASER

Irish Folk Drama by Alan Gailey. The Mercier Press, Cork 1969. Pp. 103. 42½p.

Mr Gailey handles a complex situation with quiet expertise (*e.g.* pp. 60–1) and scholarly respectability. His book is the fruit of much original investigation and while, as a brief introduction to the subject, it could hardly be better (except for its over-pricing), Mr Gailey's work deserves a more extended presentation, with full academic apparatus. He unobtrusively relates Irish folk mummings to their probable pagan sources and discusses their relationship to other Irish folk customs and to similar activities in Scotland and England (*e.g.* pp. 42, 61, 100). The text of five plays (from the counties of Antrim, Derry, Dublin, Fermanagh, and Wexford) are given, and their nature

discussed. In his opinion there was 'much more borrowing by the literary drama from its folk counterpart, than in the opposite direction' (p. 66). The final chapter provides a judicious summary of his conclusions.

Hypotheses are carefully controlled; no point is pressed to death and evidence is used only as far as it will go: Mr Gailey is, for instance, careful about possible interpretations of the dress of performers and associative links with Scottish folk activities (pp. 52–3), and refuses to submit his evidence to more interpretation than it will bear—a rare quality in this particular field.

The occasional lapses towards the journalistic at the ends of one or two paragraphs—perhaps a glance towards his publishers and the lower *haute vulgarisation*—are the only disconcerting features.

MCD. EMSLIE

Books Received

John Skelton, Poet of Tudor England by Maurice Pollet. Dent, London 1971. Pp. 302. £3.

The Collected Poems of John Galt 1779–1839, Vol. 1 edited by H. B. Timothy. University of Toronto, Canada 1969. Pp. 455. $15.

The Isle of Mull by P. A. Macnab (Islands Series). David & Charles, Newton Abbot 1970. Pp. 246. £2.50.

An Egg at Easter. A Folklore Study by Venetia Newall. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1971. Pp. 423. 24 coloured plates, 20 black and white. £6.

Industrial Archaeology of Galloway by Ian Donnachie. David & Charles, Newton Abbot 1971. Pp. 271 + text illustrations and 32 plates. £3.50

Studies in Chinese Folklore and Related Essays by Wolfram Eberhard. Indiana University Folklore Institute Monograph Series, Vol. 23. Bloomington 1970. Pp. 329. $10.