



Four Independents. By Daniel Sargent. 243 pp. Sheed & Ward Inc., New York. \$2.00.

Against a "conversational" background stand four self-centered, self-expressive, intellectually independent men: Charles Péguy, Paul Claudel, Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J., Orestes A. Brownson.

That "self-centered" is not entirely derogatory. Among other things it describes the point whence all four men go out towards their final end, for all had this in common that they first captured and enmeshed their personality in a somewhat complete selfishness, then came to a realization of a deficiency, and boldly sought its removal. Self must be centered in God.

Péguy and Claudel had early shot off from that Center, which had been theirs by Catholic Baptism. Later, they found their way back laboriously. Manley Hopkins and Brownson groped through intellectual darkness, caused more by influence than by self, until they emerged into the radiant light of Faith, wherein they could see their true end and confidently seek to attain it.

For example: there is the poet, Charles Péguy (1873-1914)—"a mixture of gasoline and holy water" (a hostile critic's description of one of Péguy's poems), a mixture which finally blended and lighted a holocaustal flame in the battle of the Marne. In life, Péguy did not blend the gasoline of his personality with the holy water which had been poured over his head at Baptism. After a devout childhood, he lost his religion partly through anti-clerical influence in the public schools he attended and partly perhaps through his "obstinate individualism, which lies, paradoxically in his love of solidarity, in his unwillingness to co-operate in a general break-up of Christian society by joining in any faction or fragment of society which was merely hostile to another." This love of solidarity seems to be the explanation of his strange gamut: Catholic, atheistic, socialistic, nationalistic, traditionalistic, then Catholic again, but Catholic as he wanted to be—without Sunday Mass, Sacraments, ritual. Still the individualist!

Artistically and piously he wrote of things Catholic. Saints and sanctity enamoured him. The Mother of God brought him three

times from Paris to Chartres on foot pilgrimages. The love of God and neighbor seemed paramount in his life, but Péguy set the standards.

Though this strange mixture continued over a period of years, shortly before his death he wrote as though really converted. He had been to Mass; he was happy. A few days later he was killed in battle.

Similarly, but by varying means, Paul Claudel, poet, playwright, and diplomat; Gerard Manley Hopkins, Jesuit priest and poet; Orestes A. Brownson, journalist, controversialist, and philosopher; came to a personal, vivid knowledge of God and self and of the necessity for utter submission to His Way. This knowledge each gives to the world in his own individual manner. The writings of all four men, poetry and prose, reveal their very different characters. Mr. Sargent recalls their biography and interprets.

With a graciousness indefinable he introduces his reader to his group and keeps the "conversation" flowing most interesting, lucid. One is scarcely conscious of self or "interlocutor"—Péguy, Claudel, Hopkins, Brownson must finish their experiences—such is Mr. Sargent's objectivity. No wonder one must say these studies are rare accomplishments. Besides, insight, appreciation, limpid clarity, brevity are expressed in a prose whose beauty, accentuated by verve, precision, and finish, is remarkable. A.J.M.

The Two Sources of Morality and Religion. By Henri Bergson. Translated by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton. Henry Holt and Co., New York. viii-308 pp. \$3.00.

M. Bergson's latest work not only investigates the sources of morality and religion but formulates a philosophy of life and advances an original line of philosophic thought, particularly in the fields of psychology and anthropology. The book is divided into four chapters, treating of moral obligation, "static" religion, "dynamic" religion and of the interrelations and contrasts of material as opposed to psychological considerations.

The first chapter, on moral obligation, lays the foundation for the whole work by tracing the roots of this obligation to infra-intellectual and supra-intellectual grounds. The two foundations of this moral obligation, M. Bergson declares, are pressure and aspiration. The first, akin to the instincts of creatures devoid of reason, works to the rigid preservation of society and operates with a uniformity and necessity analogous to the "natural law" which science presupposes in its investigation and which men read into the facts

of nature. The second operates towards the progress of society; it is the product of the emotional response to an outstanding individual who has broken the circle of a rigidly closed society and dragged society after him in a progressive step. Both of these are products of vague vestiges of the inherent characteristics of the vital impulse buried deep in humanity: the first, pressure, of instinct; the second, aspiration, of intuition. This pressure and aspiration are then thrown on the plane of intellectuality and their rationalizations are the moral principles; but the force of the obligation is not this rational principle, but the pressure of society and the emotional attraction, both of which are purely biological functions. Biology then, in the wide sense of the vital impulse struggling through matter, is the foundation of moral obligation.

Religion is the product of these infra-intellectual and supra-intellectual vestiges. Pressure results in "Static Religion" which has the function of providing a defensive reaction of nature against what might be depressing for the individual and dissolvent for society in the exercise of intelligence. These ends are accomplished through the medium of the "myth making faculty," which is a kind of virtual instinct, doing the work that would be done by instinct in a creature devoid of intelligence. This faculty produces phantasmic representations, ghosts of facts, hallucinations masquerading as perceptions, to hold the intellect in check lest it push its conclusions too far to the detriment of society and the paralysis of the individual. For instance: the intellectual representation of the inevitability of death works against the tightly closed society, particularly the primitive society and the representation of the depressing margin of the unexpected between the initiative taken and the effect desired would make the activity of the individual seem hopeless if pushed too far. So the myth making faculty presents the phantasmic representations of survival after death and of unseen forces taking care of the element in human actions that is beyond human control.

M. Bergson then shows the development of a religion of personal gods and the contemporaneous but divergent development of magic. From this myth making there develops a coterie of "elementary personalities" which are no more than resistances opposed to tendencies; certainly they are not personalities, but they seem to act intentionally. These later become personalities and so gods. On the other hand, magic is the mechanical development of what, developing in a personal direction, resulted in gods; in back of it is the idea that all things are charged with or can be charged with human fluid. The

source of religion is not so much fear as an assurance against fear that must be traced to fundamental instinct and intuition which, while necessarily separated in different species for growth, are yet not entirely discovered. Morality is not coextensive or causally dependent on religion, unless it be in very primitive peoples; for religion's primary end is national and only secondarily moral.

The religion which develops from supra-intellectual elements is "dynamic religion." It is the result of the attraction of an outstanding individual who, through that intuition that rests on the fringe of intellectuality, gets in closer touch with the life stream and breaks through the circle of a narrow, closed society to a wider vision that embraces all humanity. It is a kind of popularization of mysticism, or a crystallization brought about by a scientific cooling of what mysticism had poured while hot into the soul. It lifts the soul to a higher plane but at the same time gives security and serenity which is the one of the objects of static religion. Indeed these two, static and dynamic, intermingle in actual life; the dynamic absorbing some of the preceptive force of the static and the static taking on some of the idealism of the dynamic. While static religion can and does give pleasure, it stops short of joy which is the fruit of dynamic religion. Dynamic religion seeks and finds, to some extent at least, direct contact with God i. e. with the life force or vital impulse. Its final aim is the complete absorption in this life force, the divinisation of men, the making of gods, what the mystics call union with God.

In this third chapter and in the succeeding one, the reader must note that the terms used by M. Bergson have their own special meaning. Thus God is love and the object of love or the creative energy which is essentially a motion. Creation is the result of a necessity for objects to love; the appearance of living creatures is the complement of the creative emotion and without material substance life would have been impossible. Intuition is an emotional, not an intellectual operation. Mysticism is union with the vital impulse or life stream. The end of the universe is to make gods of men.

M. Bergson's book is well written and excellently translated. Its terminology is clear; what is new or seemingly strange is defined before being used. The procedure is orderly, the thought well organized; summaries are frequent throughout the book and a brief index is added to assist the reader.

Moreover the book is important; too important to be looked upon as just another modern philosophic work. Indeed it may well turn out to be one of the important books of the century, a kind of gospel

for the new paganism. It is so close to the truth in its starting point as to give very plausible solution to innumerable difficulties later on. Primarily it presents a solution of the modern anomaly of atheism following a moral code; it presents an answer to the difficulty of a moral code without a personal God Who is its author. And, in peculiar sympathy with modern thought, while starting from nowhere and with no good reason, it actually seems to be going to a definite end.

In the last analysis, M. Bergson reduces religion and morality to instinct and emotion, both springing mysteriously into existence; religion's intellectual manifestations are after-thoughts without fundamental value. In other words man's religious life is an activity, not of his humanity, but of his animality.

M. Bergson can be answered only on very solid grounds for his theories are too well knit to be vulnerable anywhere but in their principles. Such an answer is furnished by the philosophy of nature of St. Thomas which starts from the essences of things but does not make the mistake of having them pop out of nowhere; yet this Thomistic philosophy adequately answers the difficulties met by M. Bergson. In addition it presents an end capable of attainment, not by some rare and gifted personality, not piecemeal or by some future development of the human race, but by every individual member of that race.

L.W.F.

Dante Vivo. By Giovanni Papini. Translated from the Italian by Eleanor Hammond Broadus and Anna Benedetti. xiii-340 pp. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$3.50.

This is an intensely interesting, vivid and truthful biography, suggesting in many respects the life of an Augustine or a Petrarch. It is interesting because it gives us a picture of a man living in an unusual period of history—"amid the struggles and factions and the strifes of the Papacy and Empire"; vivid because the author has presented Dante as living, a moral and spiritual portrait; truthful because he has depicted the whole man. To use the words of Papini; "I have always seen in him not only the Titan but the man with all his human weaknesses, the poet with all his torment before the unutterable . . . and to those whom we truly love we say everything without fear."

The best passages in the book are those telling of the way a hungry soul lived, and the portraits of the characters who influenced the poet. There are great Italians discerningly drawn, most of them historic characters. In the poet's own words Papini finds the secret

of the greatness of soul that was Dante's. Dante lived, felt and suffered. Life was what he sought and found, life in its turmoil, its fervor and variety.

These pages on the soul of Dante plunge us head-foremost into the real message of the author, namely, that a sensitive soul is horrified at the horror of pain, contemplated or experienced, poverty real or imagined.

H.M.S.

Principles of Ethics. By Dom Thomas Verner Moore, Ph.D., M.D. 381 pp. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, Pa. \$3.00.

Here is strength for the heart's desire to do good and avoid evil,—a book that endeavors to present moral principles and solve life's greater riddles. Dom Thomas Verner Moore has undertaken "to write a background of moral theory and principle on which sound philosophic solutions can be given" to the problems that meet us every day and every hour. He discusses the subject of ethics in general; and then, in particular, the moral duties of man to himself, to other men, to his family, state, and profession. In the last two parts are grouped together a consideration of religious duties, a criticism of various moral systems, and short histories of ethics in the medical and nursing professions.

The author in composing his book has kept before his mind the difficulties of young people, especially young professional people. As he progressed, his intent seems to have shifted from writing a general textbook on ethics to formulating an ethical code for the nursing profession. "Such a formulation," he writes at the very end of the volume, "has been precisely what was attempted in the present work"; whereas in his preface he expresses himself as hoping "that as a general work in ethics the work will supply a need as yet unfilled."

The variation, if it really be one, in no way detracts from the clearness, conciseness, interest, and orderliness of the first twenty-four chapters. One would have liked, however, a better explanation of the grounds for professional secrecy, a more convincing form of the arguments for sex morality, and a more satisfying discussion of the attributes of marriage. Indeed, Father Moore would have done well to attempt greater precision and exactness throughout his work in demonstrating his secondary principles. A lay person reading the book would perhaps react to the section on craniotomy as to a piece of unconscious brutality, and to the biological argument for monogamy as to a lack of appreciation for a sense of humor; but the author's 'M.D.' explains both fully.

Each question is treated with all desirable frankness. Happy definitions and descriptions frequently enliven the pages. We would refer the prospective reader by way of foretaste to "Prudence and Habit Formation" (p. 40), the characterization of suicide (p. 50), and the words on whining and sympathy-seeking (p. 62). We regret the sentence—characteristic of many similar examples of somewhat insufficient attention to detail—in the translation of the Rule of St. Augustine, that advises us: "Conquer your flesh by fast and abstinence of food (end of line) and drink as much as your health permits."

E.S.C.

The Church: Catholic and Protestant. By William Adams Brown, Ph.D., D.D. xix-421 pp. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. \$2.75.

This work is a "lengthy survey of the complicated and puzzling situation in which the Christian Church finds itself (p. 394). Dr. Brown presents his case,—that the Christian Church be united, if not for the sake of the Mystical Body of Christ, at least in order to bring Christian principles to bear on the major social questions of our day. He analyzes the similarities and differences between Protestants and Catholics, and finds that the things which unite them are more important than those which separate them. He devotes a section each to the Catholic and Protestant religions, and his chapter on the Catholic Church, "for a Protestant, reveals an unusual insight into the genius of Catholic piety," to quote his own words (p. 146) about Henry Adams. The author concludes with a strong plea for a united Christendom, and, until that is a reality, he urges for as much union as possible and a more sympathetic appreciation of men whose faith and convictions differ from one's own.

A bibliography and an index are included.

H.M.G.

Lectures On The Blessed Eucharist. By Nicholas Cardinal Wiseman. Edited by J. M. Barton, D.D. 328 pp. Burns Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., London. 5|—

Dr. Barton presents in these pages an admirable edition of the illustrious Eucharistic lectures of Cardinal Wiseman. The book is fittingly announced as a centenary issue, precisely when our English Catholic apologists are winning large groups from the church by law established. No one will deny that the magnificent labors of Cardinal Wiseman so many years ago are today still bearing fruit. His *Lectures on the Blessed Eucharist* render silent testimony to the fact.

The Lectures themselves were delivered several times by Wiseman while at the English college in Rome. Their initial publication some time later met with cordial welcome. They suited the require-

ment of the Protestant apologetic of his day, as yet free from the advanced rationalistic criticism of the French and German non-Catholic exegetes. Today to one who believes in the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures these same lectures disclose flawless evidence of the truth of the Catholic doctrine on the Real Presence. Wiseman with studied care presents Catholic doctrine, Protestant and especially Anglican opposition. He then proceeds to discuss the literal sense of the Eucharistic passages. Throughout, Wiseman rigidly adheres to the principles of biblical hermeneutics, scholarly exegesis and logical presentation. His appeal is made more attractive in that it is made to the plain sense of the passages, read in the light of exegetical and philological findings. I.B.

Isabella the Crusader. By William Thomas Walsh. 308 pp. Sheed and Ward Inc., New York. \$2.50.

In *Isabella the Crusader* William Thomas Walsh has given us another striking portrait of Spain's great queen. His book *Isabella of Spain*, since its publication a few years ago, has acquired a well deserved reputation and is no doubt one of the best contributions to Catholic and medieval historical research that has been made by an American. Without doubt, he handled his subject and the historical background of the period in masterful fashion. Times like those of Isabella are every bit as complicated as our own. To interpret one age in the light of another is to do it an injustice. In *Isabella of Spain* everything was presented frankly and sympathetically. An attempt was made to understand Isabella as she was then and not as she might have been had she lived in more recent times. By reason of this attitude, the author has introduced to readers an Isabella who has won their sincere admiration.

However, for popular consumption, *Isabella of Spain* was too long and contained more controversial matter than the average reader cares for. For this reason apparently William Thomas Walsh has written *Isabella the Crusader*, which is very much shorter and does not treat contested points. The audience is wide which would appreciate knowing a woman so remarkably capable and yet so entirely feminine as Isabella, the last of the Crusaders. C.F.

Catherine, The Portrait Of An Empress. By Gina Knaus. The Viking Press, New York, N. Y. 377 pp.

A mixture of intelligence and warm-heartedness, passion and greed, genius and fatalism, Catherine the Great is one of those unfortunate and notorious characters about whom numerous yellow

covered biographies have been written. The modern, superficial public seems to demand such matter for its mental consumption. It shall be greatly disappointed in Frau Knaus' book for it is not in the least sensational. It is a sincere attempt to portray truthfully a character for whom she has the greatest admiration. Written in the light of modern psychological research, this biography gives us a clearer and truer portrait of the Empress. However, Frau Knaus' frequent psychoanalysis leads her into a number of misleading generalizations and a few contradictions.

Catherine, influenced chiefly by the Encyclopedists in general and by Voltaire and Montesquieu in particular, attempted to better the condition of the peasant by granting him industrial freedom. Her attempt was thoroughly misunderstood. A constitutional or representative government which she tried to introduce was repulsed because it brought only dissatisfaction to the masses who were not sufficiently prepared for such a complete innovation. Had they recognized that this ruler had their welfare at heart, had they appreciated her sincere, concrete offering of freedom, perhaps Catherine, known to many as infamous and tyrannical, might have truly been looked upon as a gentle "Little Mother."

The translation from the German by June Head is worthy of commendation for the book as a whole is easy reading.

W.G.M.

St. Raymond. By T. M. Schwertner, O.P. xxii-124 pp. The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee. \$1.50.

With this posthumous work by the late Father Schwertner, a notable, worthy addition has been made to the long-looked-for Dominican Library of Spiritual Works. The author has treated his subject with his usual precision. He has done justice to his entire theme. The style, scholarly throughout, provides an excellent medium for St. Raymond and his life by an author who was himself much like the saint in his variety of interests and universality of talent. Hailed by not a few as a true representative of his age, Raymond of Pennafort appears in this work in the varied roles of educator, preacher, co-founder of a religious order, crusader, missionary, canonist, author, confessor to kings and popes. In a few words, he possessed all the qualities of the ideal Dominican outlined in *Dominican Spirituality*.

Coming to the press just seven hundred years after the promulgation of S. Raymond's chief and most famous work, the codification of Canon Law, this book begun in 1912, has a timely appearance.

Miss Antony deserves our gratitude for the suggestion of the work and for its final editing. The Most Rev. Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, the Apostolic Delegate, has written an admirable introduction that serves both as an encomium to St. Raymond and as a short conspectus of Canon Law.

One notes with regret the total omission of the details of St. Raymond's elevation to Sacred Orders. Some slight confusion may be remarked on page four where, "seventeenth century" should be substituted for "sixteenth century."

J.A.Q.

A Saint in the Slave Trade. By Arnold Lunn. 253 pp. Sheed & Ward, New York. \$2.50.

That Mr. Lunn has illustrated the thesis of his present work with a character so intimately bound up with the negro question as St. Peter Claver makes his book welcome at a time when the education and development of the negro presents a real problem. For this happy choice, he gives us to understand, we have Father Martindale to thank.

That the Saint of the Slave Trade led a life of unusual penitence and self-denial is evidenced by his untiring devotion in spite of a body ravaged by multiple self-inflictions such as fasts, vigils, hair shirts and scourges. At one time, because for an instant he had hesitated at the repulsiveness of a patient, falling on his knees, he embraced the ulcerous negro and licked his sores. Like unto his Master, he suffered the great sorrow of ingratitude from one whose body and soul he had raised from the muck.

The author attempts to interpret the life of Claver, which to him seems nothing other than a glaring illustration of an awful truth. The vocation of the little missionary of Cartagena was a glorious challenge to a weak-stomached race that fled suffering, though suffering was the choice of the Godhead in the Incarnation.

Having seen the little man through his last agony, the famed dialectician meets all opponents on their own grounds and leaves them without so much as an unstable foot rest. He points out definitely the Supreme Truth that motivated the charity of Peter Claver. Stoicism, Humanism and all such systems of "for their own sakes" are pointedly rejected as unreasonable. Christian Humanism, the overflow of good will and firm reason, alone stands; for it alone has a solid foundation.

In common with Mr. Lunn's other works, *A Saint in the Slave Trade* is marked by a relatively easy though definite form of argumentation. The style is simple and attractive despite the sublimity

and profundity of the doctrine. Interspersed in his arguments are many interesting and significant anecdotes.

The author gives a key to the lives of the saints when he says: "They always act with this shattering conviction on the beliefs which we others so half-heartedly hold." L.M.S.

Catholics In Colonial Days. By Rev. Thomas P. Phelan, A.M., LL.D. 304 pp. P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York. \$2.50.

In an attractive and very readable volume Dr. Phelan has assembled an account of Catholic activity in the American colonies from the time of their foundations until after the War for independence. He prefaces his treatment of the colonies with three very interesting chapters to early discoveries and explorations of our continent. After a brief and orderly treatment of the fortunes of the Church in each of the colonies, the author sketches summarily the careers of many prominent Catholics of revolutionary days. He evaluates their contributions to the foundation of our nation, with especial emphasis on the service they rendered in securing in our constitution the provision for religious liberty.

The material for the present work has been culled from reliable secondary sources. Its chief merit lies in the author's concentrating in one volume the high spots in the history of the Catholic Church and its members in our infant nation. Despite unnecessary and frequent repetitions the book admirably fulfills the author's hope for a "popular treatise on Catholic heroism in the early days." J.T.F.

Mirage and Truth. By M. C. D'Arcy, S.J. 204 pp. Macmillan Co., New York. \$1.75.

Mirage and Truth may be termed another triumph for Father D'Arcy and a real treat for his readers. There are five chapters, deep in philosophical thought, but lucidly set forth in the author's brilliant style.

The first chapter, *Competing Ideals*, examines and compares Atheism, Agnosticism and Theism and establishes Theism as the only tenable position for the thinking man. *Grandeur of Theism* develops the idea of the belief in a Supreme Being and the subject of His attractiveness. The author proposes to look at God from the outsider's point of view in *The Idea of God: The Minimum*. In this chapter the traditional arguments for God's existence are masterfully adduced in a new and striking manner. Next, the truth, goodness and beauty of *The Christian Ideal* with humility as its approach are the topics

which absorb the reader. Finally Father D'Arcy marks out for his companion the path to be trodden in the attainments of this Christian ideal—*Per Crucem ad Lucem*. M.M.M.

Roper's Life of More. Edited by Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock, Ph.D., D.Lit. li-148 pp. Oxford University Press, London. \$4.00.

This new edition of the primary life of St. Thomas More has been carefully and methodically compiled from thirteen copies of Roper's original manuscripts. It is a scholarly work, edited in a clear and orderly fashion. The text of the *Life*, in old English spelling, but with modern punctuation, is prefaced by a critical description of each of the manuscripts used and a brief life of William Roper and his relations with Thomas More. At the end of the volume the editor has placed a well-chosen set of historical notes, a glossary and a comprehensive index.

The ever growing number of friends of St. Thomas More owe a real debt to Dr. Hitchcock and the early English Text Society. Excellent biographies of the saint have of course been recently published; here however is something of far more value to the student of Thomas More—a critical edition of the primary source. J.T.F.

Make It New. By Ezra Pound. 407 pp. Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn. \$3.75.

Ezra Pound being a romantic and a violent individualist, this book is but a collection of personal views. However, there is scarcely enough coherence or analysis in it to present Pound's critical viewpoint on the subjects of which he writes. His general attitude, though, may be seen in his often penetrating and brilliant observations. The book is a collection of Ezra Pound's criticism from 1912 to the present, and clearly shows that Pound is no thinker, however good a poet he may be. He is a man of sensibility and appreciates certain writers and groups of writers, usually of the left. Of course there is the by-now stale diatribe against Milton. It seems one reason Pound objects to him is because "the 'Miltonian' cliché is much less Milton's invention than is usually supposed." Though, what novelty has to do with good poetry is not explained.

There are seven essays to the book: *Troubadours*, *Arnaut Daniel*, *Elizabethan Classicists*, *Translators of Greek*, *French Poets*, *Henry James* in which he has lots to say about America and Americans, unfavorable of course, and *Cavalcanti*. All the essays are marked by an irritating insufficiency. However, one must bear with it and go along with Mr. Pound, being deluged under very frequently with

insulting bombast. There is one good point to the book though,—one may estimate quite closely the modern sophisticated, intellectually snobbish front.

R.D.R.

Tadpoles and God. By Laurence Oliver. 270 pp. Sheed and Ward, Inc., New York. \$2.00.

The author has divided his work into three parts. The first part gives an excellent criticism of the vagaries of the modern mind. The concept of Progress is riddled to pieces with well-aimed shafts of irony and sarcasm. What will strike the American reader most is the author's attitude towards bankers and money magnates. The passages in which these are discussed read like expurgated editions of Fr. Coughlin's lectures. The second section is the most interesting. It develops the proof for the existence of God against agnosticism. The chapter on Mr. Wells, the tadpole of them all, is full of pleasant humor that effectively deflates the Wellsian balloon. The last section follows the usual lines of defense against the critics of Christianity.

The book, in general is well arranged. The broad outlines follow very logically. However, in the first two sections, the author comes back again and again to the same points without any apparent justification. The style is easy, intelligible, though not brilliant, or even striking. Humor and irony lighten the general effect and make the book enjoyable reading.

J. M. E.

Catholic Faith. A Catechism based on The Catholic Catechism as drawn up by His Eminence Peter Cardinal Gasparri and edited under the supervision of the Catholic University of America by Rev. Felix M. Kirsch, O.M.Cap., Ph.D., Lit.D., and Sister M. Brendan, I.H.M., M.A. Illustrations by C. Bosseron Chambers. 64 pp. P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York. Book I. \$0.25.

Most of us are only too familiar with the small, poorly printed catechism used for so long in our primary schools. To say the least the book with its table of definitions and pronunciations is not particularly attractive to a child whose other books, all attractively illustrated, are made up of words and sentences well within its grasp.

The compilers of *Catholic Faith* appreciate that for too long teaching of religion has not had the material aids and improvements accorded less important subjects. Further than this they realize that Catholic Doctrine should be presented especially to children in a form consonant with its rich beauty and paramount importance.

The makeup of the book is excellent, the full page illustrations appealing and the type large and clear. Mere acquaintance with *Catholic Faith* should insure its adoption; familiarity with it should raise it on a pedestal in the hall of Catholic Education in the United States.

R.F.

The Enjoyment of Literature. By Elizabeth Drew. xi-233 pp. W. W. Norton & Co., New York. \$2.50.

"The power and glory of literature will always be that it enlarges and enriches life. "Miss Drew here attempts to enkindle in the reader the wish to experience personally the interest and enjoyment contained in literature. She divides the matter into eight chapters: *The Literature of Gossip, The Essay, Lyric Poetry, Biography, The Novel, Epic and Narrative Poetry, Drama, The Critic and the World Today*. She sets out to examine and illustrate from the study of certain masterpieces in each class something of what is the unique interest and essence of each, and the pleasure proper to it. In general she succeeds exceptionally well; her style is lucid, exact, and to the point. However there are to the Catholic viewpoint serious errors which prevent its unqualified recommendation. "Life is unintelligible and monotonous, human relationships are inevitably unsatisfactory; . . . life is no part of any divinely ordered plan"; "Man has lost his sense of sin." It is not censorious to object to such. Such an attitude towards things is fundamental and the focal point of a universal outlook which not only runs counter to all religious beliefs but also to reason and common sense. It is not idle logic chopping to maintain that the personal element, although the essential thing in enjoying literature, is negligible in evaluating and interpreting the worth of any book.

R.D.R.

The Spiritual Letters of Dom John Chapman, O.S.B. Edited by Dom Roger Huddleston, O.S.B. xiv-330 pp. Sheed and Ward, Inc., New York. \$3.00.

The author of these letters probably would have been the last one to wish them published. He made no pretension to being an authority on their chief subject matter,—contemplative prayer—for time and again he repeats that his views are advanced only tentatively; that he is not laying down positive directive norms. Quite evidently, in his letters, he is thinking

out an explanation of mystical prayer, not advancing one as already thought out.

It is true, as the dust cover reads, that the book contains "counsel intimate and informal, illuminated with flashes of almost fantastic wit." The letters are charmingly written. Behind them lay a sympathetic heart which had that rare gift of understanding souls in conflict with themselves. But, Abbot Chapman, a great scholar in Biblical and Patristic lines, lacked the prime requisite of a safe teacher of mystical prayer; he was not a Theologian. His answers to the particular difficulties of souls are packed with good sense, and seem to be sound, but his theories on the nature of contemplative prayer, advanced in both the letters and two appended essays, are subject to question. St. John of the Cross is his great authority, but in using St. Thomas to interpret the Carmelite, he quite palpably misunderstands, and consequently misinterprets, the Angelic Doctor. A general looseness in the use of theological and philosophical language pervades his disquisitions on the nature of prayer.

It is to be regretted that this pupil of Marmion's lacked the solid grounding in theology that is evident in all the works of his teacher and superior. A more careful editing of the letters might have made the book more acceptable. As it stands, it would be dangerous for those not well versed in the subjects treated.

F.M.M.

Mother Marianne of Molokai. By L. V. Jacks. 203 pp. The Macmillan Company, New York. \$2.00.

This inspirational biography is pleasingly succinct. The author scrupulously avoids subjective interpretation of his study, without detriment, however, to the interest. Ungarnished chronological sequence of facts often tend to beget boredom, but in this biography interest is fanned in every chapter because of the author's judicious selection of material. Realistic descriptions of revolting pathological states to be found among lepers have been omitted for the most part. Sharp antithesis between the strength of Mother Marianne and the debilitation, moral, political and religious, found on the leper island arrests us. "To this brilliant and devoted mind who had not come out to Molokai to spare herself, but to work, and who considered herself expendable," there was but one dynamic purpose: "to grapple with all the work that presented itself."

Those who are convinced that selflessness is merely a synthetic production by idealistic writers will meet in this biography sharp rebuttal to their conviction. Mother Marianne bore the stench of lepers—for God! T.M.C.

The Angel of the Schools. By Raissa Maritain. 127 pp. Sheed and Ward, Inc., New York. \$1.25.

There are two very difficult tasks in the field of writing: studies of saints and youths' books. Mme. Maritain has undertaken both in this study of St. Thomas. How well she has succeeded is hard to estimate. With a studied simplicity she undertakes a presentation of St. Thomas' learning and sanctity, so that young people may understand and admire the union of both in the saint, and with God's grace strive for a like union in themselves.

The plan, contents, and object of the book are admirable. In many ways it ought to appeal to our youths. If it does not, perhaps the fault will lie in some apparent defects: There is not always maintained a consistent simplicity of thought, expression, and choice of words in harmony with the book's purpose. At times the thought of the author is very profound, implied rather than expressed, yet intended—for example, the section from pages 25 to 29. Sometimes the translator's constructions could have been freer and clearer, as in sentences such as: "But we shall never see that Divine Truth, and in it and by it the truth of all that exists, if our heart is not turned toward it in this life, and if we refuse to love it and to serve it" (p. 57). "After the death of Christ the divine truth revealed by Him and carried by the Apostles, one and all, to the ends of the earth so far as it was then known, eclipsed poor human wisdom, and for nearly a thousand years it formed almost the only object of Christian meditation" (p. 60). Note just the management of the pronouns, forgetting the abstractness of the terms. Nor are these sentences isolated types. Many others could be quoted that make for ponderous reading, which at times is abetted by choice of words such as "combat of eloquence and learning," "subtle," "tenacious," "visage," etc., difficult in their context for an adolescent mind.

Despite these defects, fancied or real, the book should appeal directly to those for whom it is intended, it should be most enlightening and helpful, and it deserves the very careful atten-

tion of those who would instruct and guide youth in the difficult path of learning and sanctity. A.J.M.

Personal Appearance. A New Comedy in Three Acts, by Lawrence Riley.

There is more truth than imaginativeness in the title of this drama. Within it appears a real person, Carole Arden, a cinema celebrity. Not by her press-agented personal appearance does her true self emerge, but by her accidental visit to the Struther's home, somewhere between Scranton and Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. This chance entrance into the sheltered life of an American family strips her of all her superficial sophistication. She unconsciously sheds all the false glamor which her screen work has gathered for her when she is confronted with the virile innocence of a small-town boy, Chester Norton. Between herself and this ruggedly upright chap is spun a plot of caustic criticism which is woven upon the surface of her seductive quest for the boy's attention.

The whole merit of Lawrence Riley's work reposes in that criticism which he so deftly draws out of every line of dialogue. With interesting realism and discreet candor he arraigns the fatuous posing of Carole and her kind, the pathetic enthusiasm of her admirers and the insipid magnificence with which Carole Arden has been attended.

This play, then, is worthy of intelligent readers and educated audiences. Some of the lines and scenes, however, preclude commendation for parish production. However, the earnestness and gusto of Lawrence Riley's writing, the depth of criticism anent the phenomenal influence of subversive cinema fame, demands that *Personal Appearance* be not ignored by anyone interested in an authentic revelation of a particular niche in the facade of American life. B.L.

DIGEST OF RECENT BOOKS

THEOLOGY: The Eucharist and Education, by Rev. Father Gervasius, O.M.Cap., S.T.D. Translated from the Dutch by Rev. Gregory G. Rybrook, Ord. Praem., S. T. D. Catholic educators are much indebted to Rev. Gregory Rybrook, Ord. Praem., for the translation of this little book, whose utility cannot be overemphasized in the teaching of the Catholic youth. Taking the Encyclical of Pope Pius XI "The Christian Education of Youth" as his starting point, the author proceeds to propose in an orderly manner the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, with its historical background, and its efficacy in the education of the young. The end in view

is the establishment of a Eucharistic Crusade. There are added numerous admonitions and much sound advice to teachers in proposing this doctrine. Practical incidents and a few short prayers to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament add to the attractiveness of this little book, which indeed will prove an aid to all engaged in instructing Catholic children. (Benziger Bros., New York, \$1.25).

Presenting The Angels, by Sister Mary Paula, S.N.D., In presenting this little book the authoress has utilized all the sources of information at her command. In perusing the book a well-instructed youngster would not waste his time; nor would adults capable of more mature consideration find the suggestions with which the book is replete impracticable for daily use. We would disagree with two of the writer's statements: first, that it is the common opinion of theologians that "all the angels form but one species with no two exactly alike." This of course is not according to the mind of St. Thomas, who holds that every angel forms a distinct species in itself. The book is one to be commended as thoroughly Christian in principle and Catholic in its interpretation of Catholic Action. (Benziger Bros., New York, \$1.50).

EDUCATION: Practical Aids for Catholic Teachers, Vols. II and III, by Sister Mary Aurelia, O.S.F., M.A., and Rev. Felix M. Kirsch, O.M.Cap., Ph.D., Litt.D. The second volume of this series is for intermediate grades. The first part of the book consists of morning talks on character training, based on the eight beatitudes, choice stories with very practical lessons, and lives of the saints. The second part of this volume treats of several classroom projects such as art, music, drama, training altar boys, classroom aids and devices. The third volume is for the upper grades. It is built on the same principle as the second volume, but the matter is different. (Benziger Bros., New York, \$3.50).

A Little Child's First Communion. Book I. By Mother Margaret Bolton, R.C. This booklet printed and illustrated attractively is the first of a series of six intended as a course of instruction for First Communion and Confirmation. The subject of this first part, love of God, is treated in several very charming stories and three easily learned hymns. (St. Anthony's Guild Press, Paterson, N. J., \$0.10).

FICTION: Dew in April, by John Clayton. An historical novel purporting to be a true picture of life and love in the Catholic thirteenth century. Mr. Clayton is according to his publishers a deep student of the history of the period. Be that as it may, his book is far from a true picture of the times. Its author is not Catholic. His background and sympathies are not Catholic and as a consequence his vision is distorted and his picture greatly out of perspective. The book has little to recommend it. The plot is flimsy and the style sluggish. (Kendall & Sharp, New York, \$3.00).

The Walters Family, by Florence M. Hornback, LL.B., B.S. Many books have been written treating of family problems, but most of them are drawn-out and scientific. Mothers, fathers, sons and daughters will find in this book many fundamental solutions to their home problems. The conversational tone used throughout the book makes for pleasant reading and the arguments are easy to follow. (St. Anthony's Guild Press, Paterson, N. J., \$2.50).

MISCELLANEOUS: Baptismal and Confirmation Names, by Edward F. Smith. At Baptism and Confirmation pastors are often surprised by parents requesting names for their children with which the priests are unfamiliar, or of which they are almost certain no mention is made in any martyrology. Both parents and pastors lack a clear and succinct source on which they can rely. This lack is remedied by the present

volume. In the interest of a second edition we wish to note that we think some of the biographical matter in the book incorrect. (Benziger Bros., New York, \$3.50).

PAMPHLETS: From Our Sunday Visitor Press we have received the following pamphlets: **The Communistic Crisis**, by Joseph A. Vaughan, S.J., Ph.D. **Mexico Destroys Religious Freedom**, by Rev. John A. O'Brien, Ph.D. **The Sacred Heart, Why Honor It? The Protestant Mind In 1935 A. D.**, by Rev. Maurice O'Connor. From the Queen's Work the three following pamphlets: **How To Pick a Successful Career**, by Daniel Lord, S.J. (\$0.10), **At Mass With Mary**, by John Sexton Kennedy. **Prayers for Our Times**, by James J. McQuade, S.J. (\$0.05). **The Parish Kyriale**, published by The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn., was designed as an aid in introducing congregational Gregorian singing in parishes. (\$0.10).

BOOKS RECEIVED: **Instructions for Non-Catholics Before Marriage**, by Rev. Anthony L. Ostheimer, The Dolphin Press, Philadelphia, \$0.60. **A Question of Lovers and Other Poems**, by Sister M. Madelena, St. Anthony Guild Press, New Jersey, \$1.25. From Samuel French, Inc., New York: **Accent on Youth and White Man**, by Samson Raphaelson (\$2.00); **Three Men on a Horse**, by John Cecil Holm and George Abbott (\$1.50); **Petticoat Fever**, by Mark Reed; **No Curtain**, suggested themes for eight impromptu plays, by Mary Aldis (\$0.50).