



Our Own Kind. By Edward McSorley. pp. 304. Harper and Brothers, New York. 1946. \$2.50.

Current fiction has seen quite a cycle of autobiographical novels of childhood and early youth. This cycle has been characterized by its revolution from its literary forebears which had cast about childhood the aureola of a gay and blissful time. The new cycle portrays childhood with no aureola, but in the unflattering light of reality. Although the note of joy has not been completely silenced, it is heard infrequently in the bleak symphony of the violins of poignant grief. The story of Willie McDermott is one of the best of the cycle, for it has most of the virtues and few of the vices of this literary trend. The episode of the drug store robbery and the shattering disappointment of circus day are as vivid as the best writing of the cycle. Mr. McSorley wisely avoids the Freudian pruriency that has characterized too many of the current novels of early adolescence. He also sees Willie, and Willie sees himself, as part of a community, something which books like *The Green Years* and *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* never quite succeeded in doing.

The community in which he lived—his beloved Grandfather, his not-so beloved Grandmother, his frustrated great aunt, his finicky bachelor uncle, the wealthy Pete Carron who grinds the poor into the dust, socialist uncle Pat, corrupt Joe Riordan—is the Irish settlement in Providence. It is genuinely Irish, though not as their apologists would see them. For that matter, there is no grist for anyone's mill in this story, since the author seems to have no axe to grind. The faith of "Our Own Kind" is the warp and woof of their lives, but these Irish-Americans are not saints, though, like the author, they have occasional glimpses into the splendor of that faith. "Reading the last Gospel . . . he was like a tired man who has left his heart in a far country and is refreshed again, reading a letter from the land where his spirit still dwells."

Ned McDermott, the real hero of the story, never had time to learn to read and write, but he knows Robert Emmet by heart, and interpolates the adventures of Irish heroes, as he "reads" the funnies

to Willie. Ned's sons lacked all the education that Ned thought of as part of the American dream so he pins his hopes on his grandson Willie, who, somehow is to get out of the bush leagues of smallness into the grand world of the scholar. Ned's efforts to educate Willie are seconded by the Fathers McCaffrey, especially Father Joe, who taught Willie a little about the Fathers that someday he might "read the Angelic Doctor, for all the thinking of the Church before him led only to him and the thinking that followed returned to him." In the end, all fail Willie, and though he has the memory of his Grandfather and Father Joe to sustain him, "desolate and sick, he stumbled through the darkness of his loneliness for the comforting light of his prayers and found himself sending up his sighs, mourning and weeping in a vale of tears bitter and deeper than he could sound his thoughts. Oh, Mother of the Eternal Word, he cried again and again until the aching silence of his spirit echoed with its sound, adopt me as thy child."

Brilliant is the imagery, but the sentences are so loaded with detail that the colors run together. Then, although obscenity is absent, there is a preoccupation with the sordid. Those unaccustomed to language that is strong and profane will not go many pages without a shock. However, although this book is not great literature, it is a good story, humorous and tender, beautiful and heartwarming. U.V.

The Flight and the Song. By L. M. Anderson and S. M. C. pp. 175. Longmans, Green and Co., N. Y. 1946. \$2.00.

The many who have enjoyed the other quaint stories of old England told by S. M. C., will find pleasant reading in this tale of old Devon. Against the background of the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII, the gifted Dominican Sister—collaborating this time with L. M. Anderson—sketches the life of bizarre Robin Hackworthy and the simple country folk of his tiny Dartmoor village.

Robin was a child of blessing given by God to Dickon and Lucky Hackworthy in their old age. The devout old couple cherished the hope that one day the lad would be a monk in Buckfast Abbey. But the sturdy boy was not fitted for this life; God had withheld from him the use of reason. Instead of a monastery Robin had the world for his cloister, where he "lived in community with the innocent birds and beasts of heath and hedgerow" on the bleak moor between the abbeys of Buckland and Buckfast. Guided by instinct in the place of reason, he crooned "the song of those things that have been made . . . the song of the Maker of Heaven and earth."

For Robin's lifelong friend, the wise old hermit of Mis Tor, this state was not too hard to understand in a baptized soul where sin had never entered. He told Robin: "The good God has made you to worship Him in His creatures, to play before Him in the world He has created." But the simple villagers suspected the strange youth of being in league with pixies and goblins. They feared him even as they were in awe of his extraordinary powers. So it was that when Buckfast Abbey was destroyed and the abbey church desecrated, the evil eye of Robin Hackworthy was held responsible for the crime. He was seized by the angry village folk and died a strange death on top of a witch's pyre that would not burn.

Through Robin we are led to meet several other interesting people. Lizz Brownrigg, "the tow-haired, thin, long-legged eldest daughter of the carpenter," grew up to become a nun in the convent of the Augustinian Canonesses at Canonsleigh, and proved to be the Valiant Woman of the Community under the oppression of the King's Commissioners. The old hermit, a finely drawn character, is a lovable person. In contrast, Joan Hackworthy, Robin's brother's shrewish wife, earns little of our sympathy. In an excellent scene at the end of the book, her husband is inspired by the example of Robin's pure life to forgive her for all the evil she has wrought.

This book has nearly all the features that gave success to S.M.C.'s earlier works, though there is probably less of fantasy and more of everyday life in this tale. Robin's charming songs, written in lilting, lyrical verse, are a new feature worthy of special mention. They hold something of the joyful simplicity that belonged to Catholic England. The writing is, as usual, picturesque, simple and lucid.

L.R.D.

Spirit in Darkness. By Rev. Fr. Brice, C.P. pp. 356. Frederick Pustet Co., Inc., New York. 1946. \$3.50.

In his second companion volume to *St. John of the Cross*, Fr. Brice comments on Book Two of the *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*. His treatment follows the logical development of the Carmelite's doctrine on the spiritual life rather than the exact order of the original work. This is done not as an attempt to improve on the Mystical Doctor, but rather as an aid to the reader in understanding the important subject of contemplation. The author observes that "it is sad enough when souls fail to reach contemplation for want of will; St. John will not have it happen for want of knowledge."

To appreciate fully Fr. Brice's work, one should already have

read the *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*. However, the author is so clear and complete that the book can also serve as an introduction to Book Two of the *Ascent*. A good deal of the volume is concerned with the purification of the inner faculties, that is, the understanding, memory, and will. The "darkness" in the title refers to the darkness of faith.

The state of perfection consists in the Divine union. How this is attained is the subject of the book. The pitfalls to be avoided, the distinction between meditation and contemplation, and the signs of contemplation are brought out clearly. By the frequent use of outlines, Fr. Brice sums up graphically the matter he has treated. The beginner and the advanced in the spiritual life will profit considerably by reading and comprehending *Spirits in Darkness*. Also all will be encouraged by the author's insistence that contemplation is normal, for as he shows, St. John considered infused contemplation the goal towards which all advance and which God grants to those who fight the good battle every day of their life. R.S.

Collected Papers of Evelyn Underhill. By Lucy Menzies. pp. 240. Longmans, Green and Co., New York. 1946. \$2.75.

A British wag has it there are three divisions of the Church of England: High and crazy, Low and lazy, Broad and hazy. The High group is called crazy because of its ritualistic leanings and its closeness to the Roman Catholic Church. Miss Underhill, who died recently, was one of this group. A disciple of the well-known Baron Von Hugel, she was long interested in the subject of mysticism. The papers contained in this book were delivered by her to small Church groups over a period of twenty years. They treat of various phases of prayer and their application to the spiritual life of Christians. Miss Underhill writes well and possesses an easy and moving style. She strives to be Catholic in her thought, for almost everyone of the authors cited in these pages is Roman Catholic. Her theology of prayer is quite orthodox, yet when she turns from prayer and discusses other things her touch is not so sure.

In her desire to stress the transcendence of God, she succeeds in rendering Him unapproachable to all save the boldest. The true approach to God in prayer, through Christ our Lord, is almost entirely overlooked. Moreover, for her, natural reason is unable to know God. It is by an act of divine mercy that He reveals His existence to us.

Her notions of the Eucharist is not orthodox. In the Eucharistic mystery, "as the various branches of the Catholic Church set it before us," the priest's consecratory action is purely symbolic of a "natural life given in its wholeness to God."

Miss Underhill lays far too much stress on the apparent likeness between Christian and non-Christian mystics, so that one is tempted to believe that the difference between them is a merely accidental one of degree of insight, and not one of distinct orders, of nature and supernature.

It is impossible to doubt her sincerity, yet the fact must be made clear that Anglican is not synonymous with Catholic. What Miss Underhill has to say will no doubt deeply move non-Catholic readers, yet Catholics will find the same truths which has striven to convey expressed more clearly and more surely in the works of many modern Catholic writers.

F.M.C.

Paradise Hunters. By W. Kane. pp. 291 with index. B. Herder Book Company, St. Louis, Mo. 1946. \$3.00.

Man's desire for happiness is so great that it can be satisfied only with the possession of an infinite good. That "good" is God, for as St. Augustine asserts: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our souls are not at rest until we rest in Thee." Still, men want "to have their cake and eat it"; they want happiness and they want it now, immediately. They fail to realize that any degree of true happiness attainable here on earth, will be attained only in proportion to the degree in which they draw nearer to God. Fr. Kane stresses this point while portraying the many problems which a man faces in his search for happiness.

These problems are problems of living and conduct and the author disclaims any attempt to solve them by mere speculation. Yet he hopes that the knowledge of the problems and principles involved will be an indirect approach to a solution, the direct approach being found only in the actual application of principles to conduct.

Written in a simple and unpretentious style, this work should be of help to the faithful in dealing with the basic problems of Christian living. However the haphazard order of the work, its many repetitions and loose ends, make for difficult and wearisome reading.

L.L.

Truths Men Live By. By John A. O'Brien. pp. 423. Macmillan. 1946. \$2.75.

Fr. John O'Brien, professor of Philosophy and Religion at Notre Dame has achieved the end of explaining in popular language and style the fundamental truths of the Christian Religion in *The Truths*

Men Live By. In his work the author has borrowed extensively from his knowledge of philosophy, history, scripture, and science.

Under the five-fold division of the book the writer treats of the existence of God, the Spirituality and Immortality of the Soul, the harmony of science and religion, the Divinity of Christ and other doctrinal items of great importance and interest not only to those of the Faith but also to those who, as the author states, are groping in uncertainty.

The author has labored over a quarter of a century in compiling the material for this work. He has conferred with leading theologians, philosophers, and scientists in preparing this worthy exposition of the Christian Truths.

With the combination of the technical terms and popular parlance the book will appeal to the average reader as well as the college and university student. The book serves well as a companion volume to the very popular work by the same author, *The Faith of Millions*.

M.E.G.

The Spirit of Christ. By Father James, O.F.M. Cap. pp. 222. The Newman Bookshop, Westminster, Maryland. 1946. \$2.50.

Down through the ages many wise and holy writers have called the spiritual life man's constant warfare. True, there are many salutary points bearing on this figure; yet the word "warfare" might give a wrong impression of the frame of mind in which a person ought to seek that perfection which terminates with the Beatific Vision. To escape from the pit of dull monotony into which a treatise on perfection frequently falls, Fr. James, in his *Spirit of Christ*, endeavors to convey the message intended in the Gospels for souls struggling for perfection in the world. To do this, the author has caught the spirit of God by which our divine Lord lived His life and by considering some of the more important and memorable events in the life of Christ he shows us the workings of this spirit in the Saviour's soul whereby He completely surrendered Himself to the Will of His Father.

The Spirit of Christ maps out the road from "Conversion" to "Holiness." Meditation on the life and person of Jesus Christ is stressed in this priceless book which should prove helpful to all, especially religious, who have the obligation of conforming their lives with their Divine Creator in such a way that "the signature of Jesus may be written to our every thought, desire, and action."

F.W.K.

Most Worthy of All Praise. By Vincent P. McCorry, S.J. pp. 189. The Declan X. McMullen Co., New York. 1946. \$2.00.

The purpose Father McCorry had in writing *Most Worthy of All Praise* was to make Sisters a little happier. He believes that he should rather try to make them holier, but, as he himself confesses, he feared to go beyond his depth. Yet, in this statement, it appears that he is hiding behind a subterfuge because he well knows that his book bears witness that true happiness can only be attained and increased as one grows in holiness. But because some prospective readers might shy away from a book that proposes to make them holier, he offers them instead a book that has their happiness (the effect of holiness) as its goal.

Among those who have answered the call to a higher and more perfect manner of life there can be and usually are many petty things, sometimes called faults but in reality sins, which not only place a barrier to solid sanctity but also cause anxieties and fears and rob religious of the true happiness which should be theirs even in this vale of tears. As the author himself states it: "For all who are peculiarly Christ's, for all men and women who have left all things to follow Him, there should be, there must be and there is a very real and special joy in this life. Strangely and sadly, not a few of Our Blessed Lord's feminine followers know little of this joy or but rarely taste it. It must be that somewhere, somehow, there has occurred a pitiful misunderstanding. Between the shining words of Christ and His latest and not least devoted followers, there has come a cloud."

To help dispel this cloud Father McCorry offers sixteen essays on sound spirituality. He does not treat every phase of the spiritual life, but he does consider those things which are essential and basic in every Sister's religious life: their place in the Church based on the place of women in the life of Christ and in the early Church, and even the tact and patience they should endeavor to exercise in dealing with the busy pastor or the irritable cleric.

The author devotes four essays to the matter of vocations: three to those having vocations and one to the conduct of Sisters detecting and encouraging vocations. He then moves to the religious life of the individual. The opinion that cheerfulness is a result of biological makeup and that moodiness is sometimes beyond one's control is analyzed and quickly rejected. The basis for cheerfulness is the virtue of humility. The opinionated, the inflated, and those who know they are important are quite without a sense of humor, and so cheerfulness for them is almost a hardship.

The essay "Microphilia: A Religious Malady" is a masterful

treatment of one of the plagues of the religious life, the inordinate concern for little things or the confusion of means and end. But by far the most important consideration in *Most Worthy of All Praise* is the one on the exceedingly subtle and practically universal vice known as pride. Unfortunately, or perhaps we should say strangely, Father McCorry, even with his long years of experience gathered from retreat work, offers no cure for this most deadly of maladies. Surely there must be a cure, and we believe there is one included here which is implied in the writing between the lines. It is "recognition."

The style of Father McCorry is fast and humorous, and his manner of expression is clear and concise, with rarely ever a wasted word. He writes what he has to say, and one is never lost because of subtleties of expression. We feel that Father McCorry has achieved the end he set out to reach in writing this book and that it will profit all who will peruse its pages.

R.D.

The Venerable Bede: His Spiritual Teachings. By Sister M. Thomas Aquinas Carroll, Ph.D. pp. 270 with preface, bibliography, and index. The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D. C. 1946.

In an era when there is almost a superabundance of books on the spiritual life, it is encouraging to find at least one work which deals with the very fundamentals of this life. Such is the work of Sister M. Thomas Aquinas Carroll. Her success in arranging St. Bede's statements on the spiritual life according to a truly theological order is astounding. Indeed, it is the very order of the matter on the spiritual life as presented in this dissertation that should make it clear why this work should be pondered by every theologian, preacher, and spiritual director: "Because the normal introduction of every soul to the supernatural life was through the Church, and because Bede considered all association with Christ to be through the Church, his teachings on it have been discussed first." p. 252) Then there is the consideration of the sacraments and of the three ways of the spiritual life, namely, the purgative ("Sin and its Purgation according to Bede"—Chapter IV), the illuminative ("Incentives to Virtue as Emphasized by Bede"—Chapter V), and the unitive ("The Life of Virtue in Bede's Teaching"—Chapter VI). This division should not be taken too strictly, for, in fact, prayer and contemplation are treated at the end of the fifth chapter, and "Progress and the Stages of Perfection" is one of the subdivisions of the sixth chapter. Nevertheless, the division is quite in accord with that of such modern theologians as Fathers Tanqueray and Garrigou-Lagrange. Dominicans should derive special advantage

from what is said about the mixed form of religious life, that is, contemplative and active. C.M.L.

Mother of Carmel. A portrait of St. Teresa of Jesus. By E. Allison Peers. pp. 220, with index. Morehouse-Gorham Co., New York. 1946. \$2.50.

A few years ago E. Allison Peers wrote the life story of St. John of the Cross. Now he offers a companion volume, *Mother of Carmel*, the biography of St. Teresa of Jesus. Mr. Peers possesses an unquestionable competency for his task. His previous studies of Spanish mysticism and the Spanish mystics and his translations of the complete works of St. Teresa give him a familiarity with the saint which is in evidence throughout the book. He knows Teresa the saint, the writer, the reformer, the mystic. He knows her background, her friends, her enemies. The result is a lifelike portrait of "one of the most remarkable women who ever lived."

The book has three sections: Preparation, Achievement, and Fame. In the first part the author writes of the Saint's childhood, her entrance into the religious life, and her first attempts at reform. The final section is an analysis of the literary value of St. Teresa's writings and a searching study of her dynamic character. "Achievement," the second and largest part, is a record of the last twenty years of the Saint's life, years spent in making foundations, struggling in defense of her reform, writing her masterful books, yet all the while, living in close communion with her Lord and Master. Whenever possible, the author tells us, he has stood back and attempted "to use the words of Teresa herself." The abundance of quotations from her *Life*, *Way of Perfection*, and *Interior Castle* do not make for difficult reading. Mr. Peers has made excellent transitions, and the excerpts, besides being an introduction to the literary phase of St. Teresa's life, are the choice fruit of her contemplation. The author concludes that "if we are to turn our backs upon the way of the world, which has failed us, and to seek a new world along the Way of Perfection, we shall do well to charter as our guides her writings, her ideals, and her magnetic personality." *Mother of Carmel* is a splendid introduction to those guides. H.M.M.

Mystic in Motley. By Theodore Maynard. pp. 250. Bruce, Milwaukee, Wis. 1945. \$2.50.

Philip Neri, a saint, whose spiritual exercises consisted in the practice of cheerfulness and humility, needs a new introduction to

each generation of readers. In this book, Mr. Maynard provides just this with the literary felicity, historical fidelity and theological abandon characteristic of his work.

In his intention to make the saints attractive to modern readers, Dr. Maynard succeeds. His facts are culled from standard and traditional biographies of the saints, or from trustworthy sources. His style is as readable and his presentation as modern as the best of contemporary biography. And this life of St. Philip Neri is as good as his best work. When he begins to interpret the facts or actions of a saint's life against a background of theology, however, he leaves a little to be desired. He places thoughts, aspirations, and motives in the saints which could never have been there at all. This fate has been the lot of St. Francesca Cabrini and St. Philip.

In the volume at hand, Mr. Maynard makes a practice, which becomes almost a crusade, of correcting and reneging the spiritual and supernatural reasons supplied by ancient biographers to explain the wonders and marvelous works in St. Philip's life. He labels them pious tales that can be supplanted by more satisfying scientific or historical explanations. In most of the cases, however, while the ancients try our faith, Mr. Maynard, in his anxiety to contradict them, furiously tries our common sense. But the life of St. Philip is worth reading no matter what the handicaps. And this book, because of its many merits, is more worth reading than any other available.

M.H.

A Mystic Under Arms. By Eugene Boylan, O. Cist. R. pp. 59. The Newman Bookshop, Westminster, Maryland. 1945.

For the busy executive and the even busier housewife, there is in this book ample proof that a life spent in union with Jesus Christ is not impossible simply because one is busy and "distracted." This brief and concentrated biography of Michael Carlier, the Cistercian turned soldier, presents a formula for sanctity under the most unsaintly of circumstances. M. Carlier lived a more than average childhood, found studies difficult, suffered the inconvenience of bad health, and knew the nagging of half-hearted Catholics who resented "his adherence to the ordinary practices of religion." Though discouraged by his father, he promised himself to the Cistercian Abbot of Chimay at the end of his college years. But according to French law, male subjects of the Republic were liable to serve for two or three years training with the army, and Carlier's parents had made military service a condition of their consent to his entering religion. The barrack-room manners and

morals had no effect on his determination to live a life of contemplation. The morning of Dec. 8, 1911, saw Carlier receive the white habit of a Cistercian novice. Three years later war was declared and his monastic life came to an end, and all that was left of it was his Abbot's parting advice, "Be a good soldier." On the battlefield "he was the admirable soldier, beloved by his men, rugged though considerate, keen as mustard, never flagging in the weary work of waging war, pulling his men through the worst moments by example, and when that failed, by shouts, harsh words, and even threats when necessary." Inwardly, "... he can only live in a simple, cheerful act of self-surrender to God, Who loveth a cheerful giver." His death came quietly and simply on Sept. 14, 1917, when a shell struck the shelter where he was and killed him instantly.

The author, despite his simplicity and almost regrettable brevity, gives us a lasting picture of the mystic under arms. We learn a precious lesson from this man who could lead a contemplative life even in a trench full of ice water. No American can excuse himself from trying to be a saint after reading this inspiring biography.

T.A.K.

Two Kindred Hearts. By Sister Mary Charlotte, S.N.D. pp. vii-xvii, 173. Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., New York. 1946. \$2.00.

In an age when the education of the poor and orphaned was almost nil, God inspired two young women to devote their lives caring for and educating these unfortunate children. How the vocation of Aldegonda Henrica Wolbring and Elizabeth Bernadine Kuehling manifested itself in their early years and crystalized later in the founding of the Sisters of Notre Dame at Coesfeld; how these two, Sisters Mary Aloysia and Mary Ignatia in religion, labored valiantly in their congregation; and how they inspired in their novices simplicity and love of God, especially by their example, *Two Kindred Hearts* shows simply and interestingly. The reader, however, misses the accounts of the great obstacles which confronted them and the heroic deeds which they performed; but he sees them striving after religious perfection in their ordinary, everyday duties, and this was the intention of the author.

Here is a little book which should move the Sisters of Notre Dame to a greater imitation of their two holy foundresses; which should encourage the young aspirants; and which should provide useful information for those interested in the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame, in its birth, growth, and varied activities.

N.B.J.

Our Neighbors the Koreans. By F. D. David. pp. 90. Field Afar Press, New York. 1946. \$0.35.

Our Neighbors the Koreans is the second booklet of a series designed to study those things which can make good neighbors of all the peoples of the world. The first of the series was entitled *Our Neighbors the Chinese*.

The booklet at hand is a concise delineation of the history, ancient as well as modern, of the customs, the cultural background, the pagan religious beliefs and the extent of Christianity in a country which till modern times merited the title "Hermit Kingdom." Because of its brevity it is necessarily sketchy. However, ample references are given at the end of each chapter and in the bibliography at the end of the whole book for those who wish to go deeper into the subject. Especially interesting is the chapter dealing with the beginnings and the persecution of Korean Christianity, the most famous martyr of which is Blessed Just de Bretenieres of the Paris Foreign Missions. *Our Neighbors the Koreans* is well worth the reading time of all interested in the spread of the Church in the Far East. H.E.P.

Religion in America. By Willard L. Sperry. pp. xi, 318 with appendices and index. Cambridge University Press and the Macmillan Company, New York. 1946. \$2.50.

It is the intention of the Cambridge University Press to publish a series of books which will present contemporary America to the English reading public. Dr. Sperry's work is the first to be issued in this ambitious series. In it he hopes to give a comprehensive picture of the entire American religious scene.

Beginning with the thirteen colonies, the author outlines the earliest religious developments in America, his primary intention being to show historically why there was never such a thing as an established Church in the United States. This historical section is by far the best portion of the book.

The remainder of the work is less praiseworthy. It is limited for the most part to a consideration of the Protestant churches. Dr. Sperry seems to have the idea that America is still something of a Protestant preserve, despite the fact that Catholics make up well over a third of the entire church-going population. He emphasizes the smaller Protestant denominations, evidently because they are more characteristically American and because they are less well known to his English readers; but he seems greatly impressed by the multi-

plicity of these denominations, seeing here "a mark of religious contemporaneity and vitality" whereas it is rather a mark of religious disintegration and decay.

The chapter on American Theology is rather pitiful. The author can find little to put between Jonathan Edwards and William James, considering the latter's *Varieties of Religious Experience*—a work which reduces religion to emotionalism—as "the most distinctive contribution which America has made to the religious thought of the present century."

It is the chapter on American Catholicism, however, which will be of the most interest to the Catholic reader. Dr. Sperry leans heavily upon Maynard's *Story of American Catholicism* for his historical treatment of the subject. We will not criticize him for this, for despite the many defects in Maynard's work it remains the only readable one-volume work on the subject, and it was natural that Dr. Sperry should utilize it. He appends, however, some ideas which he terms "common-places in Protestant circles," even though he refuses to vouch for their truth. Here are listed all the old objections. The Church is un-American and Catholics owe allegiance to a foreign power; the Church is pro-Facist, operates under a veil of secrecy and is too much concerned with politics. Dr. Sperry blames the Church for not fostering a greater interest in the contemplative and mystical side of religious life. It is true that the Church has never encouraged those whose interest in extraordinary mystical phenomena is mere intellectual curiosity, but Dr. Sperry should not be ignorant of the hundreds of true contemplatives now living in American cloisters or of the thousands who, under the direction of the American Catholic clergy, are mounting steadily to the summits of Christian perfection.

The footnote on page 217 is quite evidently in error. The reference should be to the revision of the New Testament made under the direction of the Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and not to Father Spencer's translation. Catholic readers will also be puzzled by the reference to *the* Sacred Congregation on page 223. One of the Catholic professors of theology with whom Dr. Sperry professes to have discussed religious matters could perhaps inform him that there are a number of sacred congregations in the Roman curia, each having its proper title.

At best it can be said that Dr. Sperry's view of Religion in America is an unbalanced one. We hope that English readers will not accept it without broad reservations.

P.M.S.

The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking. By Dorothy M. Emmet. pp. 238 with index. Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London. First edition 1945, second printing 1946. \$2.50.

Dorothy M. Emmet has grasped a fundamental truth, penetrated a few of its ramifications, and then committed the oft-repeated error of making this single truth the whole of truth or more exactly the basis of all truth. Convinced, and rightly so, that metaphysics is an analogical way of thinking, she analyzed all thought, philosophical, scientific, theological, historical—in brief, all disciplines that treat of reality—and found only analogies. For her, therefore, all thought is circumscribed by, and rigidly compressed within, an interminable circle of analogies created by the human mind.

Her efforts to break this circle—and break it she must as she well recognizes if her metaphysics is to have any basis in reality—are futile. All she can offer as a link with the stark, rugged reality of the world about her is a vapid, meaningless concept of “things.” Deprived of all intelligible content, this concept becomes for her a dogma of faith to be adhered to tenaciously and blindly, come what may. This idea has its source in conception as an activity of mind; in no way is it caused by any physical object. Driven to the wall by the sheer logic of her own argumentation, the authoress defends this sole, tenuous link with reality by fabricating a theory of mind which views the knowing subject as a “bipolar organism” indulging in two activities: one, a non-conceptual activity of response to interrelated, energetic functions; the other, a conceptual activity that orders and interprets in symbolic forms. Interprets what? Miss Emmet can respond only with an act of faith: “I believe in ‘things’.”

Explaining how her defensive hypothesis of the nature of the knowing subject accounts for the possibility of attaining truth through revelation and argumentation, whether scientific, philosophical or theological, occupies Miss Emmet's attention for some two hundred pages. Each branch of knowledge presents its own peculiar difficulties, and each in turn is faced boldly and answered, seldom to the authoress's satisfaction, never to this reviewer's.

Dorothy Emmet is keenly aware of the difficulties attendant upon the attainment of knowledge concerning transcendent objects. Both those difficulties which necessarily accompany the object itself, as well as those which arise from an attempt to discuss the problem of knowledge in terms of the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter or the Kantian dualism of noumena and phenomena are stated clearly and analyzed carefully. Particularly trenchant in this regard is her criticism of the idealist point of view adopted and expounded by many

modern philosophers and scientists. Indeed, she has met these men on their own grounds and has confronted them with several insoluble difficulties arising only within the frame work of their own philosophic synthesis.

Matching her brilliance in analysis and criticism of modern theories is her intellectual shabbiness and sloth in presenting the doctrines of realism in regard to the problem of knowledge, of Thomism in regard to revelation and faith. Realism is rejected as being too naive for serious consideration, a criticism which is certainly true of the type of realism delineated in this book. There is another realism, however, that speaks also of direct knowledge of things, of copies and images, but never of an immediate apprehension of the nature of things. Likewise, it takes into account and explains satisfactorily errors, illusions, and the changing perspective of our senses. All in all, it is not quite so naive as the strawman Miss Emmet has flayed. An attempt at investigating and understanding the position of moderate realism, which should have been made previous to publication of a pretended exhaustive treatment of the subject, would pay her heavy dividends.

Again, the analogy of being criticized by the authoress and supposed by her to be the doctrine of St. Thomas is nothing more than the truncated accounts of two popularizers of Thomism in which more has been left unsaid than said. Miss Emmet still has a great deal of investigating to do in sources more reliable than the ones she chose to use, before she can criticize with any assurance a doctrine she now neither understands nor appreciates.

Finally failure to consult competent authorities in the field of Catholic theology has resulted in her adoption of a ridiculous position in regard to the nature of faith, which she conceives as some sort of total assent, definitely not of the mind of man, not quite so definitely not of the feelings of man, but possibly of man's character as a whole. In reaching this definition of faith, Miss Emmet leans heavily upon several modern protestant theologians, completely ignoring the traditions of nineteen centuries of Catholic theology, an oversight not easily excused in an analysis of the best thought on the subject.

P.F.

Conversations with an Unrepentant Liberal. By Julius Seelye Bixler. pp. 113. Yale University Press, New Haven. 1946. \$2.00.

This is the publication of the twenty-second series of lectures delivered at Yale University on the Foundation established by the late

Dwight H. Terry. Mr. Bixler, President of Colby College and author of several works on philosophy and religion, re-incarnates two Greek philosophers, Simmias and Cebes, and places them in our present age. Through them he discusses the perennial problems of life, education, and religion from the liberal viewpoint.

In an engaging style and with a penetrating analysis the author exposes the faults of the liberal while maintaining that liberalism itself can contribute much toward a solution of many of our present-day problems. There is a great deal to be admired in this work, yet one lays it down with the impression that much of it is but dilettante intellectual dialectic which leaves some of the most important questions of truth and salvation at the mercy of mere probable opinion.

Certainly the liberal's understanding of the nature of freedom is a distorted one; for a freedom which rejects all moral authority, making man a god unto himself, leads inevitably to intellectual anarchy and moral chaos. The fact of revelation and of a Church established by God to guard that revelation cannot be blandly dismissed on the score of narrow partisanship and arbitrary authoritarianism, especially when in its place is substituted a vague appeal to the unity of the human cause and the commonness of the human aim—a cause and an aim which become real and concrete only by the practical application of Christ's teaching.

Cebes, the unrepentant liberal, and Simmias, his critical opponent, have little common ground on which they can meet in mutual understanding. However, their concern over our present-day crisis, their apparent sincerity and good faith unite them in the desire for a better world and a lasting peace.

L.L.

Facing Your Social Situation. By James F. Walsh, S.J. pp. 237 with questions for discussion and indices. The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee. 1946. \$2.75.

Though this book makes no boast of offering a "cure-all" for social maladjustment, it does point out to the reader the value of solving social problems in terms of Christian thought.

Before dealing with his subject matter as such, the author establishes definitions and gives a brief review of the progress of Social Psychology from the days of Aristotle to the present. Special attention is paid to the ennobling effect that the Incarnation of the Son of God has had upon society. Because that event has been ignored and because scholastic philosophy, with its insistence upon the worth of the human person, has been shunned, the social psychologist of today

is guided mainly by the doctrines of sensationalism, materialism and psychologism. Deservedly, then, does Father Walsh conclude his preliminary work with a discussion of the psychology of human action from the point of view of the scholastic.

There follows an interesting treatment of the elements that are present in the "Formation of the Situation." Imitation and the growing child; inventions and their resultant state of leisure—these and other factors are analyzed. "Reaction to the Situation" and "Control of the Situation" are described at considerable length. Especially well done are the sections on crime, war, and the psychology of propaganda and mobs. Also worthy of close study are the pages that consider leisure and recreation; for, unfortunately, as the writer declares, these are the producers of heartache, and not relaxation, in too many instances.

Finally, the family, the school, the workshop, the Church and the State, as institutions that remain constant in every social situation, are studied in reference to the strong influence which they exert upon all members of society. Teachers, parents, and lawmakers, who complain about the lack of reverence for authority among the "teen-agers" and the youngsters, might find some revealing statements in the explanation of family spirit and the task of education. Current fallacies and old misunderstandings concerning the efficacy of Catholicism as a social power for good are recalled and answered. Aptly is it observed that the Church, given a free hand, has not lost, nor can it lose, its power of influence. The conclusions about the knowledge that the ordinary citizen possesses in regard to the function of the State will prove surprising.

Facing Your Social Situation will fulfill the demands of critical readers looking for a popular, concise treatment of Catholic Social Principles and for the answers to the problems that arise from man's relations with his fellow man. M.M.

A Negro's Faith in America. By Spencer Logan. pp. 88. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1946. \$1.75.

This short but mature analysis of the Negro problem is soberly and realistically presented by a returning war veteran. The difficulties as outlined by the author are many and involved, but the plans so far attempted for remedying these difficulties have failed because of a lack of unity among the Negroes and a blinding prejudice among some Whites.

Such plans were the Back-to-Africa Movement of Marcus Gar-

vey, the Sanhedrin Plan of Dr. Kelly Miller and the Pan-African Congress of Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois.

The author points out the pressing need of leaders to further the cause of the Negro. Today more than ever, with the return of Negro veterans there is a growing desire and hunger for the attainment of a fuller participation in the democratic idea established by the Constitution. Their most earnest wish is for social equality. This end surely must be gained, but the author realizes that its attainment will come about neither by political pressure nor by court decisions, for such as these are subject to the will of the people.

The Negro problem is now more than ever being approached through the power of education. Such a plan is being carried out in Springfield, Massachusetts where there is practiced "in all schools a common philosophy of education based upon the ideal of living, learning, working and thinking together." Also leading in this work are All-Day neighborhood Schools of New York City and some schools in Chicago.

However, education alone will not be able to surmount the many problems dealing with the Race Question. The Church must embrace the problem and seek to instill in the hearts of all men the love which Christ brought to all men, the love of one's fellow man. This the author points out when he concludes: "We must educate ourselves to the point where the color of a man's skin is of no more importance than the color of his eyes, and where our evaluations of one another are on the basis of character and interests rather than on creed or color."

A.L.D.

Cicero in the Courtroom of St. Thomas Aquinas. The Aquinas Lecture 1945. By E. K. Rand. pp. 115 with notes and 2 short appendices. Marquette University Press, Milwaukee. 1946. \$1.50.

This tenth publication in the series of the Aquinas Lectures represents a radical departure in subject matter from the definitely philosophical and theological preoccupations of its predecessors. As the title partially indicates under the metaphor of the courtroom, the book is concerned primarily with investigating St. Thomas's use of and judgment upon those teachings of Cicero which may be found in his rhetorical and polemical works.

In developing his lecture Professor Rand first touches lightly upon the Angelic Doctor's method of handling and arranging his numerous quotations from the ancients, his interest in the rhetorical teachings of Cicero, his analysis of rhetoric both as a speculative

science and as an art, and finally his own schooling in this discipline beloved by men of letters in the Middle Ages. Having presented this background material, the author then considers the contributions Cicero has made to St. Thomas's synthesis of moral doctrine. Thus a very small craft has been launched in the mighty sea of the *Summa Theologica*; a tiny bit of this vast ocean of doctrine has been explored; and a new horizon for thoughtful study has been opened.

P.F.

Drums Under the Windows. By Sean O'Casey. pp. 431. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1946. \$4.50.

Once more from the pen of a talented Gael, has come a work of unmistakable merit. Sean O'Casey possesses the happy faculty of making words form beautiful sounds and images. *Drums Under The Windows* is such a work. It would easily be one of the better works of autobiography, if it were not for one sad fact. Mr. O'Casey is a bitter man and his acidity makes him a scoffing anti-clerical and a subtle atheist.

Drums Under The Windows is the third volume of Sean O'Casey's autobiographical series and contains in its scope the period ending with the first World War. It offers a clear picture of the turbulent state of affairs in Ireland at this time, closing with the famed but ill-fated Easter uprising. We can have no doubt that Mr. O'Casey paints the overwhelming confusion as he saw it—the Gaelic League and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the leaders viz Connolly, Pearse and Larkin, the strike and riots, all to climax later in the heroic defense of the Post-Office.

These, then, were times of seething unrest and drab poverty, when all Irishmen were not true to Ireland's ancient glory and her living faith and some dreamed great dreams of Ireland's return to her position of antiquity and spurned Ireland's faith as a bar in her march to preeminence. Among these we find Sean O'Casey. He is bitter against the machinations of some members of the Irish hierarchy and for such he would lead the people away from the guidance of their pastors. For the weaknesses of men, he would reject Ireland's crowning jewel.

We would remind Mr. O'Casey that, in view of his Protestant background, he is hardly in a position to declaim against the Irish clergy as Ireland's impediment. Ireland is neither pagan nor Protestant, but Ireland is Catholic and except for the fierce Catholicism of the penal days, all of O'Casey's ancient lays would be as canticles in a

foreign land. It was love of country, buttressed by faith, that withstood the onslaughts of Protestant England throughout the centuries and it was the same patriotism and faith, that brought about a free (though not yet whole) Ireland. No dreamy idealism of dying in vain attempts, but the vivid realism of living under dismal conditions with head and heart erect, carried Ireland through her dark hour.

It is far from the purpose of this review to belittle Mr. O'Casey's sincere and ardent love of Ireland or to decry his genuine sympathy and compassion for the poor and downtrodden. But just as misguided satire vitiates his love of country, so his rationalistic views prevent him from understanding the poverty stricken people he pities. Material poverty, without the blessedness of being poor in spirit and rich in faith, is indeed a thing of shame, but Mr. O'Casey should know that the people in the Dublin slums were, of a certainty, happier than those in the high places who had forsaken their country and their God.

K.C.

Alms For Oblivion. By George Carver, Litt. D. pp. 325 with bibliography and index. Bruce, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 1946. \$3.00.

Alms for Oblivion is a book about books, men, and biography. Dr. Carver opens his discussion with a brief consideration of the definition of the word 'biography' and a swift sketch of the development of biography as a literary form. The twenty-three following chapters are studies of the representative men, their works, and the manner in which each contributed to the furtherance of the biographical form. To each biographer and his most important Life or Lives one chapter is devoted. The result is a series of discreet considerations, each sufficient unto itself but all, taken collectively, define clearly the continuous road along which biography has progressed.

From Adamnan (d. 704) to Lytton Strachey (d. 1932) is a period of twelve centuries during which life writing grew, one might say evolved. The earliest Lives were of saintly Clerics, didactic in purpose. Soon biography became secularized to the extent of recounting the lives of rulers to teach the "ways of wise government." Not until well on in the Renaissance did other than saints and rulers become increasingly popular as subjects of biographers.

Izaak Walton introduced into the biographical form the re-creation of the personalities of his subjects for themselves alone. In this, says Dr. Carver, consists the essence of biography and all biographers must become apostles of personality. This is an opinion of the author not a dogma of biography. Far better is the presentation of the life of

a good and holy man with the intention of affording the readers a model for emulation than a mere word portrait of a vivid personality.

Margaret Newcastle in writing the life of her husband was another innovator. Thomas Fuller wrote, "to procure some honest profit to myself," a purpose never before mentioned. Dryden recorded minute details and private actions of his subject which previously had been considered too small for remembrance.

The highest point of the biographical form was reached in Boswell's *Johnson*. After Boswell, little that was new was added. Older forms sometimes recurred.

Dr. Carver closes his story of biography with the study of Gamaliel Bradford's psychography and Lytton Strachey's 'ironic' biography in which the author's "freedom of spirit" is never to be curtailed.

Alms for Oblivion is a well written book. Interspersed throughout the factual data concerning both biographer and biography, the author gives the reader his own critical observations. The text is replete with quotations. Overfrequent incidentals and side excursions tend to distract from otherwise captivating discussions, but one is immediately brought to attention by some humorous passage or keen observation.

By this book the neophyte will be aroused to further study and the far advanced student will glean many refreshing points view and criticisms heretofore confined principally to Professor Carver's lecture room.

T.L.F.

Virgil. By F. J. H. Letters, M.A., LLB. pp. 162. Sheed and Ward, New York City. 1946. \$2.00.

Educators today are witnessing a too drastic, lamentable swing from the speculative to the practical, from the fine arts to the mechanical. Consequently, the classics of antiquity are taking a secondary place in the curriculum of numerous high schools and colleges. Mr. Letters in his present work, *Virgil*, helps to offset this trend. It is a consideration and interpretation of Virgil's genius as it is mirrored in his pastoral *Bucolics*, agricultural *Georgics*, and epic *Aeneid*.

The author does not attempt a theological exegesis, or a proof whether or not Virgil possessed the *anima naturaliter christiana*. Instead, the reader is given a scholarly manifestation of Virgilian art and genius. There is a comprehensive treatment of the various sources from which Virgil derived much of his material. Mr. Letters interestingly points out how original Virgil was even in his use of themes borrowed from his predecessors.

Charges of superficiality with which the master of Saturnian verse has been assailed are answered. Nevertheless, the author is always ready to admit Virgil's faults. A lack of Latin will not hamper one's enjoyment of this book, for an English translation is provided for the many passages quoted. This translation is not merely something incidentally added, for in the foreword the author says, "Written in contemplation of the time when a knowledge of Latin would have ceased to be necessary for matriculation, this book is in part an attempt to give an attempt to give general students some knowledge, and even appreciation, of the most famous of Roman poets." There is also a short appendix for those interested in Saturnian verse.

The beginner will find this work helpful in gaining an understanding of Virgilian poetry. The part devoted to the characters and historical background of the more widely known *Aeneid* will be of special interest to him. However, if the reader's knowledge of the other poets of antiquity and many English poets is scanty, this book will be too advanced in spots. Those more proficient in the classics, on the other hand, will wholly welcome this latest work on Virgil.

V.F.

Mysteries' End. By Harold C. Gardiner, S.J. pp. xiv-142 with appendices, bibliography, and index. Yale University Press, New Haven. 1946. \$3.00.

It has been the custom in tracing the development of culture to pass from ancient Greece and Rome to the Renaissance and Reformation with hardly a word about the intervening centuries. This gap of nine or ten centuries has been explained as, at the very best, a preparation or hibernation before the dawn of modern culture. This approach to the history of civilization has been especially true of the history of literature, and more particularly, of the history of the drama. When medieval drama has been treated at all, it has been either as a substitute for the barbarous arena and bloody jousts, or as a precursor, in some dim fashion, of the splendor of the Shakesperean stage. Occasional surges of a vague "Gothic" Romanticism, or perhaps even of a more thorough scholarship, have resulted in scattered and desultory efforts to unearth the great treasure of the Middle Ages. If the reason for the snubbing of medievalism has been opposition to the great motivating spirit of those ages, perhaps the lack of interest and the smallness of result in the investigation of those ages may be attributed to an ignorance or lack of sympathy with that same spirit. The critic of Medievalism must bring to his work a sympathy that

will understand how right Chaucer was when he wrote of the *blissful* passion. Such a sympathy is completely foreign to the modern scholar who finds such a phrase "strange to us, who cannot read the Gospel account without pain."

The present writer brings precisely this needed sympathy to his investigation of the last days of the medieval religious stage. He also brings a wealth of scholarship. Indeed, there is such a wealth of it that the reader who expects Father Gardiner's usually transparent and vivacious style will be disappointed to see it embalmed in the paraphernalia of a dissertation. However, this would hardly be a just criticism, since the nature of the thesis precludes a popular treatment. Father Gardiner sets out to prove, often in decided opposition to other writers on the subject, that the religious stage declined not from the opposition of the Church (before or after Trent), not from the opposition of the Guilds, not from a people tired of the religious cycles, but from official opposition inspired by the Protestant rebellion. There is a cursory treatment of the effect of the Reformation spirit on the religious stage throughout the continent, but the burden of the argument rests with the England of the Tudors. Although for the most part the evidence is compelling, there are times when the reader feels that Father Gardiner is skating on rather thin ice. This is especially true when there is a question of negative evidence, for, as far as historical certitude goes, silence may often mean nothing at all. Nevertheless, even in these few uncertain questions, the presentation of what evidence there is is a valuable contribution. On the whole, the conclusions seem justified, and the general impression is that new light has been thrown on an interesting phase in the development of the drama. U.V.

Christopher Marlowe. A study of his thought, learning, and character.

By Paul H. Kocher. pp. x-344 with index. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hinn. 1946. \$3.50.

Christopher Marlowe is hardly a popular author. The average college student may dip into one or another of his plays; only the specialist in Elizabethan drama will have read him thoroughly. Dr. Kocher's book, will, then, hardly have a large audience, for it will appeal only to the serious student of Marlowe.

This work is, as the title indicates, not so much a study of Marlowe's literary artistry as an analysis of his thought and learning.

The author is concerned primarily with Marlowe's religious thought, and certainly this is the most important portion of his book. His thesis is that Marlowe, though he took a degree in divinity from

Cambridge (he never took orders) was a "militant atheist." This contention he attempts to prove from biographical sources, principally from the Baines note, wherein the playwright is accused of teaching publicly the most vile sort of blasphemy. Though the existing biographical evidence for this opinion is fairly strong, Dr. Kocher would go further and convict Marlowe out of his own mouth. Here he has set for himself a difficult task. The characters in a literary work do not always represent the thoughts and ideals of the author. This is particularly true of the characters in a drama. Dr. Kocher's repeated insistence that Marlowe was a "subjective dramatist" does not really settle the matter. Yet even granting this point, the evidence he has amassed from the plays is far from convincing and sometimes even conflicting. Dr. Kocher tries to explain it away: "... however scornfully Marlowe rejected the system (Christianity) intellectually, it still had a powerful hold of some sort on his imagination and emotions. . . . However desperate his desire to be free, he was bound to Christianity by the surest of chains—hatred mingled with reluctant longing, and fascination much akin to fear." (pp. 118-119) However, even with this explanation, the case is not as clear as Dr. Kocher would like us to believe.

The rest of the book is of little worth. Dr. Kocher studies Marlowe's knowledge of witchcraft, politics and ethics, astronomy and meteorology, and the art of war. In these studies the author displays a vast amount of scholarship, introducing contemporary material which may have influenced Marlowe. Yet the conclusions are hardly worth the effort. Marlowe's knowledge of witchcraft and astronomy are just about what we would expect of a sixteenth century university man and divinity student. Marlowe evidently did some reading in military tactics and history; what of it? The chapter on politics and ethics is thoroughly disappointing.

Dr. Kocher is a man of evident scholarly attainments. It is to be regretted that he did not direct them to a more fruitful subject.

P.M.S.

Initiate the Heart. By Sister M. Maura, S.S.N.D. pp. 46. Macmillan, New York. 1946. \$1.75.

The poets contribute little by volume. Intensity, by the depth of their insight and the light of their revelation, is their gift. To Sister Maura for *Initiate the Heart* we are in debt. This small hand of poems combines a thinking mind with a facile pen. She is concerned with the heart of man, with loneliness, the heart's reaction to change,

with bitterness. She touches the heart of a nun, the meaning of a vocation, the joy, the mystery of her life. She reflects on the world, on nature and people, and the things of the mind. Sister Maura is deep and penetrating. Her expression is sure, figured, colorful, and direct. She has succeeded in forging forty poems, limpid as well as searching. Among the poets of the language, she is in the company of the best. *Initiate the Heart* is a precious mound of shard struck from a beauty-full and truth-full Catholic mind.

M.H.

The Golden Book of Catholic Poetry. By Alfred Noyes. pp. 440. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia. 1946. \$3.50.

A Little Treasury of Modern Poetry. By Oscar Williams. pp. 672. Chas. Scribner and Sons, New York. 1946. \$2.75.

"But where are snows of yesteryear?" Ah, Francois, look to the anthologies for answer. Perennially, the poetically minded bind up within pitifully thin covers what is dubbed the "best" in poetic expression, and cast them adrift in the blizzards and squalls of modern literary output. Two such recent publications are those of Mr. Noyes, the Catholic, and Mr. Williams, the Modern. Let us note how both have allowed the "snows of yesteryear" to drift into their works.

Noyes is ambitious. The task he set for himself is not an easy one. The evolutionary demonstration of English Catholic poetry as the catholic poetry of the Anglo-Saxon world and a correspondent development of his own theme: the dependence of the Anglo-Saxon upon the Latin genius, is more than formidable. For, strictly speaking, true Catholic poetry is always catholic. And, truly catholic poetics cannot be easily barred from the designation Catholic, thus making selection difficult. But, the Englishman fulfills his every ambition in a highly interesting coverage of eight centuries. He has culled the heights and depths of poetics of the Anglo-Saxon strain, and the fruit of his labors is praiseworthy.

The reviewer has but one adverse criticism. It seems that Mr. Noyes lost a splendid opportunity for making his work complete and satisfying, for he overlooked the obvious: English Catholic poetry really begins with Chaucer's almost balladric *Canterbury Tales* and, for the moment, we pray, ends with Chesterton's *Ballad of the White Horse*. Yet, one will look in vain for G.K.C.'s immortal poem.

Oscar Williams' very title sounds a bit apologetic and does not necessarily restrict his selection to any definite period, despite any thought to the contrary. All great poetry is forever modern, and one wonders if convenience excuses dating of any kind. However, Mr.

Williams seems to realize this fact, for he saves face by opening with Gerard Manley Hopkins, the Jesuit, and so-called father of modern poetry. Surely, if there is a modern poetry, Hopkins is responsible for much of it.

One word anent Williams' selections. Anyone who walks with Hopkins, Thompson, de la Mare, and Millay should not be suspect. However, should that same critical judge overlook a mountain for the sake of mole-hills, then, his judgment is full worthy of suspicion. Mr. Williams, where is Chesterton? There is not enough of this great man's poetic off-spring, to cite one example, to justify the space given to a Nash. Nash's wit and humor fall short of Chesterton's in maintaining "gaiety at a definite level of taste" (cf. p. 40).

Mr. Williams suffers from eclecticism in taste, and his readers must necessarily suffer the same. It is this fact that will make unity of purpose and thought of discovery for the discriminating reader. But, the anthologist aims to soften this impression by a legendary index of the various types of poems at the top of each page.

In our estimation, some of the selections in the *Little Treasury* do not justify the fine thoughts on poetry expressed in the Introduction. Furthermore, we would very much like to see a large question mark after that advertisement on the jacket: The Best Poems of the Twentieth Century, indeed.

T.O'B.

The Takers of the City. By H. R. Hays. pp. 376. Reynal and Hitchcock, New York. 1946. \$2.75.

That indefatigable champion of the Indians, Bartolome de las Casas, at the age of 70 and as the newly appointed Bishop of the Guatemalan province of Chiapas, is the central character of H. R. Hays' historical novel. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city," the author quotes from the Book of Proverbs (16/32), and then proceeds to portray the struggle las Casas went through to achieve this double victory, whereas the bloody Conquistadores remained only the "takers of the city."

There can be no doubting the author's worthy intention, and in the end of the book we see las Casas rise to great heights of self abnegation to achieve his victory. However, the means by which this victory is realized can be seriously questioned.

In dealing with the hatred of the Spanish landowners, the trickery of the Spanish overseers, and the distrust of the Indians themselves we see the famous Dominican liberator strengthened by such

thoughts as: "The sense that he was not as other men, that God had endowed him with a secret and inexhaustible power" or "the iron tool of his will had chipped a way through the obstacle." This overemphasis of the power of the will is a typical modern and erroneous explanation of strength of character. It seems hardly probable that such was the real secret of the strength of a sixteenth-century religious who had spent a lifetime in the service of and in close unity with his God.

Toward the end of the book las Casas muses that "he was not a contemplative being, his life was action, and he knew it was too late for him to travel a different road." Here we have expression of another modern error that would oppose contemplation to action. Las Casas was a product of his times, a sixteenth-century Dominican who lived to the hilt the motto of his Order, "having contemplated, to give to others." That he "gave to others" is plainly evident to the world in his monumental labors for his beloved Indians; yet none of this would have been possible had it not been for the contemplative side of his life. Without one the other could never have existed; contemplation was the mainspring of all his labors.

As a novel the background is colorful and realistic and suspense is maintained throughout. It must be sharply criticized, however, for its too realistic description of sins of the flesh. From the development of the characters and the flow of incidents it is quite evident to the reader that not all the characters are leading chaste lives. Undoubtedly, the code of morality of the Conquistadores and the Spanish merchants was lax and they were unscrupulous about taking native Indian women as mistresses. There is nothing wrong in bringing this out as an historical fact, but to present it at great length and in such suggestive detail, as the author does, is unnecessary. T.J.K.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- CHRISTIANITY.** By Joseph H. Fichter, S.J. pp. 267 with index. B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1946. \$2.50. (An outline of dogmatic theology for laymen.)
- CLAUDE DUBUIS, BISHOP OF GALVESTON.** By L. V. Jacks. pp. 268. B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1946. \$2.50.
- ALL YOU WHO ARE BURDENED.** By Martin J. Scott, S.J. pp. x-210. P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York, 1946. Cloth, \$2.00; paper, \$0.50. (An answer to the question why an all good God tolerates evil.)
- THE MYSTERIES OF CHRISTIANITY.** By Matthias Joseph Sheeben. Translated by Cyril Vollert, S.J. pp. 834 with index. B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1946. \$7.50. (To be reviewed later.)

- ARE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PROGRESSIVE? By Lawrence J. O'Connell. pp. ix-167 with index. B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1946. (To be reviewed later.)
- GUIDING GROWTH IN CHRISTIAN SOCIAL LIVING. A Curriculum for the Elementary School. Volume III, Upper Grades. By Sister Mary Joan, O.P., and Sister Mary Nona, O.P., pp. xi-372. Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D. C., 1946. \$4.00. (A continuation of the excellent work done in Volumes I and II. A complete curriculum integrated by religion now available for the elementary school.)

PAMPHLETS RECEIVED

- CATHOLIC LIFE IN THE WEST INDIES. By Richard Pattee. The Catholic Association for International Peace, Washington, D. C., 1946. \$0.10.

From Radio Replies Press, St. Paul, Minn.

- THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND THE JEWS. By John M. Oesterreicher, 1946. \$0.10.
- THE DEATH OF CHRIST THE WARRIOR. By Paul McCann, 1946. \$0.50.
- GENERAL DEVOTIONS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN. \$0.15.
- THE GUIDE POSTS OF THE ALMIGHTY TO PERMANENT INDUSTRIAL PEACE AND PROSPERITY. By Most Rev. Richard J. Cushing, D.D., 1946. \$0.10.
- MUSIC OF THE MASS. By Francis X. Sallaway, 1946. \$0.25.
- THE PARACLETE, NOVENAS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. By Lawrence J. Luelkemeier, 1946. \$0.15.
- QUIZZES ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE, 1946. \$0.15.
- WHY A HOSPITAL SISTER? By L. Rumble, M.S.C., 1946. \$0.15.