

it was George Sand's daughter Solange, the cause of the pitiful misunderstanding that brought about the rupture. The whole story leaves the reader with a lively sympathy for them both, and a poignant sense of needless waste and tragedy. In his handling of Chopin's music the author is surely right in insisting that it should be judged by its own internal laws and not by any supposed 'programme' nor by the laws of classical sonata construction. He gives due weight to the Polish element in Chopin's music—not only the intangible spirit of ardour and longing that made him, in his lifetime and for all time, the living voice of Poland's tragedy, but also to the actual traditional folk-music embodied in his work which, combined with his revolutionary piano technique, 'placed the first explosive charge against that long-revered edifice of classical diatonic harmony which now lies in utter ruin and disintegration'. As the author himself sums it up, 'Strange that a poet's reveries should forebode the end of an epoch!'

ROSEMARY HUGHES.

How to Study, being the Letter of St Thomas Aquinas to Brother John *De Modo Studendi*. Latin text with translation and exposition by Victor White, O.P. (Blackfriars; 1s.)

Brother John was one of St Thomas's younger Dominican brethren; he did not importune his brother and master in vain. A new edition of St Thomas's letter and Fr White's running commentary cannot fail to be welcome. It is true that the format is not attractive, but the grace and wisdom of St Thomas and Fr White's lively exposition triumph. Seldom, and nowhere in shorter span, is there struck so perfect a balance between exhortation to scientific method and an admonition to the devout life.

C. R.

JUDGEMENT AT CHELMSFORD. By Charles Williams. (Oxford University Press; 2s. 6d.)

This pageant play was written for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Diocese of Chelmsford, and although production, because of the war, was made vain in 1939, admirers of the late Charles Williams will be pleased to hear that it is to be presented in London at the Scala Theatre during 1947. Here admiration ceases, for it is important to distinguish between pageant plays in verse and poetic dramas. For instance, *The Rock* by Eliot is unlikely in future generations to be classed with *The Family Reunion* and, in a similar way, *Judgement at Chelmsford* is unlikely to be classed with Williams's *Thomas Cranmer*. In fact, almost in fear of such a verdict, the author in this case admits to originally ascribing the text of the former to Peter Stanhope—a name to which on various occasions he had recourse, so that the approval or disapproval which his other works had brought him might not mar the purpose of such writing as that now under scrutiny.

The pageant is presented in eight episodes together with a prologue and epilogue in which Chelmsford (personified as a woman) is discovered on her birthday coming to the gate of Heaven to talk with her

elder brothers, the Great Sees of Christendom. There are five of these—Canterbury, Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem. But her approach is prevented by a figure called the Accuser who demands that before she can enter Paradise she should see herself as she really is. He asks her if she were called to death and judgement that night, by the destructiveness of war, what she would say on her own behalf, and he calls on the Five Sees, ministers of justice, to hear her defence. They enter to the sound of an air raid and thus the stage is set for an exhibition of 'her ways of living'. In this historical retrogression, after the contemporary scene there follows, so to say, a series of short tableaux of the past: of the Chelmsford witches, the Reformation, the martyrdom of Saint Osyth and other incidents. They are chosen, too, not only so as to offer a complete history of the diocese, but also of the movement of man's soul from the things of this world to the next kingdom. So much for the framework.

The verse in which the play is written is of a modified traditional kind. Naturally in a work of this order,—written one imagines to time—the quality of it cannot be expected to have the precision of a short poem, or the texture of a carefully modulated and matured soliloquy. Rather its interest—and this is equally true of *The Rock*—lies in its experimentation with a tone of address. The Accuser speaks in a voice which challenges: in upbraiding the indifference of the audience it still remains humble and, what is more important, impersonally superior to them.

Beautiful are the mild moments: fair and fit
are feasts and fasts in the seasons' flight; wit
flashes to heaven more from a full stomach
than ever from an empty, save only where
those who are called to it climb the steep stair
of convents or rigour of rule: else—
forget you, gentles, the tale the Gospel tells?

The poise in these lines is perfect and particularly open to all the subtle cadences which an accomplished player can give them. As well this passage illustrates how, like Williams's posthumous poetic drama, *The House of the Octopus*, this pageant play is worthy to stand its ground in the works of a great Christian poet.

NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

FUNDAMENTAL THEORY. By Sir A. S. Eddington, F.R.S., O.M.
(Cambridge University Press; 25s.)

This posthumous work of Sir A. S. Eddington has been edited and seen through the press by Sir E. T. Whittaker. Here we have the culmination of all Eddington's life-work, his efforts to arrive at the complete mathematical expression of the structure of the universe. With remarkable erudition and ingenuity the mathematical pattern of the physical structure of the universe is worked out. This book is very much a book for the professional mathematician or physicist, and it is hoped to review it in greater detail later.