

of Secular Institutes shows most clearly that the Church is very much alive with the Spirit of God, and that it has as a living organism the power within it of adaptation to the changing conditions of society. History shows that a number of nameless organizations without any official status in the general law of the Church by a mysterious impulse sprang into being, largely among the laity. They were all impelled by an apostolic zeal and a desire to live the religious life under vows whilst living in the world, and usually continuing to wear secular attire. Pope Pius XII in his apostolic constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia* 1947 not only gives these societies official recognition, but has given them their proper legal title and the charter of their foundation.

This book is an important contribution to the study of these Secular Institutes which have become an outstanding institution in the life of the Church today, and tend to increase and multiply, under the initial impulse which gave them being. This is a subject which will attract the interest not only of those who belong to these institutes or to societies which are on the way to receiving the status of Secular Institutes, but to all those who wish to understand their aims and way of living, and the manner in which they have gradually developed. As is shown, the first great pioneer in this field was Père de Clorivière, who in 1791 founded two societies—one for men and the other for women. The former comprised in its membership priests and laymen. The book is well documented and to be recommended.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

SHEPHERD'S TARTAN. By Sister Mary Jean Dorcy, O.P. (Sheed and Ward; 9s. 6d.)

Whether it is Divine Providence or sheer serendipity Mr Frank Sheed seems to have an uncanny flair for the real vintage writer and to find his way unerringly to the one who can turn words into magic, phrases into features and paragraphs into works of art: Caryll Houselander, Lucile Hasley, and now Sister Mary Jean Dorcy.

The present book is a bubbling description of the experiences of a girl in the process of becoming a nun (Dominican) followed by a series of idyllic but piquant, penetrating essays, in a sort of film-shot manner, on various phases and aspects of real life in a real convent: a very Pied Piper of a book that should draw hundreds of girls to the convent gate, and further. It is also a portrayal, effective because indirect, of the heart and soul of a nun.

All sorts of incidental reflections on life in general—for instance a commonsense chapter on the way mere human sorrow enters into the life of a nun—make it a useful book for others besides girls who want to know what a vocation to the cloister means. In fact the incidental

reflection occasionally gives an impression of padding, but it is good padding and makes one hope that Sister Mary Jean will find time and opportunity in future books to talk at random on these and all kindred subjects.

Her description of a nun's life begins with the first glimmering of a vocation and takes us from school days to postulancy, to novitiate, to profession and beyond. Hers is a teaching Order, but she bears in mind the needs and temperament of those who are not called to teach, but to be nuns, just nuns. She has something to say even of contemplative nuns, and this is a section where her dexterous pencil has, perhaps, failed to put in a few lines which might have improved the picture.

On the whole this is just the book to put into the hands of anyone whose ideas of convent life and vocation need clarifying, developing, completing—that is, everybody.

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.

SCIENCE AND THE HUMAN IMAGINATION. Aspects of the History and Logic of Physical Science. By Mary B. Hesse (S.C.M. Press; 12s. 6d.)

In some ways the sub-title of this book gives a rather better indication of its contents than the title itself; for the book is a study in the history of scientific method, and it is only in the later pages that the more general issues implied in the title are confronted. This, I am sure, is the right way to go about the question, but it does mean that Miss Hesse will have to write another book to complete the message she has to give to us. And I, for one, will look forward to reading it, because Miss Hesse writes with that sort of clarity and elegance one associates with mathematicians—she is Lecturer in Mathematics at the University of Leeds. Furthermore she has a grasp of history, an ability to see things from a historical standpoint, such as few mathematicians and physical scientists possess. In this respect her book is far superior, for instance, to Canon Raven's Gifford Lectures—though it will, no doubt, receive less attention.

Pleasant as it would be to quote certain observations in this book and to repeat the acute criticisms it contains of Philosophers of Science, the readers of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* are more likely to be interested in the conclusions arrived at. Here is one conclusion, which I quote because I have only slowly become convinced of it and because it contradicts a deep-set prejudice:

'However necessary logical and mathematical formulations may be in the progress of physics and in certain parts of the other sciences, we need not fall victims to the sort of mentality which dismisses any statement not couched in exact symbolism on the grounds that