

Santeuil. But the preface makes it quite plain that the only reason for publishing it is because the manuscript of the diary belongs to Catherine de Hueck, who will be using the proceeds for Madonna House, Combermere. Few of us would grudge fifteen shillings for Combermere (those of us who have read *Tumbleweed* might be happy to subscribe even more). But the question remains, is this diary worth reading when we already know *Elected Silence*? Father Merton's superiors obviously think not, and they have asked him to make it quite plain that they are not enthusiastic about having it published. One imagines they would have preferred something a little more *distingué*. One should not be too critical about the Journal, of course. It is an excellent exercise, as one approaches middle age, to remember the hard and cheap judgments of one's own youth. Perhaps one felt this way about Dante and Dylan Thomas oneself, and *Brighton Rock* has given most of us the reactions that Merton records here. Perhaps we were not all quite so disgusted by the vocabulary of George Eliot. (What is wrong anyway with 'Ill flavoured gravies and cheaper Marsala'?) But if the reflections on literature tend to be dull, those on 'life' are much more interesting, if one gives due credit to the Merton outlook as being part of a very important current phenomenon, both religious and secular. Indeed, if Jimmy Porter had burst upon us at the same time as *Elected Silence*, we should have coupled the two equally angry young men with no difficulty. New York, Havana, the Nazis, the English, all these and much else are experienced with a degree of loathing that verges on unbalance. The humourless streak in Merton's writing is traceable here to its source, but it makes for joyless reading.

GEOFFREY WEBB

A SENSE OF THE WORLD. By Elizabeth Jennings. (André Deutsch; 10s. 6d.)

SELECTION. By A. S. J. Tessimond. (Putnam; 7s. 6d.)

The poetry of Miss Jennings needs and repays careful reading. It is everything the world we live in is not; where the world is noisy, slapdash and conventional, Miss Jennings is quiet, careful and personal. A poem of great tenderness begins

'I visited the place where we last met . . .'

and a poem on a magnificent Roman basilica closes

'I cannot quite forget the blazing day,

The alabaster windows or the way

The light refuses to be called abstract.'

It is, however, not fair at all to quote isolated pieces. Miss Jennings avoids the obviously poetic line and anything else that suggests mere trickery with words—the kind of thing which is useful for the titles

of highbrow novels or quotations in a review—preferring a seamless sobriety to purple patches. Sobriety in a good sense, such as it might have in the Greek fathers, the shining of the spirit within the world of sense and instinct. And seamless, for more than with most poets the poetry is in the whole—the personal attitude, the language of intelligent people talking, the relation of statement to statement, the subtly disciplined verse forms—in none of these alone, but in their fusion in a formal whole. The overall title of the book is puzzling. A ‘sense of the world’ would fit, for example, Auden’s ‘Dover 1937’ much better than Miss Jennings’s ‘Sequence in Venice’: Auden’s poem could be about no other place, but for her Venice seems little more than an excuse to ask herself questions which could equally well have been prompted by Madrid or Prague. Her real strength is in an almost metaphysical vision of persons and their lives; when she writes in this context, this sense of a world of persons, her poems are among the most valuable being written today.

The same cannot be said of Mr Tessimond’s. The technique is skilful, the substance conventional, producing some competent light verse, but little to which one will return, except the earlier written ‘Cats’:

‘Cats, no less liquid than their shadows,
Offer no angles to the wind . . .’

Mr Tessimond’s book is however a Poetry Book Society Choice. I wonder why.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

THE SUMMA CONTRA HAERETICOS ASCRIBED TO PRAEPOSITINUS OF CREMONA. By J. N. Garvin and J. A. Corbett. (University of Notre Dame Press; \$7.50.)

The greater part of this late twelfth-century *Summa Contra Haereticos* deals with the Cathari and Pasagini, the remainder with assorted other heretics. The author’s plan in general is first to present the heretics’ arguments, which mainly consist of conclusions based on quotations from Scripture, and then to answer them one by one; after this the Catholic viewpoint is set forth, chiefly by arguments rooted once more in Scripture. Although the editors do not advert to the fact, the method followed is clearly that of Abelard’s *Sic et Non* in the classic expression given it in Gratian’s *Decretum*. There is rarely anything of a speculative nature, however, in the *Summa*, nor does the list of authorities imply any very wide acquaintance with the Fathers; most of the quotations from the Fathers are in fact to be found in the *Glossa Ordinaria* on the Bible or in Peter Lombard’s commentaries on the Psalter and the Epistles of St Paul. Yet, inasmuch as the *Summa* gives an insight into some of the teachings of the great heresies of the twelfth century and illustrates the methods of Catholic controversialists, the