

other. Desmond Chute and myself could certainly oppose him without ruffling his tranquillity. Stanley Morison from his first meeting onwards may be said to have been engaged in one continuous controversy with E.G., during which the mutual respect and affection of the combatants steadily increased. And now that Morison also is dead, I should like to say that I have seldom heard anything more moving than his talk on E.G. as broadcast last year—not only the words but the characteristic utterance unforgettably expressing the veneration of this great man for E.G. as master.

p. 134. St Benedict's *Rule*. In the B.B.C. panel, 'Ariel between Wisdom and Gaiety', the book held by Wisdom shows the first word of the *Rule*, suggested by René Hague in the conventional form *AUSCULTA* and altered at my instigation to the 6th-century spelling *OSCULTA*, which I vainly hoped would excite donnish protests in *The Times*.

p. 152. Eccentricity in dress. Mr Attwater neatly dispels much nonsense. To the eye of reason it was perhaps more remarkable that Maritain when visiting Pigotts should have worn a bowler hat than that E.G. when carving should have worn a square paper cap, called by journalists a biretta but in fact a traditional protection against chips and dust such as Tenniel's carpenter wears in *Alice* and such as I once saw worn in Venice by four workmen around one table. 'Eccentricity' in general implies a 'centre' and the 'centre' assumed by Fleet Street and Threadneedle Street is often accepted humbly by ordinary people; but not quite always. An engineer at Monotype House said of E.G.: 'There didn't seem to be anything "peculiar" about the man. You'd never have put him down as a famous artist. You'd sooner have said he was a good mechanic

—or anyway some good workman who knew his job.'

pp. 167-169. The most ridiculous notion ever entertained about E.G. was that he was habitually uncharitable. A celebrated master of fiction has assured his public that E.G. 'hated his fellow-Catholics'. Mr Attwater gives the evidence of an intimate friend. 'I do not recollect ever hearing him utter a word intended to wound, and time and again I have watched him trying to find a worthy explanation of someone's apparently indefensible action. 'I should add from my own experience that E.G. seemed often to be acting on an admirable old-fashioned Bishop Challoner principle of not letting the sun go down on one's wrath. At lunch, perhaps, he had inveighed against a group of Catholics who had flatly contradicted a social encyclical, and his immediate indignation might have burst out in an intemperate letter posted that afternoon to the *Catholic Herald*; but then at supper he might say: 'You know, all the time they were talking about A and B, they might really have meant C and D, and that would have been reasonable enough'. His judgments on groups and institutions were often severe, sometimes unfair; his judgments on individuals were generous; when, like anyone else, he felt he had a just grievance against a friend, he was careful not to make it public. Let his *Autobiography* be the test. He had had more than one serious disagreement with Fr Vincent McNabb; he had become permanently estranged from Hilary Pepler. But in this final book there is not one word against Pepler; and the affection with which he writes about Fr Vincent is only equalled by the affection with which at his death Fr Vincent wrote about him to Mary Gill.

WALTER SHEWRING

**HOPKINS THE JESUIT, THE YEARS OF TRAINING**, by Alfred Thomas, S.J. *Oxford University Press*, 1969. 283 pp. 65s.

The last agony of fame is for an author to feel the teeth of a doctoral thesis getting into his private life. The days when Gerard Manley Hopkins enjoyed neglect are long past. His work as an artist has been subjected to clinical analysis these last fifty years, and he is now famous. Here we have the doctoral thesis, originally presented at London University under the direction of the late Geoffrey Tillotson, which seeks to worm its way back into Jesuit life in England after the middle of

the last century. The Society has strewn plenty of helpful material on the way, including a novitiate journal which the poet himself kept going from December 1869 to February 1870. With the aid of these contemporary reports and near contemporary documents A. Thomas marshals his material. He has gone to a lot of trouble, even to working out from Bradshaw the possible trains Hopkins might have taken to Richmond on the fateful day he entered the novitiate (p. 24, note 3). A rash statement by

the poet, that Stonyhurst suffered the heaviest rainfall in England, is met with the learned observation (p. 125, note 3) that Seathwaite in Cumberland has over ninety inches more. This man has done his homework.

For all its picky details, an interesting picture of the early life of a Jesuit nearly a hundred years ago emerges. It is a tableau of curious monastic rubrics, shuffling superiors, Latin conversations, and, most disturbing and unexpected of all, the rather frequent passage of death over even the young men in the houses of study. There is a mine here for anyone who wants to know if George Tyrrell had just cause for murmuring. This remarkable man appears during Hopkins' tertianship (p. 198). One feels that the emery paper of rules and rubrics in the 1880s would have been abrasive even to less sensitive spirits than he. But as for Hopkins, he took all these details with an extraordinary seriousness. The gimlet approach of the present book, therefore, gets through to something important to the poet at least. A. Thomas is not attempting to analyse the poetry but to explain the framework of its content. After all, the poems depend a great deal on Hopkins' interior experience as a Jesuit and on his close visual attention to what he saw in various Jesuit houses. It was, for instance, in the performance of a humble novitiate duty that he saw the famous 'graceful sprays' (p. 48). Such cross-references between the poetical ingredients of the notebooks and the daily menial tasks dissipate the romantic vision of a poor struggling poet in fetters. One could well argue that the very restrictions of Jesuit life and the primacy of his vocation indirectly helped his poetry. Bridges and Dixon had all the freedom in the world to write; they had not his talent, we see that now; but a little more external hindrance on their liberty might

have improved the quality of their output no end. A. Thomas suggests, prudently I think (pp. 172–3), that the presence of the strict but human Fr Gallwey as rector at St Beuno's in 1877 had not a little to do with this being the poet's *annus mirabilis*. One of the most noticeable things about Hopkins' early Jesuit life is that those nearest to him thought a lot of him, both as a man and a scholar. He had his difficulties, as this book makes clear. But that is only to say he was a mere man like the rest of us. Anyone who takes any sort of life at all seriously creates for himself deep tensions; it proves nothing.

It is perhaps Hopkins' intricate attention to everything that justifies the 32-page appendix of all the refectory reading at the various houses when Hopkins is known to have been present. A monk who is conscious of having allowed years of this refectory reading to go in one ear and out the other, is inclined to suppose that it never affects anybody anywhere. But with Hopkins one can not be sure.

One is amused from time to time in the course of this book by the anti-Jesuit sentiments of Bridges which spring mostly from ignorance. If he had lived to read this book he might have found entirely different reasons for complaint against the Society. C. C. Abbott has carried on the same sort of animus in editing Hopkins' own letters. He seemed to insinuate that the Jesuits had somehow cashed in on the popularity of a great poet, whom they were very lucky even to own. I do not suppose Hopkins would mind even if it were true. But it is certainly very fitting that as he loved the Society greatly, a number of his fellow Jesuits in recent decades have made outstanding contributions to the study of his life and work. The present volume seems to this reviewer a very worthy addition. AELRED BAKER, O.S.B.