

BLACKFRIARS

kind of comment. It is exceedingly interesting and immensely readable. It is about that "fair field full of folk" men call the world and "one man in his time." It is common: common as the common day, the commonweal, and the Common of the Missal. All three have their part in it. Open at any page and you will find a line to quote, to read aloud, to think about, to remember. It is compounded of laughter and tears: of criticism that is sharpest in self-criticism, of an immense pity and an equal interest. It is the book to read and keep and remember to know Mediæval England, and it will speak directly to you out of to-day.

The author originally wrote three versions of the one theme, and Prof. Wells has used all three in his rendering. It is, as I said, about you and me and the other fellow—that "other fellow," Piers Plowman, is the mystery of the book, its open secret. Piers is the labouring man and the greatest aristocrat of them all. He is the good life and more. He is goodness and the works thereof:

"Came from the nipping north Righteousness running—"
for all the many, brief words of this book turn round that one open secret—"Et Incarnatus Est."

MARGOT ROBERT ADAMSON.

NOSTRADAM. A Sequence of Poems. By George Reavey. (Europa Press, Paris; pp. 28).

Nostradamus astrologized in the sixteenth century and was condemned by the Roman Curia for saying rude things about their future. Mr. Reavey with no need of stars, for his concern is with our present, prophesies about the post-War world, and it is unlikely that anyone will accuse him of falsehood. Our eyes are open. Yet on the other hand one is not swept away by a sudden sharp realization in reading his poems. They are good; Mr. Reavey is a craftsman. But there is a lack: they do not make one feel what they portray. It is not for lack of verbal music; it is rather perhaps that in the genesis of these verses there was too much cerebration and too little intuition. The subject-matter of great poetry is felt, viscerally; reason is only the efficient nurse.

But, though there are lines in this book which are poor, there are others which are gripping. And there is the theme to be pondered, for if cerebration in the poet is apt to be dangerous, in his audience it is a duty:

What parapets of ours can check the hours
That stride inevitably armed for spoil?

GERALD VANN, O.P.