

## *Blackfriars*

I am a Clown, a little man who borrow all my importance from this action which I have accomplished : I have preached to those who listen on Sundays to the Friars Preachers ! Why, I have even greeted Truth with : ' Here we are again ! '

CECILY HALLACK.

## BOOK REVIEWS

SURVIVALS AND NEW ARRIVALS. By Hilaire Belloc. (Sheed and Ward ; 7/6).

Mr. Belloc's new book, *Survivals and New Arrivals*, marks a culmination in his already extensive work dealing with the Catholic Church. It is a lucidly clear exposition of the divergent qualities of the foes with which the Church has contended in the past, and whose strength is weakening ; of the main opposition which She is at present facing ; and of the new arrivals which are beginning to raise their heads against Her.

As might be expected by those who know Mr. Belloc's power as a writer there is much scathing criticism and reasoned denunciation of the attacking forces, more particularly of the ' Modern Mind,' which he describes as ' the spirit which has lost acquaintance with logical form and is too supine to reason,' but which ' being (alas !) not active, but a passive obstacle, like a bog, is none the weaker for being thus irrational ' ; yet the main impression left upon the mind of the reader—and it is a deep and lasting impression—is certainly not destructive, but pre-eminently and optimistically creative ; and, as the theme unfolds, more and more does he feel the presence of inspiration. I use the two words ' optimistically ' and ' inspiration ' advisedly. Mr. Belloc's greatest enemy could not accuse him of optimism in the cheapened sense of vaguely hoping for the best in a world where things may not be as bad as they seem. The optimism of *Survivals and New Arrivals* depends upon no reassuring statement by the author, but arises rather from the very core of the subject and its logical presentment, and in spite of the tremendous dangers which the book foresees. It is in this optimism, as well as in such remarkable passages as the one which condenses the history of Islam so brilliantly into

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little more than four pages and then proceeds to draw conclusions with compelling clarity, that a sense of inspiration becomes apparent. It would seem to be the crown of achievement that rewards years spent in active defence of the Faith in the teeth of strong opposition.

*Survivals and New Arrivals* calls for a careful and impartial reading by all thinking men and women. The book is emphatically one which cannot be abridged. Its subject deals with the essence of life and the foundations of belief, and its arguments must be approved or disapproved on their merits and not by any prejudice of upbringing or environment. To take one instance: it would be futile to discount the section on the 'Modern Mind' by saying that Mr. Belloc's whole attitude shows him to be out of sympathy with the latest developments of conduct, art, etc. He defines exactly what he means by that mental attitude to which he gives, *faute de mieux*, the title 'The Modern Mind.' Only two lines of criticism are thus defensible: either to show that this thing that he has described does not exist; or else to answer in detail the attack he makes upon it. To do either of these two things satisfactorily would evidently not be the work of the 'Modern Mind' itself.

Perhaps the most constructive part of the book is contained in the chapter entitled 'The Opportunity.' Here is a stirring call to action for all those who have the Faith at heart, and one remarkably in sympathy with the Dominican tradition. Mr. Belloc emphasises the importance at the present time for preparation of the world for the Truth by vigorous apologetic; for, as he says, the main obstacle to its dissemination is the almost complete ignorance even amongst intelligent people of what the Catholic Church is.

He has been criticised in some of his books about the Faith for repeating himself in his efforts to clarify his subject. I have even seen it brought against him that his arguments prove their thesis too perfectly and too consistently—criticisms which most expository authors would surely envy—and the same arguments may possibly be brought against *Survivals and New Arrivals*. But here in this book he has proved the necessity for such lucid exposition by pointing to the vast ignorance which undeniably exists of the subject in hand.

Mr. Belloc has shown in the best possible way—by example—the line of advance that must be followed by those who believe and who have the capacity for apologetic.

R.D.J.