

BLACKFRIARS

the Success-Ideal of contemporary capitalistic society are good bread-and-butter sociology, with an edge of satire. The closing chapter includes exhortations of the quality of the following which well exemplifies the nature and valid scope of the author's gifts as a writer:

"Such mean souls shall not be our models. Rather, let us imitate the love of the saints, a love so hot and burning that they forget themselves entirely, died to themselves entirely, and became totally absorbed in love for God and neighbour. Let their heroic love to our ideal; for as we grow in love, so shall our society grow in excellence, reflecting the perfect beatific love of the blessed society of heaven." (p. 239.)

BERNARD KELLY.

PHILOSOPHY

KIERKEGAARD. By Walter Lowrie, D.D. (Oxford University Press; 25s.)

The Oxford University Press has once more rendered a signal service to the cause of learning by its production of this large volume which will familiarize the reading public with a figure whose profound influence on the philosophy of religion has been too little known in England. Dr. Lowrie has given us a really valuable work, which is worthy of the serious attention of scholars and should serve as the starting point for the more detailed study of Kierkegaard's theological system. His literary style is most delightful, and the depth of research revealed by his pages is immense.

The criticisms we feel bound to make are suggested rather by the general impression left on the mind than by a careful perusal. We should have welcomed more of Dr. Lowrie and less of Kierkegaard. The learned author is too modest. He emphasizes the difficulty of Kierkegaard's expression, and yet, instead of giving us his own explanation of Kierkegaard's ideas, again and again, just at the point at which one is led to expect this, he interpolates a long extract from Kierkegaard's works. The result of this method is to introduce two grave defects, prolixity and tautology.

Again, we cannot but detect in the learned author a certain lack of discrimination. He clearly has such an enthusiastic admiration for Kierkegaard's high qualities of mind that he is inclined to gloss over the less lovely aspects of his character. Here and there we find him expressing misgivings as to incidents in his life, but on the whole his Æneas never ceases to be "pius." But of the man himself he, despite his utmost effort, fails to paint an attractive portrait. Every phase of his life reveals his arro-

gance and his egotism. His melancholy was undoubtedly encouraged by the almost grotesque "father complex" which clouded his whole life. There is, indeed, something not far removed from the ridiculous in his persistency in brooding over his father's early incontinence, though we must admit that this frame of mind was inculcated into him by that father himself, who treated the luckless child as bound with himself in a "solidarity of sin." But it is to egotism that we must largely attribute his indulgence in a veritable luxury of self-condemnation, by reason of a short career of dissipation which seems to have amounted to nothing more serious than a few mild drinking bouts. His arrogance, again, is but too painfully obvious. He won the love of Regina Olsen, resolved he could not marry her, treated her in the most heartless manner, displayed resentment when she married another man, and then could, with obvious complacency, give vent to the reflection that she was immortalized in history by her association with himself. Copenhagen, then as now a city of advanced culture, he described as a provincial market-town, unworthy of housing him whom it could not appreciate! Instances of the intrusions of his vanity on his most profound thoughts could be multiplied, but enough has perhaps been said to show that in the opinion of the present reviewer the book, as it is, would have been vastly improved had it dealt in far less detail with the man himself, and in far more detail with his philosophy.

H. G. HANBURY.

KIERKEGAARD ET LA PHILOSOPHIE EXISTENTIELLE (*Vox clamantis in Deserto*). Par Léon Chestov, traduit du russe par T. Rageot et B. de Schloezer. (Paris: J. Vrin, pour Les Amis de Léon Chestov; 25 frs.)

LA PHILOSOPHIE DE GABRIEL MARCEL. Par Marcel de Corte. (Paris: Téqui; 12 frs.)

"Existential philosophy" by definition defies systematisation; indeed, if it is to be consistent with its own assumptions, it defies definition itself. Léon Chestov is well aware of the handicap, and of the impossibility of presenting anything approaching a schematic manual of Kierkegaard's thought. But he has undertaken to give as concise a presentation as the subject will allow; and that in fashion which Kierkegaard would admit: "indirect expression" attained by means of "sympathy" with Kierkegaard's own experience, expressed by an accumulation of ideas, impressions and antitheses rather than by formal exposition. The result is as lucid and illuminating account of Kierkegaard's "existential" philosophy as we dare hope to find. It may be questioned whether the lucidity has not been gained by a sacrifice