

Blackfriars

Cologan.' Father Macgillivray, in his preface, explains that the suggestion came from him, in the desire 'to help make Blessed John Fisher better known, and so to arouse more devotion to him.' The piety that prompted the suggestion deserves the successful fulfilment. The biography composed to edify the faithful and, at the same time, attract the non-Catholic has its uses; we can but wish a wide and fruitful enjoyment of Miss Wilby's work. If the conjectural element seems too frequently intruded—well, doubtless there are readers to whom the 'might have been' is not disagreeable.

J.C.

ST. DOMINIC. Scenes from the life of the Saint in the form of a Play. By Hilary Pepler. (St. Dominic's Press; 2/6 net.)

This is a play of six short acts. It consists of a simple plot woven into the life of St. Dominic. Beginning his priestly life, St. Dominic saves a heretic from burning, who thereupon flies to Toulouse and falls in love with an innkeeper's daughter. The Saint converts the innkeeper, and his daughter eventually becomes a Dominican nun. After an attempt to murder St. Dominic, the heretic is at last reconciled at the Saint's death-bed, and receives the habit of a lay-brother. The play introduces the better known tales in the life of St. Dominic—his first conversion at Toulouse, which impelled him to the apostolic life; his confession that he received more pleasure from speaking to young women than to old. About a dozen actors are needed, and it could be acted easily on a small stage. The Preface gives the reader an advantage over the audience; it abbreviates three more scenes originally included in the play. In these St. Francis speaks on Property and Money, and St. Dominic on 'cumbersome democracy' and 'its ultimate impotence.' The obvious criticisms are dealt with—the author explains his use of modern terms in medieval surroundings. 'A playwright is concerned with personality and human attributes that are not dated,' he 'is not an historian.' The object of the play is not 'to photograph a holy friar of the thirteenth century, but to introduce a living saint.' One condition is necessary for attaining this end—it presupposes a Dominican audience. It demands an acquaintance with the Saint's life and Dominican customs in order to appreciate it fully. The references to the O Lumen, the Salve, or the dispersion of the brethren in 1216 would lack significance for many.

C.