

a chaplain to the Forces during the memorable Fifth Army retreat of 1918, has read the book with particular interest; and it seems to him that Mr. Benstead has managed to communicate the atmosphere of those unforgettable days with real skill. A recent correspondence in *The Daily Telegraph* informed us that the author has, under the guise of fiction, described characters who made up the personnel of a particular artillery brigade, and that he has reported incidents and conversations which, while they leave no doubt as to the identity of those concerned, are so distorted and exaggerated that those who identify themselves have reason to complain. It is reassuring to hear that the Padre was not the poor, feckless creature who is travestied in this book; and the original of O'Reilly, the M.O., is a Catholic, though Mr. Benstead does not even hint at the fact, but makes the doctor speak of religion in a way that no one calling himself a Catholic would speak. The author nowhere mentions the Catholic chaplain—a French *curé* is brought in, and there are some fatuous comments on the military 'discipline of Rome' on page 228—and one wonders whether Mr. Benstead ever came across a Catholic padre during his army experience. He would have found that the C. of E. padre was at a disadvantage compared with the Catholic priest. The difference was chiefly noticeable to the outsider in their respective flocks. The Catholic soldier normally *wanted* the priest, or anyhow understood the priest's ministrations. The High Church padre, though he might burn with zeal to shrive and anoint, did not always meet with understanding or response, and C. of E. padres generally, High and Low, found themselves *religiously* at a loose end. They were as brave on the whole as any other category in the Army, but, as Mr. Benstead says, it was the man that counted more than his faith or his mission. With the Catholic priest it was not quite the same: his work was greater than himself and personality counted for less. I should strongly recommend Mr. Benstead to read *The Life of Father Doyle*.

MACEDONIAN MEMORIES. By Henry C. Day, S.J., H.C.F., M.C. With a Preface by Field Marshal Sir George F. Milne. (Heath Cranton; 12/6.)

Perhaps Mr. Benstead might be recommended to read this book by another chaplain who certainly stands in marvellous contrast with the tragic padre depicted in *Retreat*. There is nothing sad or tragic or gloomy about Father Day: he is breezy, hail-fellow-well-met and brimful of good spirits and

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humour. We can imagine how popular and successful he must have been with the troops. Sir George Milne welcomes the book as one 'which looks upon war in a healthy British way.' There are of course other ways of looking at it; for instance, the way of the Church which, in the Litany, prays to be delivered from it as from other misfortunes such as famine and pestilence. This book is well worth reading. The illustrations are unfortunately not always up to standard.

MEDITATIONS OF A HERMIT: Spiritual Writings of Charles de Foucauld, Missionary in the Sahara, Apostle of the Tuaregs. Translated from the French by Charlotte Balfour. Preface by René Bazin. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 6/-.)

Admirers of the saintly Père de Foucauld, the 'Hermit of the Sahara,' will welcome this little book, which discloses some of his inner life. Its contents are various; we should have liked more of one particular class of writings, his *Meditations on the Gospel*, for instance, or his very charming letters, but M. René Bazin tells us in a short preface what a difficult task he had in gleaning even this little sheaf suitable for presentation to the public, out of the miscellaneous literary remains of Charles de Foucauld. He incorporated some portions in his comprehensive *Life of his hero*; they will be found here in their context. There is nothing formal about these spiritual writings, no pretence to style or literature; they please by their very spontaneity and artlessness. Occasionally a happy phrase contains a whole philosophy of life, or an old truth is freshly handled which we feel we would like to make our own. The *Meditations*—a few practical thoughts on some Gospel text—should prove useful to many who need a spring-board—as it were—before taking the plunge into the sea of mental prayer. The thoughts are simple but not hackneyed, and appeal as the outpourings of a heart wholly possessed by the love of Jesus Christ. Charles de Foucauld's spiritual life was characterised by a childlike faith and a spirit of joyous thanksgiving. There are no shadows of doubt, no morbid returns upon the past, only a look back to recall God's mercies to him, no relentless self-introspection. In all this he is a refreshing influence in our too analytical days, and should be helpful to souls both in the world and in the cloister who are exercised in the ways of the interior life. Mr. Algar Thorold supplies an Introduction, a short but complete biographical sketch of the Hermit. The translation by Mrs. Balfour is easy and agreeable.

S.M.A.