

understood and applauded, with its consequences—the greater part allowed to the intellect and intelligibility, care and precision of statement, stricter discipline and often considerable beauty of verse structure—the poems in this book are with few exceptions pointedly contemporary. Their ‘reverence for the real person or event’ may be seen at its best in Mr Gunn’s ‘On the Move’, a meditative poem about a gang of boys on motor-cycles such as those in the film ‘The Wild Ones’:

‘A minute holds them, who have come to go . . .’—
or in Mr Larkin’s ‘Church Going’, which begins (devastatingly)—
‘Once I am sure there’s nothing going on
I step inside . . .’—

But where the real person is oneself or the real event is within one’s own mind, a tendency to over-intellectualize appears. A poem ostensibly ‘about’ a place or thing becomes a poem ‘about’ one’s reaction to the place or thing, instead of being in its poetic mode that reaction. But this tendency, by which a few only of these poems are spoilt, is perhaps due to a more general over-carefulness of imagination, a refusal of colour for fear of being flashy.

A similar refusal, this time for fear of being over-emotional, seems to dictate the prevailing quietness. There are of course exceptions to this too—the momentary slash of Mr Davie’s ‘Too Late for Satire’:

‘Whom I have knives for could begin with you’,—
but if passion is lacking, there is much affection and much compassion, though here again (as in his novel *Lucky Jim*) Mr Amis seems noticeably at fault.

Considered as a manifesto, the volume is not startling in the way one expects—no sudden enlarging of the poetic vision, no striking technical experiments—but it does manifest an impressive amount of very competent and sometimes very beautiful verse in a shared and contemporary idiom. It is the amount that is startling.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

PROUST. By J. M. Cocking. (Bowes and Bowes; 7s. 6d.)

Professor Cocking’s avowed purpose in this compactly academic work is to examine the evidence available in the recently published *Jean Santeuil* and *Contre Sainte-Beuve* which he believes illumines the reality of Proust’s vocation. He attempts to sketch that reality, interpret the fiction and explore some of the ways in which they are related. As a piece of detection this is accomplished. It is a thorough and painstaking work but at the same time it makes extraordinarily dull reading, and the detective methods employed—the examination of Proust’s works in terms of his life, feelings, complexes, etc.—makes

the criticism very narrow and subjective. One is left with the impression that Professor Cocking has said a number of interesting things in a manner often irritatingly allusive and inconsequential and that one has not learnt very much more about Proust or his work. For instance, he goes to some length to explain that Proust's work is firmly rooted in the French literary tradition; 'but', he adds, 'it is not merely literary. It is rooted in his personal experience.' Has any writer ever lived of whom this is not true? It would be unfair to say that such statements are typical of Professor Cocking's thought, but at the same time they are not uncharacteristic.

There is also much talk of transcendental aesthetics, emotional patterns and artistic visions, and much of it is vague. Its partial obscurity does not enhance its explicit grandiloquence. Professor Cocking's book is, in fact, rather like the verbal transposition of a complex nerve reaction chart for which the vocabulary, though expensive, is inadequate and imprecise.

J. A. CUDDON

THE MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN. Edited by Edward D. O'Connor, C.S.C. (University of Notre Dame Press; \$2.75.)

LA VIRGINITÉ CHRÉTIENNE. By Joseph-Marie Perrin, O.P. (Desclée de Brouwer; 90 fr.B.)

VIRGINITY. By J. M. Perrin, O.P. Translated by Katherine Gordon. (Blackfriars Publications; 12s.)

In a single review we bring together three publications which in theme are related to each other. The first, with the inelegant title *The Mystery of the Woman*, consists of an introduction followed by five essays on the Mother of God, sponsored by the Department of Theology in the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. Three of the essays present clearly and simply the revealed mysteries of our Blessed Lady, the Divine Motherhood, the Immaculate Conception, and the Assumption. These sublime truths are shown to be closely related and complementary to each other. Another essay gives a brief history of devotion to our Lady in the United States from the time of the Norse explorers who settled in Greenland, until the present day. A final chapter tells how, from its inception, Notre Dame University has been a shrine dedicated to the Mother of God, the distinctive symbol of which is the Lady on the Dome, a replica of the statue of the Immaculate Conception erected by Pope Pius IX in the Piazza di Spagna in Rome. I cannot speak with authority of the woodcuts; the one which forms the frontispiece is more pleasing in its colour than in its design.

The two other books, *La Virginité Chrétienne* and its translation into English with the title *Virginity*, are inevitably connected with