

REVIEWS

A word is due to the translation, which is extremely good. Some of the notes have been replaced by references to the French edition, but on the other hand a valuable appendix has been added from two articles by the author on the divorce. A few misprints have been noticed: p. 286, l. 10: 1530 should be 1503; p. 376, l. 9: *matanoein* should be *metanoein*; p. 393, note 4: *Russel* should be *Russell*; pp. 453 and 511: *Vaughen* and *Vaughan*. I am indebted to a friend for pointing out that on p. 380 'one of Cranmer's envoys' would be more exactly described as 'Cranmer's commissary.' A. E. H. SWINSTEAD.

VALE. By W. R. Inge, D.D. (Longmans; 3/6.)

To temper the tragedy of his official arrival 'on the shelf' Dr. Inge has provided us with this absorbing account of his life and work. This book presents us with an unique and very contradictory personality: an English Church dignitary of the old school, ultra-Eton, with a superstitious regard for the National Church and the Public School System, and a temperamental dislike of the Roman Church and the working-classes; at the same time a pioneer in the interests of eugenics, birth-control and euthanasia. This contradiction has caused most of his social teaching to be disregarded as either reactionary or irresponsible. It has further caused Fleet Street to make him a 'big noise,' and it is upon the foundation of this 'popular appeal' that most of his notoriety has been built up. To all this we say 'Vale' without any reluctance, and are glad to think that it will die with him.

But his life has had another purpose: '. . . I tried to find a sound intellectual basis for my religious beliefs.' Believing, with von Hügel, that 'science is the purgatory of religion,' he adopted its methods in looking for religious truth. His search has been a very stimulating one, though more for his destructive criticism of already established theories than for any positive one which he has himself discovered. Catholicism in all its forms he thoroughly dislikes—here a corrosive prejudice seems to have deprived him of any great ability to see clearly. The Liberal Protestantism of Harnack he discounts for ignoring Pauline Christ-mysticism and Christian philosophy. Loisy's incredulity he considers perverse, and indeed he has always been a stern critic of the Modernists. His own religious philosophy appears to be an unusual mixture of polite mysticism and pure rationalism: an ill-defined association of Plotinus with Aquinas. Here again the melancholy truth seems to be that there is very little that will survive, though of course his incidental services to religion and scholarship have been enormous. His pioneer work on mysticism is directly responsible for the very

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valuable books which have since appeared on this subject. His study of Plotinus has received enthusiastic recognition from scholars all over the world. And his attack upon the myth of progress has put us all in his debt.

But indeed it is his life itself which is his chief monument. In spite of the serious drawback, which the desire to help fellow-sufferers causes him to mention in this book, he never allowed himself to cease working to discover the truth, and in religious matters he never compromised his intellectual integrity by allowing himself to go beyond the evidence. 'I have always tried to speak the truth, and to give honest work.' What man could wish for more than to be able to say that of himself without flattery? And who, having read this book, will deny that Dr. Inge can?

IGNATIUS CHAMBERS, O.P.

THE MONASTIC REMAINS OF NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK. By Claude J. Messent. (H. W. Hunt, Norwich; 7/6.)

Few probably of the thousands who annually visit the Broads realize that they are living for the moment in one of the most historic lands of Europe. When England was flourishing and contented because she was selling wool to Flanders, and desolating the common enemy France, it is not entirely an exaggeration to say that East Anglia was England. From here came the money for the English wool. Nowhere else in England can there still be found so many remains of first-class building both domestic and ecclesiastical. It is with the latter that the present volume deals, and though it is an extremely good compilation, so vast is the subject matter that it cannot be considered as anything more than a capable guide book, or hope to do more than serve as a signpost to more exhaustive journeys into the study of East Anglia, where dwelt in pre-Reformation days almost a third of the population of England. Mr. Messent has arranged his book most conveniently by giving the notices of the religious houses—more than 280 in number—in an alphabetical index, with useful cross references. Many of the larger establishments, such as the Benedictine and Dominican houses in Norwich and St. Benet's Abbey at Horning, are well-known; but the advantage of the book lies in the account of so many hitherto neglected places. To us moderns it seems incredible that Thetford, a small town, scarcely big enough for a Lancashire village, should possess remains of no less than six great religious houses and seven small ones. It is in facts such as these that we read real history, and to one who provides them we owe a debt of gratitude. The work is profusely illustrated by pen and ink sketches, the author's own work.

WALTER GUMBLEY, O.P.