

## BLACKFRIARS

summarize the riches of his book—the incidental issues he discusses and enlightens—for example, the valuable contribution to the question of the relation between poetry and belief in the poet's mind, in the lecture on Shelley and Keats; or his precision as to what we mean by *communication* in poetry. It is definitely a book for thought: there is no wastage: it is one of the finest examples of economy in writing in our time.

A.M.

Now I SEE. By Arnold Lunn. (Sheed & Ward; 7/6.)

'Autobiography or argument?' enquire the publishers brightly. Both, they reply. We would rather say that it is the same thing, for to Mr. Lunn, argument, good stout religious argument, is plainly the breath of life. He has argued his way into the Church, and now that he is there he does not intend, so he says, to stop arguing. 'Thank God,' says he, 'there are still many problems to solve.' His way of solving problems, however, is a characteristic one. When he was a very new boy at Harrow, and found himself in a difficulty, he set about solving it by the simple means of tweaking the Headmaster's gown. He has gone on through life tweaking gowns whenever he desired to receive information, and always he seems to have been treated as he was by the delightful headmaster, who gave him the required information, and wholesome entertainment beside.

He gives racy descriptions of a variety of distinguished persons whose gowns he has successfully tweaked, including Father Knox, who appears in the character of the Reluctant Fisherman, and Mr. C. E. M. Joad, with whom he made friends as a result of first attacking him violently in the press and then inviting him to lunch. There is an amusing account of how he preached in St. Mary's—wearing an undergraduate's gown because it was the only one he was entitled to—and dealt so unemotionally with the claims of reason in religion that a Buchmanite was heard to wonder, with typical impertinence and smugness, what sensual sin could be keeping the preacher from Christ. But though the dust jacket promises that the book is scandalously amusing, we could find—though of course we looked with interest for the spicy bits—no passages answering to this description.

Mr. Lunn 'enjoyed every moment' of his search for truth, and having found it, he has already begun to pursue with equal zest the congenial task of communicating it. He has set forth the reasons which brought him into the Church, touching on a great variety of questions in a manner both lucid and readable, and we hope that this **book** will find its way into many public

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libraries, for it is one which the non-Catholic may read with interest and profit.

There are some small but rather irritating defects, such as the odd reference to ' Faith ' as a luxury for the convert, when what is meant is clearly emotional certainty ; the ascribing to the *Te Deum* of a quotation from the *Sanctus*, an excusable mistake when sleeping out on a glacier, but not when perpetuated in the ' cold light of reason.' And there is a bad misprint in this and in another Latin quotation, one printed, moreover, in capital letters. The proof reader should have seen to this.

M.A.B.

**GATES OF HELL.** By Erik R. v. Kuhnelt-Leddihn. (Sheed and Ward; 7/6.)

An American business man once said that in his world-wide experience the only concern that beat Standard Oil for efficiency was the Catholic Church. It was meant as a compliment, though it may seem a dubious one on second thoughts. Is it true? Should it be true? Anyhow, here is a novel by an author who seems to know Europe from Somerset to the Caucasus, from Finland to the Rif, which shows the Church at grips with Communism, fighting to save the very nature of man, with a terrible sense of power not an easy confidence, and using all the modern technique of organization. Watchful and decisive, Rome at the centre; the confusion of combat on the frontiers. This is the background of the story, a thriller—no doubt about that. The formula has been worked before, but this novel bears the relation to those of Robert Hugh Benson that a modern talkie does to the flicks of twenty years ago. Besides the action there is the thought, the reaction of a young and vigorous mind to the European view. Taken as excitement or argument, or both, this book is an excellent piece of work, and can be recommended even to those who have a taste for something more shaded and delicate. There is nothing cosy in this story of a man who loses his lover, his identity, and finally his life in the service of the Church. Nor is it such pure fiction as those may imagine whose religion is more sheltered, and whose civilization is less menaced. The author certainly does not understate the issue, but his oppositions are not merely violent. His quality of mind saves him from this trick of the religious romanticist. The publishers are to be congratulated on this book, and on their translator, who has rendered the German MS.—not yet published—into forcible English. What an excellent film the story would make. Cannot something be done about this?

T.G.