

THE MORALITY OF PREFRONTAL LOBOTOMY is considered by Fr Patrick O'Brien in *The American Ecclesiastical Review* (September). This 'butchery' (as it has been described even by those who perform it) of the nerves in front of the brain as a means of dispelling a serious psychosis is yet in its experimental stages and is regarded by many with horror. But Fr O'Brien dispassionately concludes that the operation is *per se* illicit, but *per accidens* licit. For the liceity of this lobotomy he lays down four conditions:

- (a) All other means of applicable therapy must be found unavailing.
- (b) It must be a case of a true psychosis which shows itself to be of a permanent character.
- (c) The psychosis must be 'affective' in character and truly disabling.
- (d) The after care of the patient in a healthy circle of family or friends must be assured.

This last point is of great importance as the first effects of the lobotomy are to reduce if not to eliminate the patient's normal emotional and sensitive responses; and it is only over a period of months or years that his emotional powers return and are controllable. Training and environment at this period are of the greatest consequence.

The question will no doubt receive a very thorough thrashing from moral theologians before we can be certain of the morality of prefrontal lobotomy, which has hardly in the medical world emerged from its experimental stages; but Fr O'Brien's article will contribute greatly to clear discussion and decision.

ALDATE.

DESIGN AT WORK

A calculated economy and restraint in the selection of exhibits and scale were two praiseworthy elements in this exhibition at Burlington House, although in no way restricting the range and variety of the works displayed. A word of praise for the organisers, therefore, must be inserted for their skill in contriving to create an illusion of space despite the evident limitations.

The designers themselves, who were all members of the Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry, included amongst their ranks the late Edward Johnston and Eric Gill. The former was represented by his famous alphabet specially evolved for the London Transport Executive. This example summarised the essential character and purpose of the show. The intention of the artists was to produce designs for objects possessing a high degree of utility and

at the same time conceived in a form compatible with the nobility of human nature. Inevitably this ideal was not achieved every time, but there was a notable absence of the bizarre and meretricious brilliance that typified so much to be seen at 'Britain Can Make It' two years ago.

Ultimately it is not so much the individual articles that remain in one's mind—although, of course, there are such instances as Ethel Mairet's hand-woven fabrics, a Duncan Grant plate, Susie Cooper's coffee set or Sir Francis Meynell's volumes of Shakespeare, to name a few—as a general impression of an excellent knowledge of design and exquisite craftsmanship. Besides these qualities the actual making of some of the exhibits was explained in a palatable and instructive manner which should have added to the general appeal. It is regrettable that it did not receive greater publicity.

M. SHIRLEY.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS.

Sir,—I have just read the article 'Lutherans, please refute!' in the August number of BLACKFRIARS.

I have no quarrel with the conclusions drawn by your contributor. But I am a little alarmed at the possible reply 'tu quoque'.

To many of us who, although outside the Roman Communion, look rather wistfully over the Vatican wall, it is a difficulty that predominantly Catholic countries have given support, even violent support, to Fascism. What is the subtle difference between Fascism in Italy and Spain and Nazism in Germany?

Would it not be possible, just as Miller traces Nazism to Lutheranism, to associate Catholicism with Fascism? In common parlance it seems to me that Mr Miller has 'put his chin out' and somebody will hit it.

Perhaps a future number of BLACKFRIARS would deal with the problem and deal with it not from the angle of Catholic periodicals, which can remain nameless (after all if priests, religious, Anglican clergymen, etc., ask to be bumped off by making a stand on doubtful principles we cannot scream if our request is answered), but from a real religious and philosophical angle.

Yours, etc., WM. H. BIRCH.

[These questions were partly considered in the BLACKFRIARS of ten to twelve years ago. But evidently there is still much ground to be covered. We hope to be able to take up this challenge in the coming year.—EDITOR.]