

## Book Reviews

but others are not happy in their new garb, e.g., *ninfas de Judea*, 'daughters of Jewry'; or

*Nuestro lecho florido  
de cuevas de leones enlazado*

as

'Now blooms our nuptial bed,  
Safe-hid from men by lions' fortress-lair.'

*Con llama que consume y no da pena* becomes 'The flame consuming-fierce, yet painless-keen.' Or to take a whole stanza, so lovely in the Spanish :

*Oh noche, que guiaste,  
Oh noche amable más que el alborada,  
Oh noche que juntaste  
Amado con amada,  
Amada en el Amado transformada!*

'O night that led'st me thus!  
O night more winsome than the rising sun!  
O night that madest us,  
Lover and lov'd, as one,  
Lover transformed in lov'd, love's journey done!'

This is not poetry. But then, why ever attempt to translate St. John of the Cross?

A.A.P.

THE BURNING SOUL OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS. By Rodolphe Hoornaert. Translated by Algar Thorold. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd.; 3/-.)

What more delicate theme than the soul of a mystic? But the Abbé Hoornaert's valuable French rendering of the works of St. John of the Cross have given him months of intimacy with the saint and a claim to some qualification for his task. One could wish that no one, short of another St. John of the Cross, would try to analyse the saint's inner life. Such an attempt can only be guess-work, an effort to drag down to the plane of sense and thought those things of which it is already true that 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man.' So we are grateful to the Abbé Hoornaert for making his sketch mainly biographical. It is fresh and vivid, a worthy contribution to literature as well as hagiography.

It is interesting to find that the poetry of St. John of the Cross, said to be some of the finest in the Castillian tongue, is not, as probably most of us have imagined, the utterly spontane-

## **Blackfriars**

ous, irrepressible and almost unconsidered outburst of his mysticism, but a studied specimen of the *Arte Nuevo* in fashion at the time, reproducing its characteristics—its mannerisms, says the biographer—with unerring art.

The English rendering, despite the painfully literal translation of the title and an unexpected lapse here and there (such as 'internal corridor'), is remarkably good. In a comparison with the original, the peculiarly happy choice of word or phrase will give keen pleasure as well as a valuable lesson to those interested in the much attempted but too little studied art of translation.

Is not the faultless obedience of a saint rather obscured by the statement that 'John offered increasingly direct opposition to Doria's policy'? The French has '*s'opposer de plus en plus nettement aux tendances de Doria.*'

M.B.

SANCTIONS : A FRIVOLITY. By Ronald Knox. Pp. 265.

THE SPIRIT OF CATHOLICISM. By Karl Adam. Pp. 270.

PLATO'S BRITANNIA. By Douglas Woodruffe. Pp. 204.

(London : Sheed & Ward. The Ark Library, 1932 ; 3/6 each).

Three books well worth salvaging from the flood of ink and wood-pulp. The conversation of Fr. Knox's house-party is still fresh, the problems still very much to the point. Entertaining—and a capital introduction to a Catholic philosophy of life.

Prof. Adam's lectures, with a certain gracious ponderousness, present the idea of the Church in its religious depth and strength, combating an empty institutionalism. A noble book—and one that has already done incalculable good.

Mr. Woodruff's Socratic view of present-day England reflects the wise and critical judgment of the original. The fun is his own—but made natural by the subject.

T.G.

THE CONSCRIPTION OF A PEOPLE. By the Duchess of Atholl, M.P. (Phillip Allan ; 7/6.)

REPORT ON RUSSIAN TIMBER CAMPS. By Sir Alan Pim and Edward Bateson. (Ernest Benn ; 2/6.)

Clearly, unemotionally and concisely the Duchess of Atholl gives a general survey of the position of labour under communism, and refutes the view that the Workers' and Peasants' Republic is actually the worker's and peasant's Paradise. Well aware of the futility of a trip to Russia for anyone un-