

BLACKFRIARS

The five children went each evening to recite the rosary at a grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes near Beauraing. After the recitation of a certain number of *Aves*, the children declare that Our Lady appeared. Each evening they noticed some special feature in her appearance, all five noticing the same feature on the same evening and reporting it in the same terms.

Dr. Van Gehuchter, who was present at one of these scenes, when over twenty-five thousand people were present, says he is convinced that the children saw nothing at all. The *Aves* were recited with very little fervour or conviction. The speeches attributed to Our Lady are extremely poor in content. When asked *why* the Blessed Virgin appeared, Andrée Degeimbre replied angrily: 'Could you tell me, I wonder?'

There is very little change in the children's appearance, still less in their conduct. They usually come to the grotto from the cinema. One girl, as she makes her way through the crowd, says: 'Let me pass, I am the seer!' (Je suis la voyante).

'Aren't you in a hurry to get to the grotto in the evening?' asked Dr. van Gehuchten.

'No,' replied the girl, 'that doesn't matter; she only comes when we are there.'

'Do you pray for sinners?'

'Are there any?' (Gilberte).

Fernande: 'It is like the Mystery of the Yellow Room' (a film).

Gilberte: 'Or else the Mystery of the White Lady!' (a novel).

Some members of the children's families belong to spiritualistic clubs.

In short, the general impression produced by these children on sober observers is not reassuring.

Alas for twenty-five thousand men and women who can thus waste their time in a quest of the 'supernatural' (of the type described above), abandoning the springs of living water in the search for broken cisterns!

CYPRIAN RICE, O.P.

ANNE. By a Benedictine Nun of Stanbrooke. (Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1932; 5/- net.)

This life of Anne de Guigné, the little French girl who died only eleven years ago, is delightful reading. Her story is told in a simple and objective manner. This is why the book is so successful; the facts are given, and the reality and fascination of the supernatural can hardly fail to convince. For Anne provides a very happy example of the truth that grace is founded and built up on nature: she remained always a wholly lovable and genuine child, and was in no way made self-conscious or

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precocious by a vivid realisation of the things of heaven, but rather more lovable and more typically a child. Holiness did not prevent her from encouraging her little brother and sister to indulge in protracted sniffs at a pungent cheese as a mortification.

The description of Anne's last days and brave death at the age of eleven is well worth reading even for itself : but altogether the book is a very pleasing account of a little girl who would have been remarkable in any case, but who in her loyal response to the urgings of grace was made quite fascinating.

P.H.K.

SELF-ABANDONMENT TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE. By Father J. P. de Caussade, S.J. A new translation by Algar Thorold. With an Introduction by Dom David Knowles, monk of Downside. (Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1933; 5/-.)

A thoroughly beneficent piece of spiritual instruction, excellently translated and with a masterly introduction. If such spiritual books, offering us a simple method of attaining perfection—'sanctity without tears'—often raise false hopes; and if their authors, in the claims which they make for their own special method, often assume the very style and language of the vendors of patent medicines : no such complaints can justly be made against a book which asks of us nothing but that very simple and very fundamental thing, a genuine acceptance of the Will of God. Father de Caussade has unction and persuasiveness; his book ought to do a world of good.

Dom David Knowles, in the Introduction, connects the teaching of the author with the teaching of the Salesian and Carmelite schools. We should like to suggest as a possibility a further source in the book of that Capuchin writer, Fr. Benet Fitch, whom Bremond regards as of first rate importance in the history of French mysticism. The very title of his book is suggestive : *The Rule of Perfection, containing a brief and perspicuous abridgement of all the whole spirituall life, reduced to this only point of the Will of God.* And nothing could be happier than his motto from the twenty-ninth psalm : *Vita in voluntate eius.*

J.M.

IS CHRISTIANITY TRUE? A Discussion between Arnold Lunn and C. E. M. Joad. (London : Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1933; pp. 368; 7/6.)

Hard and good-tempered controversy between a rationalist and a mystic—a distinction here only of emphasis, for elsewhere Mr. Joad is also a philosopher. Most of the country has been fought over before, but never with such exciting move and