

rejoiced to see all this excellent matter presented in more attractive form. The illustrations are frankly disappointing. Surely some Catholic artist could have been found who would have considered it a privilege to illustrate a book about Jesus. The pictures here, too few for a children's book, are really not convincing; in fact they savour of fairy tales and cannot be said to illustrate the book. S. M. A.

VENGEANCE IS DEAR. By Henry Brinton. (C. and J. Temple Ltd, 50-52 Old Brompton Road, London, S.W.7; 6s.)

'We shall have peace when we are willing to pay the price of peace: the regulation of the affairs of nations by the same high codes which we aspire to employ in our daily dealings with each other.' The solution is familiar, as are the grounds on which it is based. Perhaps if they are repeated often enough, someone may perceive the obvious. E. Q.

CATHERINE, SAINT OF SIENA. By M. de la Bedoyere. (Hollis and Carter; 12s. 6d.)

This book is most curious, skilful—and readable. The author tells the story of 'a woman with a queer and highly individual temperament' who also happened to be a great saint. Whether or not such a selective approach is a dislocating distortion or not, remains to be judged.

In the perennial market place, a sounding board has been erected and trained upon Catherine, and the air is filled with the competitive clamour of rival biographers, the clangour of 14th century Siense arms, and rather shrilly relayed above it all, come the incisive, not to say acid, comments of Catherine.

There are, of course, difficulties in the adjustment between a 20th century editor and a 14th century woman mystic—in politics—but Mr de la Bedoyère sets about it with engaging buoyancy; with something of a gamin cheerfulness and cheek; and something of a Jack the Giantkiller stabbing at 'legends' or weaving his way through the wiles of adulatory biographers.

That bright, almost breezy touch, however, that harsh 20th century searchlight is curiously—only to some tastes, no doubt—unvital; Catherine is 'a bundle of excited energy', an activist, an extrovert, 'specially endowed with the gift of "contacting" the Unseen'!

Richly documented with the saint's lively letters is this odd scenario, we hear of visions and penances, and there are here terrific key letters to her spiritual state, but the impression left is of a spiritually galvanised mystery woman.

It is not, however, artistically possible to separate Catherine the saint, so objectively glorious and intelligible, from Catherine the praying politician. This book is, indeed, loving, loyal and lively; but it remains a brilliant freak.

MARY JACKSON.