

Father Steuart achieves much the same effect as that made by the Studio Portrait, taken by a photographer who, in order to surround his sitter with sweetness and light, screws the lens of his camera a little out of focus. Father Martindale, in the Memoir he has compiled to introduce twenty-eight of Father Steuart's Conferences, allows no mitigation of line or shadow to blur his view of that much-loved, well-remembered saint.

It is a portrait from within. 'Father Steuart', says his editor, 'believed, as I do, in the co-existence of contradictories in his soul.' The letters, diaries and notes from which this Memoir has been put together form what seems, at a first reading, to be a catalogue of such contradictories. We find Robert Steuart at one moment writing: 'Ever since the first thought of the religious life entered my mind it was always as the way of perfection . . . I seem to feel that I, by right, belong to the category of those who dare much and did much.' Before long he is declaring: 'I am a miserable caricature of a religious, a shame to the ineffable dignity and holiness of the priesthood'. He has advanced far on the way he has chosen and now '*Habes tota quod in mente petisti, infelix!*'.

Carefully, unrelentingly, Father Martindale collates this hidden see-saw of the spirit which in conferences, retreats and published books gave hope and strength and certainty to souls less ardent than his own.

To turn from the preface to the conferences themselves is to meet a serene, lucid, informed and humorous mind unclouded by any shadow of self-abasement.

In naming this book by the title of one of the conferences it contains—*The Two Voices*, Father Steuart's colleague has plainly offered us more than one meaning to his words.

NAOMI ROYDE SMITH

RECENT THOUGHT IN FOCUS. By Donald Nicholl. (Sheed and Ward; 16s.)

This book is an attempt 'to use modern learning as a focus for viewing the world into which we are born and in which it is so hard to discern our destiny'. There are chapters on Modern Philosophy, The Natural Sciences and Psychology. Modern Philosophy is viewed under the headings of: Marxism, Phenomenology, Existentialism and Logical Positivism. In the chapter on the Natural Sciences, Evolution, and particularly the Evolution of man, receives special attention.

The book is remarkably successful in the range and penetration of its assessments, and the readable way in which they are presented. It should be emphasised that it is addressed to the intelligence of the ordinary man, the non-expert, and it succeeds admirably in making intelligible to him what the experts are saying and the idiom in which they are saying it. The book is entirely free from a characteristic that has ruined so many similar attempts; namely, the attitude that the intelligent reader can, with

patience and application, become an amateur expert in all these matters. Indeed, it is part of Mr Nicholl's thesis that there is *always*, or should be, an area of common ground between expert knowledge of this sort and the judgments that the non-expert is competent to make. The expert has not an unlimited authority. Without technical knowledge of Philosophy or Science, 'common sense' has a competence to make judgments, say, about the nature of man. One who knows the human reality through an experience of the joys and sorrows attendant on birth and death, and especially one in whose life there is the light of Faith and the forgiveness of sins, is living by intuitions that are untouchable by the views of Logical Positivists on the nature of truth or the views of the scientists on the origin of man.

However, the delineation of this common ground is obviously a matter of some delicacy, and since by definition it is the expert who is articulate, it is he who will be moved to question, not only the limits but the nature of the limits that are set to his authority.

MARK BROCKLEHURST, O.P.

MAURICE OF SULLY AND THE MEDIEVAL VERNACULAR HOMILY. By C. A. Robson. (Blackwell; 25s.)

This study has a far wider significance than its title would suggest. It includes a critical edition of the sermons of Maurice de Sully, Bishop of Paris, preached between 1168 and 1175, together with detailed notes and glossary. But it also contains in eighty pages of compressed research enough material to form three separate monographs. The first would deal with the Parisian origins of prose and the learned use of the vernacular in twelfth and thirteenth century France and England. Here Mr Robson is at his most stimulating and least controversial. He is surely right in emphasising the importance of the administrative status acquired by the vernacular in the thirteenth century and its new dignity as a court language. An interesting parallel can be developed from thirteenth-century Castile and it might be suggested that this would lead inevitably to class dialects cutting across topographical divisions and perhaps too often ignored by philologists. So much turns on the exact character of the publics who listened in twelfth-century France or England to the de Sully homilies or the Garnier life of St Thomas of Canterbury or the romances of Hue de Rolelande. Clearly a greater power of concentration and a deeper pleasure in the sententious was always needed by those who listened to prose. Mr Robson suggests that Maurice de Sully preached to his fellow councillors and the burgesses and his sermons seem essentially a learned exercise in Victorine exegesis.

A second monograph would be a development of the author's re-assessment of the intellectual movements in the Paris Schools of the twelfth century. In contrast to the current reaction against the Abelard