

his scarlet gown, and the healthy face with its close-cropped white hair, so alien from its adornments and yet carrying them so well. Mrs. Greene shows him to us as a person of distinctive character. To start with, he was an artist who was always tidy and was always in time. Order he loved, disorder he hated. As a musician indeed he should have done so, for order is harmony's first law : yet many musicians were not as he. He stands apart. Moreover, he was a musician who loved humour. Now musicians have been witty, but musicians have not often had humour. Again he was intelligently interested in his world, its science, its politics, its dreams, its hopes. Of all artists musicians as a rule have been least interested in their world. In a moment of national crisis or under royal patronage they may be stirred to compose a rousing anthem or to decorate a loyal ode or to chant the praises of freedom : but usually they are self-centred and even narrow in their minds and sympathies. Hubert Parry was little centred on himself : he stood with his back to himself, hiding his emotions and his pains, austere, hard in his bearing, loving the boisterous movement and supreme loneliness of the sea. Even finally we could say that he was unique as a musician in his settled dislike of the Catholic faith. He seems to have thought it weak, emotional, and insincere. He was ignorant of it, of course ; and the Catholicism he disliked he had found only in some human embodiment of it, weak, emotional, insincere. But no one who reads the book will doubt his sterling qualities, his genuine force of heroic constancy, his delicate sense of beauty in its more austere and dreadful forms, his self-mastery, his love of Christ's personal character, his orderly conduct, the deep violence of his love.

The book must have been difficult for Mrs. Greene to write : she has told us almost as much about herself as about her witnesses, partly deliberately, partly beyond her desire. Such a book, however, needed to be written : it is delicate, it is reticent, it will help those who admire strength.

B. J.

MEDIAEVAL SPIRITUALITY. By Felix Vernet. Translated by the Benedictines of Talacre. (Catholic Library of Religious Knowledge ; XIII. Sands ; 3/6.)

Everyone who has studied mediæval piety and prayer will probably have criticisms to offer when he reads this book, either because his favourite authors have been given insufficient prominence or because some writer has been misunderstood. Such reprimands are inevitable. But this summary of an immense

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literature is as judicious as any could be. It is more judicious, more complete even, despite its smaller compass, than Pourrat's second volume, which deals with the same subject at greater length. Moreover, though its matter is curiously arranged—first a sorting out of the families of mediæval spirituality and then a re-arrangement of their contributions to mysticism under headings which cover the main points of their spiritual teaching—it has very nearly succeeded in being the absolute manual needed from which a would-be student could work out any particular interest for himself or relate a particular author to the rest of the series. We say 'very nearly,' for its fails to supply one fundamental need: it has no index. We should like to see also in an appendix a list of all the names mentioned in the book, with their dates. This could, and no doubt will, be done by an energetic student for himself; but he will have to go elsewhere for some of the facts he needs. He could hardly tell, for instance in which century Denis the Carthusian wrote, unless he would say (from p. 29) that it was after 1475—and he would be wrong. There is, however, another cause for quarrel against the translators. (Without the original French to refer to, perhaps our complaint should be laid at the door of M. Vernet and not of Talacre.) But we must protest that the Latin quotations given throughout, though perfectly correct in Latin, are often inaccurately turned into English; it is not often that any great hurt is done by this, for the sense of the original passage is nearly always retained. But sometimes hurt is done. For instance, *majores contemplationis gradus* (p. 135) is rendered *highest degree of contemplation* where *higher degrees* is the exact point intended in the original. The author does not hold the theory here imputed to him. Elsewhere, too, a mistaken translation spoils the meaning of the passage (p. 155, *manifestat* is rendered *closely unites*; p. 156, the distinction between *quando* and *cum* is not maintained; p. 157, the beauty and meaning of the Latin are lost). Again (from the French), on p. 57 *forestall* is the wrong word; so is *disclose* on p. 112. But we should most of all attack the accounts given of contemplation (pp. 159-163) and of mystic union (pp 164-181). Thus we believe the attempt made in a collected set of passages to establish a contemplation which is the result of extraordinary grace and yet is not to be called 'acquired' is not borne out by mediæval teaching. Everywhere the grades of contemplation given are the same, though names may differ: the first is acquired and natural; the second is acquired by personal effort, but heightened by grace; the third is infused and excludes all personal effort.

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Guy du Pont uses simple names for these, philosophical, scholastic, infused; the first is the result of human effort only, the last of grace only, the second is the result of human effort with grace superadded. It is surely as much the result of personal effort as any good and meritorious act can be. It is acquired. The other matter would require more space than we can afford, and perhaps it would only end in the mere assertion of our own judgment on the meaning of texts.

B.J.

GREYBEARDS AT PLAY. Literature and Art for Old Gentlemen. Written and illustrated by G. K. Chesterton. (Sheed & Ward; 3/6.)

THE JUDGEMENT OF DR. JOHNSON. A Comedy in Three Acts by G. K. Chesterton. (Sheed & Ward; 2/6.)

I suppose Chesterton would like to feel now as he felt when he first wrote his manual of Literature and Art for elderly persons. This is a reprint of the happy journalist out for a lark, and the gleeful drawings are somewhat of a contrast with the more thoughtful pencillings of his later period. The Slade School in his time was to all appearance a livelier place than it is now. People there may have taken themselves less seriously. That cosmic emotion, that conscious kinship with the Universe (not the weekly *Universe*) are here expressed in terms of conviction rather than of aspiration. He is not on the way to Nirvana, but has achieved it on easy terms. And so he sings the easy terms.

But now that he is becoming a Greybeard himself he is at the Play. Those who have seen his 'Magic' can understand his altogether exceptional sense of the spoken word. George Bernard Shaw has made a fortune out of mere conversation, just because it is well-attuned. We have listened hour after hour to it, and we know. But Chesterton's conversation is as much superior to Shaw's as Mozart's is to, say, Hummel's (though the latter could compose like a *gentleman*.) He (G.K.) was born with a better sense of the theatre than Shaw, and his management of event is much superior. Chesterton's conversations *never* go on too long, which is remarkable considering that he himself is happiest when he is talking. Now Shaw's lightest remark in his plays is invariably a little longer than it ought to be, and his blundering efforts after a synthesis of good and evil, as in the portentous interlude of *Man and Superman*, have literally, no end. He says himself that Hell is necessarily monotonous, but we cannot believe it is so monotonous as Shaw. Yet he