

or another is at the bottom of all psychopathy. The graver the disease the less is moral responsibility involved. He does not, however, go so far as to exclude sin entirely as a source, in some cases of psychopathy.

As has been said already, this treatise is the outcome of wide personal experience over a number of years, and is independent of theories of a psychoanalytic or other nature. In a field where much diversity of opinion and theory prevails, this plain non-technical exposition of facts is very welcome.

AIDAN ELRINGTON, O.P.

THE DARK WHEEL. By S.M.C. (Sands; 6s.)

The author of *Brother Petroc's Return*, which had so well-deserved a success, has now given us a still more finished and still more important novel. *The Dark Wheel*, like its predecessor, asks credence for an unusual play with time, which once granted, the sequence of the story follows with masterly and compelling logic; for in both books there is a well-developed theological theme skilfully clothed in most interesting narrative. But from every angle *The Dark Wheel* shows a notable advance in technique on the part of the author. Brother Petroc's return to human intercourse depends upon four hundred years of suspended animation, a phantasy remote from possibility yet somehow easy of acceptance. But in the revolving of the Dark Wheel, Greville White, a modern professional man and an atheist who has suffered a breakdown from overwork, is carried through the tenuous veil that separates time from eternity in such fashion that from the Cornish garden whither he has betaken himself for a much-needed rest he sets out upon a strange journey through what can best be described as vignettes of time beginning in pre-Reformation days.

The notion of the re-enacting of by-gone scenes in the ever-present *now* of eternity, for the benefit of one who has been permitted by God to penetrate the veil of time while yet he lives in this sublunar world, opens a fascinating and by no means unprofitable line of speculation. The author presents it with a simplicity and sureness of touch that is characteristic of the whole book. The strange pilgrimage and gradual conversion of the hero is etched in with deft lines and a great sympathy; and in the course of it deep Catholic truths are expounded with the ability of a theologian and the finished technique of the experienced novelist, though the author is professionally neither the one nor the other. (Perhaps it is not indiscreet to reveal

that she is a teaching Sister of the Order of St. Dominic.) The theme and the technique are sustained throughout, the doctrine is developed through the intermediation of vivid characters and some drama. Perhaps only in the last phrase of the book does Homer nod. Others will probably agree that this spiritual epic should have ended abruptly with the words of Baptism. But how small a criticism is this in a book that is otherwise a superlative type of what a Catholic novel should be!

HILARY J. CARPENTER, O.P.

TIME'S WALL ASUNDER. By Robert Farren. (Sheed & Ward; 3s. 6d.)

There is much that is striking and promising in this collection of poems by a young Irishman who is faced with the difficult task of carrying a stage further the erratic development of English verse in his country. The death of Yeats has now drawn a line below the whole wonderful chapter of political crisis and poetic achievement which began fifty years ago. Mr. Farren is one of those who feel it is impossible to be satisfied with Yeats' ideas or to repeat his literary forms, but who give the impression of being rather uncertain of the best direction in which to go to escape his influence :

He has left all words behind  
but kept the word-subduing mind.  
Nowhere in our earth is hid  
the wheat he made into our bread;  
wind has withered up the vine  
which glorified our house with wine.

Mr. Farren is, however, a Catholic, and he has also devised for himself an idiom which serves to distinguish him clearly enough from the poets of an older generation. Although this idiom bears traces of several influences (those of Hopkins and more recent English and American poets among them), it is most remarkable for its confidence of rhythm and its personal inflexions. Its individual qualities outweigh any weaknesses and eccentricities. Again and again Mr. Farren surprises and charms: even in the midst of a poem whose beginning seems flat or unreal (I must confess that some of the religious pieces in this volume affect me little), a fine phrase or image leaps out and recaptures our attention. In those poems which seem to be most under Gaelic influence this effort and accomplishment are greatest. It is interesting to find that two of the poems most immediately concerned with contemporary Ireland—*Folk-*