

would doubtless unearth much more, though there seem to be no letters from Fisher to the Pope or the Cardinal Secretary.

Mr Reynolds' life of More should serve for a generation at least. He has now given us the best life we have of Fisher. But until these papal sources have been incorporated it is not possible to hail this book as the *opus perfectum*.

GODFREY ANSTRUTHER, O.P.

SAINT WINEFRIDE AND HER HOLY WELL. By M. and A. Blundell.
(Samuel Walker; 3s.)

This is an interesting and enterprising booklet. Its purpose is implied in its contents and by its method of presentation. The pilgrimage to Saint Winefride's Well occupies, by reason of its antiquity and continuity, a place of its own. English pilgrims have for some centuries come from Lancashire, and it is right and proper that the Catholics of Manchester and Liverpool should wish to have such aspects of the pilgrimage and its history as are likely to appeal to them presented in a compact and readable form. Falling into two sections—first, the story of the saint and, secondly, the history of the pilgrimage—the prevailing impression which it will leave upon the reader is that here is something of vast antiquity which is yet an integrated and natural part of the popular life of urban and industrial England. The authors have performed what they set out to do.

There remain, however, certain criticisms. To begin with, so far as the historian is concerned, the 'facts' of Saint Winefride's life are few. She flourished in the earlier half of the seventh century. It is fairly certain that her cult developed in conjunction with, and subsidiary to, that of Saint Beuno; that her traditional connection with Bodfari and Gwytherin and with Saint Deifr and Saint Eleri is based on a solid foundation; and that her cult, in spite of the impetus which it received from the translation to the Benedictine abbey of Shrewsbury in 1138, remained, in all probability, confined to North Wales and the March until after 1398, when Roger Weldon, Archbishop of Canterbury, ordered her feast to be kept throughout his province. Any story of her life in the seventh century rests on twelfth-century documents. As Dr Barrett Davies pointed out in an article in *BLACKFRIARS* (March, 1948), the *bucheddau* of the saints are not biographies. The task of retelling convincingly and without affectation stories of which much of the underlying feeling, tone and purpose is remote from our own day is a difficult one, and it would seem better in the long run to tell the legend of Saint Winefride in a simple and direct prose narrative, suitable to its antiquity, rather than to modernize it and conversationalize it. It is fatally easy to tell the tale of Saint Winefride in the same

idiom as that of Saint Maria Goretti, but it is a temptation which must be resisted.

A more serious consideration is the apparent lack of appreciation of the historical background which the booklet displays; and one reader, at any rate, has been compelled to ask himself whether it is really possible to give a satisfactory account of a seventh-century Welsh saint and of the remarkable development of her cult down the centuries to the present day without some knowledge of Welsh history and literature. For instance, we are told on page five that Wales was converted by 'the followers of Saint Patrick and Saint Columba', on page six that Saint Kentigern 'established the see of St Asaph', and Gruffydd Robert is introduced as 'Canon Roberts'—as who should write 'Dean Donne'. On page 50 we are told to remember 'with what difficulty pilgrims from the interior of Wales travelled to Holywell, owing to the lack of good roads' when in fact the principal road of medieval Wales ran from St Davids to Holywell, to say nothing of the well-known route through Ludlow with its special hospice for pilgrims to Saint Winefride. Some account of the chapel and well at Woolston, about two and a half miles from West Felton on the border between the dioceses of St Asaph and Lichfield, ought clearly to have been included, not only for its traditional part in the drama of the translation to Shrewsbury but because its connection with Robert, the brother of Hugh, Owen of Plas Du, both of whom played such a big part in Welsh Elizabethan recusancy.

The spelling of some of the personal and place-names is erratic: Saint Twrog, for instance, becomes Saint Turog, Clynnog Fawr becomes Clynnoc Vawr, Tremain becomes Tremaine. And these are not the worst.

Nor are the authors always sure of their English history. For instance, on page 46 we are told that 'hundreds of ministers were despoiled of their livings'. The number, according to the official returns made by Bancroft, was forty-nine, a figure which Frere considered unlikely to be wide of the mark. The problem of the effect of the recusancy fines has recently been engaging the attention of specialists, and in view of this the sweeping statement that they ruined many of the landed families is rash. There were, it seems probable, other and more effective reasons.

On page 40 the account of the liturgical development of the Saint Winefride's feast needs revision and development. It should begin with Walden's decree of 1398 which ordered that the feast should be kept throughout the province with nine lessons. In 1415 Chicheley, who had been Bishop of St Davids from 1408 to 1414, ordered that it should be kept *cum regimine chori*. This had an interesting sequel at Salisbury

where the Treasurer, who was expected to provide the additional lights on all double feasts, successfully appealed to the Dean and Chapter in 1452 to declare him relieved of the financial consequences of Chicheley's decision. The authors might also consider the evidence of the MS. copy of the Hereford Missal which came from Whitchurch, near Monmouth, and is now in the library of University College, Oxford. The red lettering of Saint Winefride's feast suggests that a vigorous cult of the saint developed in Gwent and Ergyng. In Scotland again, the Arbuthnott Missal has a special mass of Saint Winefride with a sequence not found elsewhere and apparently deriving from Shropshire. The Revd Silas Harris' *St David in the Liturgy*, in which these points are discussed, should certainly be among the books consulted for this pamphlet.

T. CHARLES EDWARDS

SOVIET RUSSIA: AN INTRODUCTION. By Jacob Miller. (Hutchinson; 8s. 6d.)

'We are the masters of our country', said Nikolai to the author and he was obviously far from dismayed at this responsibility. Nikolai had been a campaigner in Collectivisation and had probably taken part in the Civil War. He was one of the people who in the late 'thirties had become ministers of the Socialist Republics and planners of heavy industry. This class Professor Miller came to know at first hand and he can rightly claim that he witnessed thus the shift from heroism to business, from the well-nigh impossible task of making the U.S.S.R. to the equally difficult task of managing it. The book reviews the origins and development of Soviet industry and the historical shaping of agriculture up to the reforms of 1953-54. The Soviet adaptation of Christianity and Marxism needs much fuller treatment than the scope of this 181-page book can allow: and I am doubtful whether that enthusiastic if inept body, the League of the Battling Goddess (now suppressed), was as harmless as the author supposes. Religion in the U.S.S.R. is still loudly attacked, but the Army now has its chaplains and the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church is established for the first time since Peter the Great. The great Russian distrust of Catholicism remains as a lasting memorial to the stab in the back by those gentile parfit knights who 'rayed in Lettice and in Pruce'. Modern Russia's gentle, parfit knights (the author contends) are to be found in the ranks of her political police. Professor Miller is a lecturer at the University of Glasgow. The present reviewer had the book read aloud to him, and as a stimulus to further study of Soviet culture and conditions it could scarcely be bettered.

J. F. T. PRINCE