

BLACKFRIARS

Benedict's last years and death and of the tradition of his relics ch. xv deals with *Benedictinism* and the wonderful romance of the spread of the Order and of its revival in England after the Reformation. Perhaps "revival" is hardly the word, "survival" would be more apt. For it was the privilege of Dom Siebert Buckley, the sole survivor of the Benedictine restoration under Mary Tudor, to receive on November 21st, 1607, the vows of two priests who became Benedictines and who thus perpetuated the ancient line.

Appendices on the *Dialogues* of St. Gregory, on Mark the Poet and Paul and Deacon, on SS. Maurus and Placid complete a fascinating story beautifully told.

HUGH POPE, O.P.

AUX ORIGINES D'UNE TRAGÉDIE: La Politique Espagnole de 1923 à 1936. Par Alfred Mendizabal. Préface de Jacques Maritain. (*Courrier des Iles*, 9.) (Desclée de Brouwer; 20 frs.)

"It was for studies such as this," writes M. Maritain in his preface, "that the *Courrier des Iles* was founded . . . It needs a great deal of lucidity of mind to pass an objective judgment on a series of events so confused externally and so heavily charged inwardly with passion. Those who know M. Alfred Mendizabal, his clarity of mind, his loyalty, his vigorous good sense, sharpened further by the finesse of his Aragonese wit, will know that, if the ideal of strict objectivity is no doubt unattainable in matters of history and especially contemporary history, nevertheless no one more than he could give the impression, and with every justice, of approaching that ideal; they will know moreover that he has a perfect grasp of the things of which he speaks, and that his competence as a jurist, and his profound and enlightened religious faith, enable him to speak of these things with freedom and elevation of thought." Señor Mendizabal is Professor of the Philosophy of Law at the University of Oviedo, a member of the International Institute of Philosophy of Law, secretary of the Spanish group of the Union Catholique d'Etudes Internationales. He has written, among other works, a Treatise on Natural Law (in collaboration with his father, Professor at the University of Madrid), and a study on the Doctrine of Justice in the *Summa Theologica*. If these details should seem to suggest the impersonal, academic intellectual, one has only to read the moving fourth part of this book, in which the author's own experiences, and his reactions to them, are mentioned.

The book begins with the Spanish dictatorship of 1923; shows the influence of this in bringing about the fall of the monarchy; and goes on to describe the fortunes of the republic, the conflict of opinions, and of motives. The third part deals with the Religious

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Problem. The author shows how the process of dechristianization had gone on beneath the official externals of Catholicism, how the apostasy of the masses had revealed itself "as an irremediable *fait accompli* in the eyes of the rare apostles of social Catholicism, who were not understood, and were even attacked as suspects by important elements in the conservative classes who relied more on police intervention than on the application of Christian social principles, and stigmatized as a dangerous revolutionary anyone who allowed himself to recall to the rich their duty towards the poor."

If the author, as Maritain writes, "has a devouring passion—and is he not a Spaniard?—it is a passion for justice and truth." There is nowhere, here, anything but the deepest spirit of sympathy and pity; and if there were nothing else than this for which to thank the author it would be more than enough. The Pope may denounce journalistic bitterness and the spirit of partisanship; we know how little his words have availed. Whether or not one agree with all the judgments here so soberly made; whether or not one agree with M. Maritain's discussion of principles in his preface—and he has seldom written anything finer—nothing but good can come to the soul from a humble reading of this book. It is, indeed, for anyone anxious to know real facts, anxious to get at the so elusive truth, indispensable. One can but hope that an English translation may be arranged as soon as possible.

The bulk of what Professor Mendizabal here publishes was written before the outbreak of July 1936; if the spirit which animates this study had been in those years more widespread there would not now be so much sorrow, and so much evil, upon the earth.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

POETRY

POEMS By Eileen Duggan: with an Introduction by Walter de la Mare. (Allen & Unwin; 5s.)

Given the gift, you would say that a poet was bound to remove, as far as he could, all impediments to his vocation. A certain austerity of life and thought, preserved in the interest of and on the lines laid down by his calling, will almost inevitably find itself rewarded by a corresponding rarity, freshness, originality and sincerity in his work; and this, I imagine, accounts for the impulse and inspiration, as well as (in their degree) for the artistry and technique of Miss Eileen Duggan's *Poems*. This slender first book by the Catholic poetess of New Zealand, acclaimed by the happily converging enthusiasm of Father Martindale and Walter de la Mare, is at once a triumph and an augury. The Faith whose unduly complicated or narrow-minded