

them, are truly astonishing. But he is no mere virtuoso of the card-index. He is a very serious thinker, and a singularly intelligent disciple of St. Thomas. He is fully alive to the fact that the 'problem of value' is largely a verbal one arising from the very ambiguity of the word. Philosophy necessarily begins in the vague—and for that reason a non-committal word like 'value' has its use—but it must not end there. In an opening critique of contemporary contributions to the subject, Fr. Ward shows that for the most part they lead nowhere. It is only possible to be extricated from the initial fog by a clear grasp of the *situation*. In this, modern philosophies of value have failed; and so, more often than not, they conclude in tautologies and despair of definitions. Fr. Ward finds the reason in that 'in current philosophy there is a pervasive jumble of value, valuing, valuation, awareness of value, and values.'

These diverse elements which constitute the 'value-situation' are carefully disentangled, and the second part of the book is occupied with an 'Outline of Constructive Theory.' It is excellently done. Careful to check his progress at every turn by reference to St. Thomas, Fr. Ward constructs his philosophy on the analysis of empiric action. 'Action is the pragmatic proof of value, its demonstration.' This pragmatic line of approach has the advantage of throwing into relief the common-sense of the Thomist philosophy of value; but this advantage is somewhat counterbalanced by the fact that it obscures the full metaphysical setting of value as an *a-priori* postulate of Being. The purely metaphysical bearings of St. Thomas's thought on the subject are but lightly hinted at in the concluding chapter. It would have been illuminating had the author treated at length of the Divine volition as the source of instrumental values, and shown how the common contention of contemporary thinkers that 'value is made by valuing' holds good if transferred from human to Divine valuation. But it is ungenerous to complain of omissions in a work which goes so far in unravelling the most chaotic of prevalent muddles, and we may hope that Fr. Ward will make the more purely metaphysical aspect of the subject the theme of a further volume.

V.W.

THE MIRROR OF THE MONTHS. By Sheila Kaye-Smith. (London: Elkin, Matthews & Marrot, Ltd.; 6/- net.)

This little book, in which the natural characteristics of each month are made to illustrate the mysteries connected with them by the liturgy or Catholic custom, is more ambitious than at first appears. It attempts, indeed, to synthetise the whole

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scheme of creation and redemption, together with the physical, intellectual and moral development of humanity. But an imagery which, in its poetry and in delicate accuracy of observation, would have delighted Alice Meynell, seems an unsuitable grindstone for the Darwinian axe.

It is surprising, moreover, that the author should have allowed the book, obviously written before she was a Catholic, to be republished as it stands. The Church does not condemn the theory of evolution. She merely requires the belief that, at a given moment in creation, God 'breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul,' a soul received directly from God and not evolved from matter or mere animal consciousness. Miss Kaye-Smith, being a loyal Catholic, no doubt holds this belief, but it is difficult to find any evidence of it in her account of man's evolution (pp. 7-9). Her conception of Purgatory, too (p. 63), and her theory that the devil is dependent on time for his existence (pp. 55-59) would probably present difficulties if the book were submitted for an ecclesiastical *imprimatur*. It may be possible to give an orthodox interpretation to these theories, but the average mind will not easily find it, and for Catholics this spoils a book in which there is otherwise much delightful and suggestive thought and great beauty of expression.

M.B.

JOYOUS PILGRIMAGE. By R. Francis Foster. (Elkin Mathews ; 7/6.)

You must not expect to find in *A Joyous Pilgrimage* a guide book to Essex, Hertfordshire and Bucks, and if you try to follow Francis Foster on his journeying you may meet with adventures as varied, droll and romantic as his own. Even when he mentions the true name of a town or village, he prevaricates about the hostelry he favours—one inn he mentions has not been an inn for thirteen years. The stories he tells are amazing—and the more amazing the more attractive. He gives you no fulsome description of scenery, but rather reveals an understanding of the countryside through his appreciation of the inhabitants. It is a provocative book, a 'joyous pilgrimage' in itself, and a strong incentive to adventure in others: it is Catholic literature; much of it has already appeared in *The Evening News*; and it is enriched by Mrs. Foster's excellent pen-and-ink drawings.

R.R.