

we had read these sweetly reasonable pages and enjoyed their charm, that there was something lacking. We were left wondering whether the author had not, with his humanism, taken the sting and fire out of his Christianity. We would venture to hope, therefore, that if he must castigate our imperfections, he will at the same time make sure that he is giving us the strong meat of the Gospel.

JUSTIN McCANN, O.S.B.

NOTICES

SAINT VINCENT FERRER. By Henry Ghéon. (Sheed and Ward; 6s.)

Vincent Ferrer could never be made, as Francis of Assisi has been, into a saint of the faubourgs. The Angel of the Judgement is a terrifying figure and one from whom we may even, at first, recoil. To read his life may prove a startling revelation of the extent to which we have unconsciously allowed our outlook to become 'modernised.' The endless miracles may strain our weary and reluctant credulity, the terrible penances of the flagellants shock our sensibilities, and the emphasis on sin and death and judgement be distasteful. But we will ask ourselves whether our times, too like St. Vincent's own in their violence and disorder, do not also call for a violent and dramatic apostolate, a recall to penance and the evangelisation of the poor. And we will come to love as well as fear and admire the shrewd, humorous, patient old friar whose great learning could never obscure his love of concrete everyday things and the common people, whose tenderness would claim even the salvation of Judas assured. For Henri Ghéon writes well of saints and has known in this book, though at first it may seem a little inconsequent and sketchy, how best to bring out the truly Dominican balance of gifts and virtues which characterises Vincent Ferrer.

M.M.

O, CALL BACK YESTERDAY. By Margaret Fletcher. (Blackwell; 5s.)

It is generally assumed that those who in the evening of life sit down to write the story of their lives will be *laudatores temporis acti*, and the title of Miss Fletcher's book would seem to belong to this nostalgic tradition. Yet the reader will be pleasantly relieved to find that this is not so, rather in fact

is it the opposite. In stately prose, never flurried, never rushed, she recounts the life of Oxford in the sixties of last century, her experiences as an art student long before the emancipation of womankind, and how she found fulfilment in the Catholic Church. Then did her life's work begin: the founding of the Catholic Women's League in England and the work on a larger scale of the Union of all C.W.L.s throughout the world. It is an epic story, of vital interest to all students of the inception of organized apostolic activity in this country, but a story told with characteristic modesty and reticence. Mellow musing on yesterday is rounded off with a facing up to the realities of today and the prospects of to-morrow, full of faith and hope and charity.

This is a book for those who love their Oxford, for those who love children and are interested in their psychology, for those who love the Church and her triumphs, above all for those who find strength and comfort in the life of one who has struggled, had many trials, and yet remains far from cynicism but is full of hope for the future.

J.F.

SANCTITY. By Violet Clifton. (Sheed and Ward; 3s. 6d.)

The story of St. Elizabeth of Hungary has inspired many writers, and this new and revised edition of the play by Mrs. Clifton is a worthy presentation of an old and beautiful story. The manner of its telling is, it is true, more in the mode of poetry than of drama, and one may feel a little doubt as to how it would appear on the stage. This poetical inspiration is most obvious in the choruses which mark the progress of Elizabeth's climb to sanctity, and which are themselves in verse-form; one feels that the play might have gained if it had been wholly written in verse, the medium in which its manifold excellences would have found their proper expression.

P.U.F.

COMMENTARIA IN PRAEDICAMENTA ARISTOTELIS. By Thomas de Vio Cardinalis Caietanus. Edited by M.-H. Laurent, O.P. (Institutum Angelicum, Rome; L. 16.)

This text of Cajetan's Commentaries on the *Predicaments* of Aristotle gives us that of the first edition, published in 1506 during the author's lifetime. Like his later Commentary on the *Summa* it was written for beginners in the study of theology, as is several times made evident in the course of it. It is good

to get such a reminder that the *Predicaments* is a logical work, not a metaphysical one, concerned, moreover, precisely to facilitate that primary task of the reason which consists in simple apprehension. The execution of that task is to be guided by the art of definition, on which the *Organon* contains no detailed treatise such as those for directing the other operations of the mind. Nevertheless, this book deals with the first stage of it, and its intention is 'to unite under ten genera all beings, in their infinite variety, thus distinguishing them in an orderly way and clarifying them as marked by their several properties, that so it may be able to direct the first operation of the intellect.' Thus from the start it is made clear that the categories or predicaments are not, as people are sometimes inclined to think, some subtle elements, hard to be perceived, of real being, but supreme genera, logical entities, with a foundation in reality. But light is thrown incidentally on metaphysical questions, as for instance in the examination of *bonum* and *malum* in the section on the post-predicaments, and where the commentator justifies the classing of analogous terms under equivocal ones. The text is duly supplied, but not overburdened, with references to authors quoted, and there are some useful cross-references to other places of the work itself.

I.T.

THE GOD OF REASON. By J. K. Heydon. (Sheed and Ward; 5s.)

Mr. Heydon has set himself to produce what people are constantly looking for, namely an exposition in a 'taking' and popular style of the first principles of philosophy, with special reference to the *Quinque Viae*. He has concentrated wisely not merely on simplicity of language, but also on the modern admiration for physical science and scientists, using his references to them as occasions of explanation rather than attack. The first half of the book dealing with the primary principles maintains a consistent level of enjoyably light reading; the chapters on the *Quinque Viae* are much more closely knit and will be found perhaps inevitably rather harder work. It is a successful effort, but the words *Ananke Stenai*, repeated without explanation or translation, while they may add a fascinating atmosphere of the occult, are not likely to further an understanding of the principle they denote,

I.T.

A CONVENT WITH STONES. By Sister Mary Barbara, S.S.J.
(Saint Anthony Guild Press, Franciscan Monastery, New
Jersey.)

This book was written on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, in Michigan, U.S.A. Although the account is a brief one, it is yet complete inasmuch as we have the story of the Congregation from its first foundation in the France of 1650 until the French Revolution brought exile; the advent of Napoleon, the 'Second Spring,' and such life and vigour that it looked around for new worlds to conquer. Thus followed the first fifty years of fruitful work in the United States of America.

'These simple historical reminiscences are told,' as the author states in the foreword, 'with the changing lights and shadows of lofty historical settings playing upon their horizon. In view of world drama, the little Community of St. Joseph, even in its solidarity of world-oneness, plays only a very small part, only a hidden role in point of time. But it is part of the universal flow of things, directed by the good Providence of God in this, His fair world.'

The author, who in 1938 was listed amongst 'leading American women,' has amply justified in this little volume the high place she holds in her country in the domain of History. The fine drawings by Mary Winifred Borst add much to the attractiveness of the book.

E.L.K.

AUTUMN'S PEACE. A Novel. By Avis M. Hove. (Sands; 6s.)

Rushy Valley is the setting for a simple drama of life in an Irish country parish. It is not, however, a story of parish or Catholic life as such, but of ordinary lives and loves, virtues and mild vices of people who are Catholics. People who, in spite of the modern trend of thought which has destroyed the traditions, principles and standards of value of the Catholic past, are still quite naturally guided by these in the conducting of their lives. Thus Father Dan naturally shares in all the joys and sorrows of his flock, as their father friend and counsellor. The romantic love of Brigid and Michael takes the real rather than the ideal course. In Matt. Ryan and Ellen Regan we have true and deep love doomed to disappointment; but so pure and healthy is the atmosphere of the book, that illicit love or conjugal infidelity, so attractively and sympathetically pre-

sented in modern works of fiction, could not be even remotely thought of in connection with such characters. So, in quick moving scenes which sustain interest, the simple story moves from the springtime of life and its romance, to the summertime and life's problems, to end with their solution and *Autumn's Peace*.

E.K.

THE BRITISH ANNUAL OF LITERATURE, Vol. II, 1939. (The British Authors' Press; 5s.)

This somewhat old-fashioned publication seems to be devoted to the task of reviewing the general literary activity of the whole British Empire, year by year. There are useful reviews of Dominion and Indian literature, photographs of literary celebrities, poems and articles on such writers as Mr. John Buchan and Mr. John Masefield. The annual would surely find a much larger sale if presented in a lighter, more modern and more attractive format.

P.U.F.

THE CATHOLIC WHO'S WHO, 1940. (Burns Oates; 6s.)

THE CATHOLIC DIRECTORY, 1940. (Burns Oates; 4s.)

In his brilliantly amusing *Preface to The Catholic Who's Who* Fr. Philip Hughes defends the publication of this volume on the grounds that it is a duty to the average Catholic to let him know whence came and how were formed those Catholics who are 'distinguished' or distinct from him 'by the amount of external fuss they cause . . . *The Catholic Who's Who* as much as it dares, *in quantum possum et tu indiges*, gives the credentials by which the excesses and eccentricities of the odder members of the body (of the Church) can be judged.' But its serious value as a reference book of useful facts (apart from its attractiveness as light and often amusing reading) is recognised and is unimpaired in the latest edition. It may well be regarded as the complement of a much more important and valuable work of reference, namely *The Catholic Directory*. More than a hundred years of excellent service make it unnecessary to recommend this yearly volume, which should undoubtedly find a place in every Catholic home. Even the minor inaccuracies, which are inevitable in such a work, do not mar its value or even its general reliability.