

## NOTICES

For us it was God's remembering and grateful heart that gave this welcome of Christmas when a child from the far north came to Bethlehem.

But it was no less the remembering and grateful heart of God that gave to this child the writer of this book who was to welcome him into the Holy Land of the Church.

No such pilgrim of the birth had found his way into the little flock of English Catholics since Newman made that net of faith which was so quiet and emotionless as to seem not faith but only reason.

As if to authenticate the reality of their faith both these men knelt and confessed their sins to a legate from an old Catholic country. Littlemore has become one of England's pilgrim places because one night the genius of a great religious movement became a child of Alma Mater Ecclesia. But for some of us who have loved Gilbert Chesterton the ascetic monastery of Littlemore is hardly more sacred than the Railway Hotel, Beaconsfield, where on Sunday, July 30, 1922, Father John O'Connor officially announced the birth of a male child in the home of English Catholics.

The priest who welcomed Gilbert Chesterton into the Holy Land of his soul has secrets which must be forever untold. But the things he could tell and has told will make this little book live by the life not only of the hero of whom it tells but also of the teller who knew his hero as no other knew yet kept him always as his hero.

The things we of to-day once saw against their background of time and place are gradually being seen in "the glass of eternity." Even now that sight is allowing the little flock of English Catholics to realize how God was kind to us when He gave us Gilbert Chesterton. And every line in this book of Father Brown tells us how kind God was to Gilbert Chesterton when He gave him as "soul friend" the gifted, human-hearted priest, whose name if fitly quartered with his hero on the title page.

VINCENT McNABB, O.P.

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COMPLINE according to the Dominican Rite. In Latin and English. (Blackfriars, Oxford. Cloth, 2s. post free.)

All those who have the privilege of attending Dominican Compline will welcome this handy edition which provides them not only with the ordinary Sunday Compline but also with the variations for week-days, for Feast days, and for the liturgical seasons of the year. They will be happy, too, to find the English translation of the psalms, hymns, etc., as well as of the rubrics governing the variations in their use. Incidentally several interesting translations from ancient sources have been

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preserved in this way. After giving a useful ruling as to the employment of the "Sunday" psalms on certain Feast days the *Foreword* concludes: "If, in addition to noting this rule, the pious reader will take care to familiarize himself with the contents of this little book, he will have small difficulty in following the public recitation of Compline, or even in reciting privately this official 'Night Prayers' of Holy Mother Church." We commend this suggestion, together with the handy and well printed volume itself, to the notice of our readers.

H. J. C.

DAS KATHOLISCHE SCHRIFTUM IM HEUTIGEN ENGLAND. By Joseph Metzger. (Kösel u. Pustet, Munich; RM. 5.80.)

This author has clearly a very great capacity for taking pains: he has produced a large volume likely to be extremely useful for reference. He derives modern English Catholic literature mainly from the Oxford Movement, and gives a full account of all important and almost all unimportant Catholic writers in England from that time till the present day. Unfortunately, he seems unable to distinguish between good and bad writing; he seems to suppose that Childe and Evan Morgan are as important as Hopkins, and Coventry Patmore deserving of no more admiration than Lord Alfred Douglas. There is something schoolgirlish in his anxiety to determine definitely who is the "greatest" male or female Catholic poet or novelist; and in this he is as bold as the writer in the current *Dublin Review*, who begins his article with the arresting pronouncement: "Hopkins is the best nineteenth century poet." The book is weak, too, in literary history: Crashaw and Vaughan appear as *mittelälterlich* (mediæval), and Herr Metzger accepts without question the nonsense Francis Thompson wrote about the former. His literary criticisms lack originality; they are almost invariably conventional and seem very often to be modelled on those of A. C. Ward. He shows little appreciation of the importance of form to a writer, and his classification of authors and influences inclines to be very superficial. But in the matter of painstaking industry Herr Metzger is an example to all Englishmen.

G. S. S.

JANE VERSUS JONATHAN. By Vera Barclay. (Burns, Oates; 3s. 6d.)

SNOWFLAKE IN BIARRITZ. By Peggy Egerton-Bird. (Burns, Oates, 2s. 6d.)

It is interesting to read in rapid succession a book written about children for children by a grown-up and another about grown-ups for grown-ups by a child—that is how I interpret

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these two volumes. Miss Barclay is a well-known expert in the former class; Miss Egerton-Bird is a newcomer in the other class; and both are remarkably interesting. Those familiar with Miss Barclay's other books in this admirable series of *Books for Young People* will be delighted to meet Jane again; Jane is very natural and very lovable. Before, it was "Jane *will* you behave"; but now we have Jane trying to behave and, on the whole, succeeding very well. This particular story is not so obviously informative as the others have been, but it is more formative in a subtle way. Not that it is a "moral tale," for it will be enjoyed by any child for its naturalness and its incident; the moral will probably point itself. In her own way—a very different way—Snowflake is as attractive as Jane. But she is not a very ordinary child. Occasionally one gets the impression that it is a grown-up pretending to be a child, and not quite succeeding. More often the genuine and ingenuous childishness is transparent and wholly delightful. The narrative is packed with interest, for the family visited Lourdes and Loyola and other places likely to produce reactions in a child. Those reactions are all interesting, and sometimes unexpected. The illustrations, by the author, are delicious. It is undoubtedly a book that will be enjoyed by all grown-ups—but perhaps not really appreciated by children.

H. J. C.

PEDANT POEMS. By Neville Watts. (Burns, Oates; 2s. 6d.)  
ALCAZAR. By Egerton Clarke. (Burns, Oates; 1s.)

The subject matter of *Pedant Poems* is conventional. Mr. Watts writes about most of the things which the poets at the end of last century and the beginning of this liked to write about, of "golden weather," "sun-kissed sea," and dusk and "the haze where the hills lie dreaming." His treatment is also conventional: he makes full use of imagery and personification, but of a kind which is rarely either new or striking. What really holds his verse together is strong rhythm and firm respect for form. He makes quite clear the handicap suffered by a poet such as Mr. Clarke, who, if indeed he has a good ear and some sense of form, chooses to suppress these qualities. Yet Mr. Clarke has something new to say, at least he has on the occasions when he escapes from the influence of Chesterton. He can walk down the Edgware Road and find between the objects he sees there relationships which he can in his verse work up into new metaphors. But good poetry is born of the marriage of matter and form, and in Mr. Clarke the latter is at fault.

G. S. S.