

did not say she would not try at perfection. She positively aimed at it. She wrote a little book for her young nuns in San José at Avila called the Way of Perfection. Of course we are all meant for sanctity; she knew it, and so took the necessary steps. This book admirably diagnoses the processes of her purification.

One of the enigmas of the life of Saint Teresa is her relationship with Saint John of the Cross. At first sight we might say there is no mystery. But after she met Gracián, it is to him that she turns and not to Saint John. True, that every time she mentions him, she calls him a saint; yet, as the author remarks, 'They were made both to understand and not to understand each other.' Saint John was nervous of contact with the world, nervous of friendship. Saint Teresa took all these things in her stride. He was distressed by her repeated raptures; she tried to hide them, but she took all that the good God gave her. However, to say as the author does that Saint John is a tortured mind is completely to misunderstand this serene and seraphic saint. Saint John was too rational to make allowances for the femininity of his friend's form of holiness. I venture to guess that Saint John was the only man Saint Teresa found she could not boss. She did not try. He refused to be fussed like P. Gracián, refused to be coaxed. He did the unpardonable thing of destroying her letters to him. He loved them too much. That gives us some inkling of the depth of his veneration for her.

In this biography there is insight into character, noble writing, exciting writing; there is a story to tell and it gets told with gusto. That lovely city of Avila lives in one's imagination again, that perfect Christian medieval city, the city of the saints with its mighty walls, its fortress cathedral, the sleeping Dominican friary of Santo Thomas in the valley below, and not far away the convent of the Incarnation. Segovia, too, with its cool cathedral dominated by its lofty tower, from which one looked down onto the patio of one of Teresa's convents. Spain, the land of heroes and of saints, lives again in these pages, with its fierce winter winds and its fiercer summer heat. It has not changed, and there will be saints travelling its roads and praying in its quiet cloister at this very hour, and to the crack of doom, so please su Majestad. . . .

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STUDIES IN SANCTITY. By Sheila Kaye-Smith. (Cassell; 15s.)

The first impression produced by these studies of four holy people—three canonised: St Catherine of Genoa, St Rose of Lima, St Teresa of Lisieux; one uncanonised: Mother Cornelia Connelly—is that of ground already well worked over which has borne by now most of the hagiographical fruit it is likely to give us. First impressions are wrong in this case, as so often, for Miss Kaye-Smith has brought new methods to bear and from these studies we can obtain fresh light on a number of problems

connected with the women she studies with evident sympathy and understanding.

St Rose of Lima, though for English people she can scarcely be made into an attractive figure, appears at least as someone more human than she is usually depicted, and St Catherine of Genoa emerges against her background realistically and as a person instead of the inhuman caricature of a saint so frequently encountered. St Teresa of Lisieux and Cornelia Connelly bring us nearer our times and for that reason perhaps nearer our comprehension. Yet what, it may be asked, is there left to say about St Teresa? This section of the book, in fact, shows clearly that a very great deal remains to be said and that it is worth saying. So seemingly small a point as the translation of the French word *petit* (often on St Teresa's lips) is an illustration of the new light this study can throw on what has so far been taken for granted. Much has been made of the idea of littleness ('Little Flower', 'little way', etc.) and in reading some appreciations of the saint one comes away with an impression of an almost pathological pettiness. Miss Kaye-Smith gives good grounds for thinking that *petit* as used by St Teresa often (though not always, of course) means what is ordinary or general. The great penances of a St Rose of Lima are not for *petites âmes*—ordinary folk—and St Teresa's so-called little way is the ordinary way for souls in contrast with the higher flights of a more rarefied mysticism. 'There are aristocrats in the kingdom of God, but there are also the common people—*les petits*, in fact. For these she has found a little way to heaven and provided a map in the story of her life.' (p. 187.) St Teresa's call 'is to the average man, who in our day exists for the first time as a real person instead of a statistical calculation. She calls him even to be a saint.'

These studies are full of illuminating, penetrating remarks. Occasionally a phrase, an image jars: 'she had challenged the divine eagle to swoop on its prey' (p. 59). But the four women here presented are made not only living figures but are shown as significant in and for this post-Christian century.

No reader, it is to be hoped, will skip the final essay on the nature of sanctity. There is much in it for discussion and a short notice of this kind cannot attempt to do so, but can touch on only one point of importance. Very properly Miss Kaye-Smith faces the question of the 'abnormal' occurrences in the lives of the saints and is not afraid to say that 'we must face the fact that a certain type of holiness is often, indeed usually, associated with some kind of psycho-physical disturbance'. It is a pity that the upholders of a charismatic interpretation of most cases of stigmata and other allied extraordinary phenomena appear unable to see that the imputation of such disturbances carries with it no accusation of moral failing. Moral responsibility is not involved at all. It cannot be

said too often that extraordinary phenomena are not necessarily a sign of sanctity though they are sometimes its accompaniment; an attitude which emphasises them out of all relation to their proper place leads only to an unhealthy and erroneous miraculism. Miss Kaye-Smith's approach to these problems and others which are to be encountered in the lives of the women she is dealing with is wholly to be commended, even when we disagree with some of her conclusions. LANCELOT C. SHEPPARD

## NOTICES

SHEED AND WARD have produced new editions of two of their most useful books, among the host of such works for which English Catholics should be constantly grateful. COMMUNISM AND MAN by Mr Sheed in its 30th thousand comes out in a cheap edition—3s. 6d. for two hundred well-stocked pages. The communist tackles human suffering on his own level; Sheed shows how the Christian should tackle the same problem from a divine standpoint. Mgr Knox's THE BELIEF OF CATHOLICS (10s. 6d.) has been a standard work of its kind for twenty-five years, the sort of book one can most safely put into the hands of a non-Catholic enquirer. This is the fourth and revised edition.

Two new books of Theresian spirituality are TO LOVE AND TO SUFFER (by Mère Amabel du Coeur de Jésus. Mercier Press; 12s. 6d.) and CHRISTIAN SIMPLICITY IN ST THERÈSE (a series of articles reprinted from *Sicut Parvuli*, edited by Michael Day, with a foreword by Mgr Vernon Johnson. Burns Oates; 9s. 6d.). The first, written by a Carmelite, will probably prove specially valuable for Carmelites. The second relates St Thérèse's teaching to the Fathers, Scripture, St Thomas, St John of the Cross, etc.; the parallels are often interesting, but sometimes they are, like the style of the book, strained: 'Whoever reads *The Story of a Soul* attentively and meditates diligently upon the doctrine of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus will be struck by an amazing resemblance, both intimate and profound, between "little" Thérèse and the "great" Doctor of the Church, St Thomas Aquinas.'

PSYCHOLOGY FOR ALL, by Fr Dempsey, O.F.M.CAP. (Mercier Press; 6s.) is a series of eight lectures which were given to first-year undergraduates at University College, Cork. Without attempting to go very deep, Fr Dempsey has many wise things to say, and an attractive way of putting them.

THE LATE PHILIP LLOYD, who was Bishop of St Albans, was widely read in the 'spiritual classics' such as Mother Julian of Norwich's Revelations; but he was primarily a meditator on the Bible. READINGS FROM THE PSALMS (Mowbrays; 5s.) contains the fruits of this dual meditation on some verses of the Psalter as he prayed it in the Book of Common Prayer. They contain a simple and straightforward devotion, such as we should expect from such sources.