

Because of their authenticity and their enormous variety the contemporary drawings serve to convey the social background of the saint's work in every aspect—and this more succinctly and directly than words could. Thus, without having to sketch in the historical setting, the author is free to devote himself to a concise account of St Vincent's life followed up by a brief but valuable assessment of the significance of his incredible achievements.

Incredible they certainly were. One had known of the much-publicised work for the sick, the poor, foundlings, galley slaves, convicts, and the lasting organizations for their relief set in motion by St Vincent through his genius for administration, and his remarkable ascendancy over the influential people of his time. But much less well known, and here rightly emphasized, is his work in reanimating a demoralised clergy who were in his own words, 'The principal cause of the ruin of the Church'. This was done first by preached retreats for ordinands, succeeded by regular reunions so that he could 'confer with them regarding the virtues and practice of their ministry'. Later, he was instrumental in re-organizing training for the priesthood—one farsighted measure being the separating of major and minor seminaries. Yet another innovation in the spiritual field was the organizing of missions to all classes of society.

In the final chapter M. Daniel-Rops considers the saint's exceptional achievement, underlining the fact that his undertakings always arose out of requests, and were never instituted on his own initiative, so that he is very much the saint of his day, raised up by providence for the special needs of the Church in his time. The point is also made that much twentieth-century admiration springs from a misconception of his enterprises as mere philanthropic ventures, without the recognition that all were animated by his ardent love for God, that he was, in fact, a saint and not a humanitarian.

Within its unpretentious limits this is an attractive book, but perhaps its most valuable feature is the little collection of wise and pithy sayings of St Vincent on the last pages. It is these that reveal the essentials of his spirituality and one could wish more had been included.

M. URSULA, I.B.V.M.

THE SAINTS IN HISTORY, by Mary Cousins. TELL ME ABOUT PRAYER, by Mary Cousins. TO WIN THEIR CROWN, by Douglas Lord; Geoffrey Chapman, 10s. 6d. each.

ST MARTIN, by Edith Delomare. ST NICHOLAS, by Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache. ST AGNES, by Louise André-Délastre. Translated by Rosemary Sheed; Cassell, 8s 6d. each.

Church history sounds a daunting subject for the young. Heresies, and the development of Christian ideas and institutions is not what most parents would light on for the next birthday present. But *The Saints in History* makes the

whole subject enthralling by portraying vividly the men and women who shaped the development of the Church, its life and its ideas. It begins with Philip the Deacon, includes Athanasius, Basil, Boniface, Ignatius, Vincent de Paul, Thérèse Martin, and ends with the Italian-American Frances Cabrini. The vigour and directness of the style match its subject. These are real people, and they mean something to us. For slightly younger children, *Tell me about Prayer* by the same author introduces various aspects (rosary and pilgrimages as well as vocal prayer and meditation) of the business of learning to know God and worship him. Each chapter makes its point with a good story from some saint's life. The illustrations are too 'young' for the book, though pleasant in themselves. *To win their Crown* tells the stories of some of the Forty Martyrs through the eyes of children who were, or might have been, there. The method is successful and convincing, and should help children to see the martyrs as people instead of abstractions. The writing is not as accomplished as that of Miss Cousins, but it is quite adequate. The drawings are straightforward and vigorous, by the same artist who illustrates *The Saints in History*. In both cases the illustrations are less mature than the text.

The three saints who get a book each in this new series (impeccably translated) are disentangled from their legends with determination and erudition. When it rapidly becomes apparent that little remains, the legends are re-presented, in their historical context, together with their authors (if any) and those who made use of them or elaborated them. The history of the developing legend, its setting and the motives of its creators, is fascinating, but fails to convince that it really assists an understanding of the saint. (So many legends are only accidentally attached to a particular saint, but arise from a local need.) St Martin of Tours comes off best because there is more real history to unearth, and this book is the most satisfying of the three. St Agnes is portrayed with infectious enthusiasm, and her admirers make up a worthwhile book. That on St Nicholas (of Myra) suffers a little from coyness. These are not children's books, though older children might enjoy them. The dust-jackets, with their superficial uniformity and detailed differences, provide a nice little puzzle. I haven't solved it yet.

ROSEMARY HAUGHTON

CROSS AND CRUCIFIX, by C. E. Pocknee; Mowbrays, 21s.

The chief value of this book to the non-specialist lies in the illustrations, which are designed to show the gradual development of the cross as a theological concept and as a visual symbol over the centuries. The principal emphasis is on the early and medieval period, though some attention is paid to post-reformation Anglican practice in the use of the cross and crucifix in churches. The earliest example of a realistic (i.e. suffering, not triumphant) crucifixion pictured is dated 780, and the reader is made legitimately aware of the strength of the