

to use again the words of her own apologia, 'they (her "memoirs") were never intended for publication—or they would have been more discreet . . . '—which one can easily believe, but would have regretted! The whole volume makes a curious *mélange*; yet it achieves an undoubted balance. For instance, the contacts between this unusual and evidently 'psychic' child and the shades of her beloved ancestors are somewhat startling. Indeed, at least in so far as that element in the narrative is concerned, this child's book is not a book for children. But that is only one facet of this literary gem. There is such a wealth of imagery, such an appreciation of the beautiful and the dramatic, such repeated examples of fine descriptive prose and restrained artistry, that the authenticity of the 'memoirs' might be in doubt were it not supported by the occasional blatant *cliché* and the wholly youthful reactions and vitality which appear.

Joan Penelope is the daughter of an ancient Catholic family (wherefore the incident of the automatic writing is odd), and lived for the most of her twelve years in the lovely Jacobean house called *Bramshill*, until financial difficulties in the family necessitated a (for Joan) tragic removal. Her naïve pride of race and her deep appreciation of *Bramshill*, combined with the grief of severance from her home and all it meant for her, moved the youthful author to use her many remarkable nascent gifts in producing this unique record of child memories. The publishers and others responsible have wisely left the original manuscript entirely untouched. They have been even wiser in letting Joan Penelope not only illustrate the volume, but also design the cover, the title and contents pages, and the chapter headings. Her artistic taste and her draughtsmanship are as remarkable as her literary excellence. We wonder what this child will become?

HILARY J. CARPENTER, O.P.

PROVENCE. From *Minstrels to the Machine*. By Ford Madox Ford, LL.D. Illustrations by Biala. (Allen and Unwin; 12s. 6d.)

This is a guide-book to a country which Mr. Ford Madox Ford's life experience has brought him to identify as Europe's Garden of Eden. A guide-book in the active sense, for its purpose is to start a migration to that paradise or at least to induce us—*i.e.*, the rest of Europe—to become Provençal by desire. Perhaps never since Moses waved the children of Israel on into Canaan has a prophet been so advantageously placed for the

framing of a colourful manifesto. The artist that F.M.F. is has lost nothing of the opportunity.

The argument is largely presented in terms of history; only of history which is in good part imaginary, the reflection of a certain perverse mood which perhaps alone prevented the writing of a masterpiece. In her full title, *Provincia Romana*, the essential glory of Provence is already expressed. For she alone among the countries of Europe was destined to assimilate the full virtue of Latin civilisation, of which she has continued until the present day to be the perfect representative and model. Throughout the Dark Ages, with the rest of Europe given up to war and superstition, she carried on her work, secure in her walled cities where the aristocracy cultivated thought and the fine arts and laid the foundations of chivalry while the plebs furnished fruit and vegetables from their tilling of the slopes and adjacent country and practised all the intermediate handicrafts in a spirit of perfect harmony and continuity with the higher culture. And it was all sufficiently Christian, especially if Christianity can fairly be described as 'the distillation of the Mediterranean spirits of Judaism and Hellenism.' Until, an interpretation of heresy having been put upon a certain gentle scepticism and rational latitudinarianism that had gradually been provoked in them by the consideration of the barbarities of official religion, they had to endure the crusade of St. Dominic and De Montfort, the real motive-force of which was the hatred which the half-civilised mind feels for a way of life that is not one of self-torture. Yet they survived, as they also survived the attempt made by St. Louis to dissolve them into an imperial compound of a United France—the first assault of the spirit of mass-production. The golden age that arrived under the rule of the Popes at Avignon (F.M.F. forbears to be harsh about St. Catherine) and continued during the legendiferous reign of Good King René can be taken to symbolize the Triumph of Provence, the glorious fact that it is her culture which can now be seen to have been responsible for all that has been part of the true civilisation of Europe.

The life-giving centre of Europe then is Provence, with which France being in closest communion is thereby saved. (Italy perhaps is to be regarded as an inferior civilisation of the same stock. But F.M.F. must surely be finding a deep significance in this recent move upon Nice which lies very near to Provence.) We of the North, however, are steadily losing the grace we formerly enjoyed by participation in that culture, by a sharing in the Provençal virtues of a fruitful love of the earth, of a fru-

gality of spirit, an industrious craftsmanly frame of mind, of a capacity for joy and love and contemplative thought, and for the practice of the arts. All that is still alive in us yearns towards the South—if it only knew it—but is thwarted by inhuman forces of Science and fog-ridden moralistic Christianity working in collaboration with our diabolical climate. Look at that statue of Eros in Piccadilly Circus—no, you will not be able to see it for the glare of advertisements recommending bile-beans. London, the most Christ-conscious city of the world—but it is a phantom figure of Christ looming through the fog and rain with which it is haunted. And indeed it *is* perhaps very significant that a procession of the Salvation Army stationing itself in some square at Arles or Tarascon is an unbearable image. Under such skies it is so hard to think that the temptation arises either to vegetate or to resort to the mass-produced thought that comes from Germany; so hard to find suitable diet for the body that one is tempted into mere grossness or else to feed out of tins or out of the hands of scientists. Clubs, arm-chairs, potted meats, indigestion, intolerance, envy—there is no end to the list of evils.

As a guide to the world of Provence this is a superb book, a rich, joyous, learned work of art. As a moral, social essay, its Pied Piping is entirely in the right direction, but its value has been seriously impaired by a mood of irresponsibility. It is not for the Troubadour to engage directly in theological, any more than in economic spade-work operations. But he must not hinder those others whose painful duty it is to do so. Mr. Ford Madox Ford, however, loyal Papist although he means to be, has not seemed to mind if in his gambolling he has embroiled quite a fair number of fundamental Christian principles. He has carried his sympathy for the Provençal Troubadours to the naughty length of playing at being himself some sort of semi-pelagian. This is unfair to his readers; it is to court the risk of being put on the Index!

RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

THE TRIPLE THINKERS. By Edmund Wilson. (Oxford University Press; 10s. 6d.)

Mr. Edmund Wilson's new book opens with an attractive account of the author's meeting with the late Paul Elmer More, who, with Professor Irving Babbitt, was one of the intellectual leaders of the elder generation in America.

'A man of true spiritual vocation,' writes Mr. Wilson, 'unable to remain a simple rationalist but prevented by a Protestant