

REVIEWS

Problem. The author shows how the process of dechristianization had gone on beneath the official externals of Catholicism, how the apostasy of the masses had revealed itself "as an irremediable *fait accompli* in the eyes of the rare apostles of social Catholicism, who were not understood, and were even attacked as suspects by important elements in the conservative classes who relied more on police intervention than on the application of Christian social principles, and stigmatized as a dangerous revolutionary anyone who allowed himself to recall to the rich their duty towards the poor."

If the author, as Maritain writes, "has a devouring passion—and is he not a Spaniard?—it is a passion for justice and truth." There is nowhere, here, anything but the deepest spirit of sympathy and pity; and if there were nothing else than this for which to thank the author it would be more than enough. The Pope may denounce journalistic bitterness and the spirit of partisanship; we know how little his words have availed. Whether or not one agree with all the judgments here so soberly made; whether or not one agree with M. Maritain's discussion of principles in his preface—and he has seldom written anything finer—nothing but good can come to the soul from a humble reading of this book. It is, indeed, for anyone anxious to know real facts, anxious to get at the so elusive truth, indispensable. One can but hope that an English translation may be arranged as soon as possible.

The bulk of what Professor Mendizabal here publishes was written before the outbreak of July 1936; if the spirit which animates this study had been in those years more widespread there would not now be so much sorrow, and so much evil, upon the earth.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

POETRY

POEMS By Eileen Duggan: with an Introduction by Walter de la Mare. (Allen & Unwin; 5s.)

Given the gift, you would say that a poet was bound to remove, as far as he could, all impediments to his vocation. A certain austerity of life and thought, preserved in the interest of and on the lines laid down by his calling, will almost inevitably find itself rewarded by a corresponding rarity, freshness, originality and sincerity in his work; and this, I imagine, accounts for the impulse and inspiration, as well as (in their degree) for the artistry and technique of Miss Eileen Duggan's *Poems*. This slender first book by the Catholic poetess of New Zealand, acclaimed by the happily converging enthusiasm of Father Martindale and Walter de la Mare, is at once a triumph and an augury. The Faith whose unduly complicated or narrow-minded

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practice has been accused—not always unjustly—of cold-shouldering the muses and graces; the new country hitherto so shy of claiming her share—to spend as she likes—of the English literary inheritance, have combined to produce a singer spontaneous and disciplined, who is certain of a permanent place in the annals of both.

It is impossible in a short notice to introduce Eileen Duggan worthily—still less possible to appraise her. Her beautiful, valiant poetry must speak for itself. She is so brave—with a touch of drollery—under hardship:

“I was driving the cows and the frogs were soothsaying,
‘Woe, land and water! All, all is lost!’

It was winter full grown and my bones were black in me.
The tussocks were brittle from dew into frost.”

She is so grateful for small alleviations and uncostly loveliness; and always to Him

“Who in the gleaming winter
Puts a white tabard on the wandering hare.”

She is so homelier with the homelier and less uniformly creditable saints. She can sing, even of St. Peter:

“I smile for that warm, simple tongue,
So quick, so breathless to begin,
That snubbed and silenced o’er and o’er
Could never lock its wonder in.”

She is so exultant, in the great Elizabethan manner, when magnificence comes her way:

“Now are the bells unlimbered from their spires
In every steeple-loft from pole to pole:
The four winds wheel and blow into this gate,
And every wind is wet with carillons.
The two Americas at eagle-height,
The pure, abstracted Himalayan chimes,
Great ghosts of clappers from the Russian fries,
And sweet, wind-sextoned tremblers from Cathay;
The bells of Ireland, jesting all the way,
The English bells, slow-bosomed as a swan,
The queenly, weary din of Notre Dame,
And the Low Countries ringing back the sea.
Then Spain, the Moor still moaning through the saint,
The frosty, fiery bells of Germany,
And on before them, baying, sweeping down,
The heavy, joyful pack of thunder-jowls
That tongue hosannas from the leash of Rome—”

But hers is, at last, the ultimate tenacity of faith:

“The faith of a willow in winter,
Or a blind hound nosing the knee”

—a more than Wordsworthian range of mysticism and a humanism that is all her own.

HELEN PARRY EDEN.