

REVIEWS

THE HIGH HISTORY OF ST. BENEDICT AND HIS MONKS. Collated by a monk of Douai Abbey. (Sands & Co., 15s.)

As an anthology, with no particular relation between the pieces except unity of subject, this is an attractive book. It brings together in one volume passages from the Rule, St. Gregory's Dialogues, St. Bede and Alban Butler, with one or two extracts from the monastic breviary, the Golden Legend, Blossius, Mabillon and Weldon (whom, incidentally, a compiler's addition might lead the unfamiliar to post-date considerably). But the compiler had presumably some plan for the work as a whole, and the title, despite its archaism, suggests as much. If there was a plan, it has completely escaped one reader. It is, for example, disconcerting to be led from the cave at Subiaco, through St. Augustine and the English mission, to Fr. Sigebert Buckley and the modern houses, only to return by way of a short passage on the sixteenth century to Honoratus of Funda; to find that SS. Dunstan, Anselm, John of Beverley and Wulstan follow; to discover that St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Romuald, Eleutherius the monk, St. John Gualbert, and St. Edmund Rich occur, in that order, between the vocation of St. Bernard and the death of St. Benedict, also in that order, and that the life of St. Cuthbert is the last thing in the book. There seems no reason why it should not be read more or less at random.

A. E. H. SWINSTEAD.

THE LIFE OF FRANCIS OF ASSISI IN SILHOUETTES. By Sister Fides Shepperson, Ph.D. (Radio Replies Press, St. Paul, U.S.A.)

It is difficult to understand how this book came to be published by what is apparently a Catholic press. It is historically inaccurate and theologically unsound. The following extract may serve to illustrate these points, and makes comment on the style unnecessary. Had the book come from any other source there would have been no need to notice it.

'A white-foot mouse slid out from Francis' sleeve; it stood still fascinated with terror at sight of the cat. Cruel desire glinted in the yellow eyes till they turned upon Francis: then they changed. The cat could not kill in his presence. She turned and walked away with grace and dignity. "Farewell, Cleopatra!" said Francis. "Go on in the upward way thro' your allotted purgatorial cycle; and stand at last all purified and unafraid at the *Judgment of the Dead* in the Hall of Osiris. Farewell, little sister, may we meet again some day in God's good explanation in that Land of the Double Truth." The big cat turned and looked knowingly at Francis ere she was lost in a great leap up a tree.'

It should perhaps be added that there is no Imprimatur.

A. R.