

THE ELIZABTHANS. By Allardyce Nicoll. (Cambridge Univ. Press: 25s.)

More than one hundred and forty authentic pictures, which include portraits, maps, engravings, and photographs of furniture, implements of war and household appliances, supported by about twice as many passages from Elizabethan writers of every sort, have gone to the making of this fine book. Every aspect of Elizabethan life is brought vividly before the mind and the eye, while the brief introductions to each section and the scholarly notes are all that they should be. This is a delightful and refreshing approach to everyday life in Shakespeare's England, and without being above the heads of even the younger readers will interest the scholar as well. Only in the section on the Church does the introductory matter fall below a very high standard. Here the impression produced is false and even fatuous. In 1559 the Catholic bishops 'vacated' their sees—a colourless word that hides the truth that they were deprived, and for the most part kept in durance till death, either in the common prisons or in the more humiliating custody of their supplanters. Mary Tudor had 'steeped her hands in protestant blood', but Elizabeth was 'determined on another policy'. Because no martyrs were made in the early years of her reign we are supposed to infer that there was no persecution. Apparently only papists and puritans forced men 'to bow to their particular creeds'. 'Jesuit priests made it part of their faith to seek her destruction.' 'After looking at the martyr-anxious eyes of catholic fanatics and the hard, bitter gaze of the puritan bigots, it is good to turn to the more measured mien of some among Elizabeth's distinguished bishops.' This is sorry stuff and quite unworthy of an otherwise excellent book.

GODFREY ANSTRUTHER, O.P.

HENRY MORSE. By Philip Caraman. (Longmans; 18s.)

The meagre details that survive concerning all but a handful of the English martyrs are inadequate for full-length biographies. Although many of them must have led lives as exciting as those of John Gerard and Edmund Campion, the few particulars that have come down to us convey little sense of individuality. There is a sameness about their education, their ministry, and even their martyrdoms, and more often than not there is little else that can be discovered. Henry Morse would have been of this number had it not been for his heroic work for the plague-stricken of London in the terrible epidemic of 1635-6. Fr Caraman rightly makes this the core of his book, for it is a thrilling, absorbing story that should be far better known. With copious contemporary illustrations and quotations the sufferings of the poor in the narrow squalid streets and overcrowded houses are vividly portrayed, as well as the devoted work of Henry Morse and his fellow-martyr John Southworth. There is much else of interest, and our