

Italian girl, never likely to be a candidate for canonisation, who, when she lost the power of seeing with her eyes, saw as clearly as before with the tip of her nose and the lobe of her left ear, and whose sense of smell was later transferred to the insteps of her feet (p. 336), and the other who after going without food for many years fainted at the smell of a piece of toast (p. 127).

Father Crehan has performed his task of editing unobtrusively, and it is certainly valuable that these very dispassionate investigations should be brought together in book form and made readily available to the public.

GERARD SITWELL, O.S.B.

MEDIEVAL LOGIC. An outline of its development from 1250-1400. By Philotheus Boehner. (Manchester University Press; 12s. 6d.)

'Everything of importance has been said before by somebody who did not discover it.' Hutchinson Stirling said that before, though not so tersely as Whitehead; and he added that we should have found 'something quite else' in the earlier writer's words, before the insight of the real discoverer had made the discovery overt. Fr Boehner is among those who think that medieval logicians really did anticipate the discoveries of the last hundred years. His title is misleading; for what he is writing about, the new elements contributed to logic by medieval writers, is not in the tradition that survived, but was soon completely forgotten—it had to be rediscovered recently—and it left few traces.

These 'new elements' are discussions of certain points that began to be considered important in Fr Boehner's period. Those he treats most fully are *syncategoremata*, *suppositiones* and *consequentiae*. It is his contention that the development of these discussions marks the gradual discovery that logic should be and is completely 'formal', so abstract and generalised that it can be written entirely in symbols. To exhibit this he often writes symbols where his medievals had clumsy Latin; the wonder is that it was done at all, like a woman's preaching or a dog's standing on its hind legs.

A treatment of *suppositiones* still survives in scholastic logic with, so far as I know, no indication why it is thought important for logic; Fr Boehner offers no explanation either, though he does suggest a remote analogy with something in modern logic.

Others have already shown that the *consequentiae* were the forerunners of the tautologies studied in modern logic; Fr Boehner makes a good case for the discovery that the *syncategoremata* are constants expressing logical form. And he produces a mild climax in a Los Angeles MS where syllogistics are dethroned to make room for *consequentiae*.

I do not see the importance, or even the interest, of discovering anticipators of modern logic whose work was lost from the tradition. Those who are interested may wonder, as I did, whether the author is only unused to writing English or also unable to translate the Latin. The following example is among the worst, but it occurs where three pages are spoiled by others equally bad. A false proposition is 'that which, no matter how, does not signify: It is so'. (The Latin was, *illa quae non qualitercumque significat, ita est.*)

QUENTIN JOHNSTON, O.P.

THE ALCHEMISTS. By F. Sherwood Taylor. (Heinemann; 12s. 6d.)

There has been a revival of serious interest in alchemical writings since Jung discovered evidence of archetypal patterns in them. But all interpretation must be based on a sound knowledge of the literal sense of texts, and here reliable information has not been easy to get, since most modern books on Alchemy are largely esoteric nonsense. This outline of what the alchemists themselves wrote, thought, and did is therefore very welcome. It is a small book, intended for that public which Dr Taylor has already put so much in his debt, but by concentrating on the most important texts, from which he gives many extracts, he manages to convey a clear impression of the alchemists' main ideas, while a critical bibliography simplifies the problem of further study. The twenty-five years he has spent on research in the history of Alchemy, though ensuring the reliability of his facts, have fortunately done nothing to obscure the vigour and clarity of his writing. His alchemists are plausible, and what is even more remarkable, respectable: for Dr Taylor is able to contrast them favourably with more modern scientists whose success in transmuting the elements 'has had precisely the result that the alchemists feared and guarded against, the placing of gigantic power in the hands of those who have not been fitted by spiritual training to receive it'.

L.B.

THE HERITAGE OF EARLY BRITAIN. Edited by M. P. Charlesworth and M. D. Knowles. (Bell; 12s.)

In the Lent term of 1949 a series of lectures was given at Cambridge by members of the Classical, Archaeological and History faculties presenting a picture of Early Britain from the beginnings to the coming of the Normans. In his preface to *The Heritage of Early Britain*, Professor Knowles, who as well as being part editor with the late—and much lamented—Martin Charlesworth, contributes the final essay, tells us that this book had its origin in these lectures; and adds to the conspiracy of silence which, even in the University itself, shrouds the fact that, although these particular lecturers were drawn from three