

than to the imaginative category, though sometimes he lets us feel that his classical learning is but sugar to coat his apologetic pill. Neither sugar nor pill depart notably from the tried recipes. It is all very sound, informative and edifying. English eyes, tired with War Economy print and margins on flimsy grey and yellow surfaces, will be relieved and delighted by the large type, the crisp white paper and the spacious layout of this book, and they will blink enviously at the discovery that it was produced in Paris in the last months of the German occupation. And English eyebrows may well be lifted with admiring astonishment that P. Deman could engage in these tranquil but profitable studies in those trying and turbulent times.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

AFRICAN NIGHT. By Desmond Murray, O.P. (Douglas Organ; 5s.).

Fr. Murray prefaces his profoundly interesting book with a quotation from Field-Marshal Smuts: "Race relationships are most probably the most contentious field in the whole range of human culture." Although he writes with the authority that comes from long experience of the problems of South Africa, Fr. Murray provides no easy solution to the tragedy of Black and White. Humanly speaking there is none, and *African Night*, avoiding the temptation of mere anger, gives to the English public the setting of the tragedy—that is to say he writes of men and places, and instead of generalisations he provides facts.

An intense sympathy with the native population does not lead the author to that woolly sentimentality which by-passes the real difficulties of understanding. "The mind of the Native has so far proved an insoluble problem to the White man", and Fr. Murray gives numerous proofs that this is so. The first need in considering South Africa (or anywhere else for that matter) is first-hand information—birds and flowers, climate and social institutions, as well as theoretical solutions. *African Night* is to be warmly commended as a courageous and interestingly-written contribution to a vital question. It will be of value to all those who are concerned for the Church's missionary work, and in particular for the work of the English Dominican Province in South Africa.

J.H.

THE WAR AND THE VATICAN. By Camille M. Cianfarra. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne; 10s. 6d.).

Mr. Cianfarra, *New York Times* Correspondent in Rome, gives us a very readable account of Vatican diplomacy during the war. His book is one that will do much (if it reaches an extensive non-Catholic opinion) to dispel the colossal ignorance and superstition still prevalent in Britain about the Roman Pontiff and the Holy See. Many of the scenes and events graphically described by the author (e.g. Balbo's last adventure) are already well known to war-time readers. We are not regaled by "sensational revelations." (Why should we be? We have been nauseated by these sickly substitutes for the truth for over six years). We are given straight history—made straight by way of the Vatican's clear view of the world and affairs, (such a view as you will get from no other hill-top).

The book, if it had no other value, would serve a purpose as a good all-round outline of the events of the past decade. As it is, it possesses the greater merit of showing forth the Holy Father as a man after the heart of all men of good will, and of demonstrating beyond dispute that the Vatican has been first in the fight "for moral and spiritual values, whether defined by Catholics, Protestants or Jews, with all the vigour and wisdom at its command."

I have one complaint only. Whereas the author is at pains to prove (as he does, conclusively) the strict impartiality of the Pope towards his children in war-time, while being "in favour of an Anglo-Saxon victory", he does not seem to stress equally the Papal deprecation of resort to arms, the Holy Father's constant condemnation of the increasingly horrible and inhuman methods employed in modern war-waging.

J. F. T. PRINCE.

IN THE BEGINNING GOD. By H. S. Bellamy. (Faber and Faber, Ltd.; 8s. 6d.).

Mr. H. S. Bellamy is a firm believer in the re-iteration of the thesis dear to his heart: but though this new work may fascinate—as indeed it does—it will hardly win conviction. The most valuable aspect is the examination and comparison of myths from far-flung corners of the world: but "myth" loses all meaning if we

say with Mr. Bellamy that all myths are but dim and distant recollections of a factual past, even "reports of eye-witnesses." And then, Hoerbiger's cosmological theories remain, as elsewhere, the basis and mainstay of the entire book. With considerable skill and ingenuity Mr. Bellamy transposes, re-writes, adapts the text of Genesis to conform with the basic assumptions. Love's labour is well nigh lost.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

SPAIN EVERLASTING. By S. F. A. Coles. (Hollis and Carter, 18s.).

It seems to be the property of *las cosas de España* to exert an unrelenting fascination over the foreigner who once touches them. The potency of the Spanish atmosphere is so intense—it would seem—that it converts into something in conformity with itself any sensibility that approaches it to savour its peculiar quality. He who begins as a dilettante ends up a fanatic. Mr. Coles is no exception. We watch with interest the process (not progressive chronologically through the book, but active all the time) of his absorption into the Spanish esoterics—the bull fight, the cult of death, solitude and the rest. This book, like so many of its class, is not so much what its writer makes of Spain as what Spain has made of him. And that is: sympathetic (as well as simpatico), understanding, not always accurate (but how Spanish, that!), rather long-winded (again an inescapable part of the magic transmutation); but the essential qualities are present in abundance and purity: first, the hyperacute sensibility to physical atmosphere, especially that which is the effect of air, aridity and height, and whose tautness is intensified by the stony beauties of architecture; and next, an intuition of the eternal drama present in isolated fragmentary moments of human life. It is perhaps this double richness which gives its acuity to Spanish natural religion—so often confused by native and foreigner alike with the Spanish acceptance of Catholicism—which it most certainly is not.

But Mr. Coles is not untouched by another vital element in this intense and potent sensibility which is the crucible of Spanish natural theology—the feeling for race, the captivation by blood. It is to be feared that Spain more than other nations has cherished a modern cult for race, though fortunately balanced by the Spaniards' oecumenical sense, and on p. 18 and elsewhere, Mr. Coles indulges in theories that are confused and unconvincing. But despite his over-identification with the place and people he describes, this long and pleasantly rambling travel book is always interesting and sometimes gives us his experience in the unminted gold of pure poetry. His excursion into morals is less happy, and his approval of what he alleges is the Spanish (and, astonishingly, the Jewish) attitude to adultery and, by implication, to sex irregularity in general, is justified neither by the legend he relates in chapter XXVIII nor by right reason. It is a pity that this discussion is linked with scriptural exegesis of very dubious quality, p. 117. (If it is adultery that is being condemned in the gospel text, (Matt., 5, 12) it follows that "woman"="wife", and Mr Coles exaggerates therefore the disasters that he supposes to have followed on the use of the former word. One wonders what the "original Aramaic text" of the Gospel of St. Matthew can be). As we have suggested, it is the pagan roots of Spain rather than the flower of her Christianity to which Mr. Coles' sensibility (with that of so many modern foreign observers) chiefly responds, and it is perhaps not without significance that the last two chapters of the book, in the concluding section, "At the Heart", give us first the bull-ring and then Don Quijote. It is possible to understand Spain and to learn from her inexhaustible nobility without giving equal value to these two expressions of the Spanish psyche. Mr Coles tells us that his book is "not about politics", and we may be grateful to him for keeping his word. The 32 full-size photographs are, with but one exception, beautiful. There are a number of small inaccuracies of language in the glossary and scattered through the book as well as on the confusing map which adorns the end-papers. There are more important errors of literary history on which Mr. Coles appears to follow doubtful authorities, e.g. on the subject of Cervantes' daughter. Mr. Coles' acceptance of the preaching of St. James in Spain will please the pious but not the historically-minded Spaniard. English Catholics will find the references to Dom Edmund