

BOOK REVIEWS

HISTORY OF THE POPES. By Ludwig von Pastor. Edited by R. F. Kerr. Vol. XVIII. (London: Kegan Paul, 1929; 15/- net.)

The latest volume of Pastor is, like its predecessor, devoted to the Pontificate of St. Pius the Fifth. It is packed with fact and incident, for that great Pope crowded into his brief reign of six years the work and the energy of at least a full century. The sections devoted to Philip II of Spain, to France and its religious wars, to the Empire and Switzerland, and to the foreign missions make good reading and exhibit the Pope in a more attractive light than when dealing with the Inquisition or occupied with the temporal affairs of his own States. But the main interest of the work centres in the crusade against the Turks, culminating in the great naval battle at Lepanto, which is admirably described; and in the Pontiff's Bull of Excommunication and Deposition of Queen Elizabeth, with its sad aftermath for the poor hunted Catholics of England. As to this last, the historian clearly shows with what hesitation the Pontiff made use of a purely mediaeval weapon in an age which even he recognised as one of obvious transition; and claims that he only proceeded to extremities because he was led to believe that the great body of English Catholics desired him so to act. His one wish was to encourage, rescue and help them; it was not his fault that most of his English advisers were Italianised exiles, for years past out of touch with English feeling, and ignorant of the attitude of loyalty to Elizabeth many of their co-religionists at home had now adopted. Perhaps under the circumstances the Pope could not have done otherwise than he did, certainly he had the best and purest intentions. That he was unwittingly inaugurating for his beloved English children a new and long era of fresh tyranny and terrible religious persecution was mercifully hidden from him.

R. B.

THE LIFE OF MARGARET AYLWARD, Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Faith. By Margaret Gibbons. (Sands & Co.; 16/- net.)

The publishers' advertisement states that the story of Margaret Aylward 'sums up in some sort the history of Catholic Emancipation.' As such it is certainly one of the biographies which should have been given to the public in this centenary year, but it is a pity a more discriminating writer has not been