

## BLACKFRIARS

the end which Destiny has agreed upon. He closes his work by saying that 'War is a God-appointed instrument to teach wisdom to the foolish and righteousness to the evil-minded.'

There is much in this last sentence that might be pondered over by serious-minded Catholics. Prominence, of late, has been given in the press to the expressions of eminent politicians and divines who voice the vital necessity for a real spiritual uplift from all classes in a combined effort to try and solve some of the grave perils that now beset the world.

A study of works like the one under review should be a help and enlightenment to all those who hold similar views and who seek from a study of past events material to circumvent future perils. If we are to believe, as well we may, that lack of wisdom has been ever one of the main causes for the scourge of war, then ultimately its abolition may well come from a better understanding of spiritual values, and from a greater knowledge of the Almighty giver of wisdom.

'For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom. For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars; being compared with the light, she is found before it. For after this cometh night, but no evil can overcome wisdom.'

General Fuller may not subscribe directly to these sentiments, yet he echoes their substance when he refers to the spiritual decay of modern times and to this age as one of saurian materialism. A thinking soldier and a broad-minded writer, he discerns the truth also when he writes 'I stand before magic, yet I see little of God.'

T.M.B.A.

DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS. By Harold J. Laski. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.; 7/6.)

'Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.'

Thus the poet, and thus, too, Professor Laski. But he goes further than the poet, for he thinks he knows what the remedy will be, namely a socialised state; and in this book he proceeds to discuss the results of a Socialist victory at the polls. What will be the reaction of Capitalism, personified in the privileged class, to such a victory? In discussing this subject, the author wisely draws a distinction between what should occur, and what is likely to occur. Human beings should act in all things according to reason, but very often they fail to do so, allowing themselves to be drawn now this way, now that way by their passions.

## REVIEWS

But why has Democracy declined? Prof. Laski suggests that the crisis is 'essentially a crisis of authority and discipline,' 'the power to secure obedience to its principles has decreased, because men increasingly refuse to accept its ends as obviously just.' Democracy is the creation of Capitalism; it has been created by the privileged class, who have very naturally fostered it in such a manner as to maintain their privileged position. There has been political equality, of a sort, but not economic equality; and Democracy necessarily requires both kinds of equality. There has been no revolution as yet, because capitalist democracy has been able to secure its own continued existence by buying off the opposition with increases of social services, etc. But this has to be continued if it is to survive, and it needs but the necessary combination of circumstances to set light to the train of powder.

But will a Socialist victory at the polls stir up a capitalist revolution? It seems to depend very largely on the policy that the Socialists then pursue. Prof. Laski says that they will be compelled to follow a vigorous Socialistic policy; but elsewhere he remarks that 'the right of the majority to rule is subject always to the necessity that it does not outrage the feelings of the minority, for in that event the latter is tolerably certain to fight in defence of its position.' If we accept this statement, a revolution would seem to be inevitable.

On the whole, however, the author is perhaps inclined to take a slightly gloomy aspect of the future of Democracy, and he under-rates the Englishman's love of a compromise. Capitalism has already commenced to compromise with Socialism. Why should it not continue to do so? In such a case the transition would be gradual, and the will of the minority would be gradually brought into line with that of the majority. Above all, before the whole system of society is changed, it must be ascertained, in some way, that it is the real will of the majority, and not merely the temporary reaction from some passion-stirring event.

As a side-line to this discussion Prof. Laski raises the absorbingly interesting problem of the efficiency of a democratic government. In order to attain any degree of efficiency at all, the cabinet must be the power-possessing body, but even the cabinet is influenced in its action by countless factors—the next general election, the personality of its component members and their subordination to the Exchequer. Efficiency is only really secured by a Dictatorship. Many other questions of interest are discussed in this book, which is certainly up to the high standard set by the author's previous publications.

F. A. K. B.

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Reports from Berlin of the extensive Nazi 'purge' of contemporary German literature has aroused doubts whether any will survive. A subscription to Fr. Muckermann's 'monthly review of poetry and life,' *Der Gral* (Munich: Kösel und Pustet, RM. 1.50 monthly), should prove reassuring. Besides the more widely advertised work of the Zweigs, Kästners, Baums and Feuchtwangers, there is a vigorous literature which is at once more authentically German and genuinely Catholic. Fr. Muckermann is already known to our readers as the founder of the cinema information bureau which bears his name. He contributes a fine article to the current issue of his review on the Church Militant, which outlines the dogmatic principles on which all such enterprises of Catholic Action rest. Heinrich Gregor contributes a study of the *Physiognomik* of Piccard and Kassner, an attractive if bizarre philosophy born of photographic portraiture. There are studies of Hugo Ball and Heinrich Federer, and Daniel Rops' remarkable article on 'The Young Catholics of France' appears simultaneously in *Der Gral* and *The Dublin Review*. Fr. Muckermann writes with insight and discrimination on the burning topic of the 'New Nationalism,' and there is an abundance of information and criticism of contemporary German art and letters. It is a review emphatically to be recommended to all who wish to keep in touch with German culture and Catholicism. BLACKFRIARS will keep readers informed from time to time of outstanding contributions to this and other German Catholic periodicals. V.W.

THE RHYTHM OF STERILITY AND FERTILITY IN WOMEN. By Leo J. Latz, A.B., B.S., M.D. (Chicago: Latz Foundation, 1222 Republic Building; \$1.)

THE STERILE PERIOD IN FAMILY LIFE. By Valère J. Coucke and James J. Walsh, M.D., Pt.D. (New York: Wagner. London: Herder; 4/-.)

The conclusions of two distinguished specialists, Dr. K. Ogino of Niigata, and Dr. H. Knaus of Graz, regarding a recurring period of sterility in women, have aroused great interest among Catholics, particularly in America and Central Europe. They are based on statistics and direct observation, and explained by the *corpus luteum* theory. But although corroborated by other scientific workers in the same field, present medical opinion is not agreed on their force. Dr. Latz gives a simple account of the physiological, practical and ethical aspects of the question. His little book is published with ecclesiastical approbation. In collaboration with Dr. J. J. Walsh, Canon Coucke, Professor of Moral Theology, at the *Grand Séminaire*