

Trapp family life. And what a fine idea it is that a good Catholic family should provide the background for the presentation in a contemporary way of the story of the Holy Family. The 'yesterday' of the title is the life of our Lord, 'today' is how a present-day family finds its domestic and personal inspiration in that life, 'forever' is the communion of the family saints.

Mrs Trapp's approach to her subject is scholarly; she consults reliable sources. Mrs Parkinson Keyes also approaches her subject in a scholarly way and she, too, consults sources. They both write from the point of view of a mother, and in Mrs Parkinson Keyes' case, of a grandmother. The latter is appropriate in a tribute to St Anne. The two writers, however, differ notably on a crucial point. Mrs Trapp dismisses our Lady's parents briefly. 'We don't know anything about the parents of the Blessed Mother', she writes, 'but tradition has it that their names were Joachim and Anna.' Mrs Parkinson Keyes devotes a large, richly-illustrated and exquisitely-written, volume to the life story of St Anne.

Mrs Parkinson Keyes finds St Anne so much more human than her gloriously-exalted daughter. 'Of course', she concedes, 'in one sense, Mary was a human being, too; but her Immaculate Conception, her virgin motherhood and her glorious Assumption set her apart from other human beings, whereas there is nothing about St Anne that does.' The sources Mrs Parkinson Keyes uses sound impressive—the 'lost' gospels and legend. Charming but hardly convincing. The account of the traditional and now world-wide veneration of St Anne and the descriptions of her chief shrines are most interesting, and the pictures are delightful.

Mrs Trapp has also something to say on ghosts, a propos of some reflections on purgatory. 'Isn't it true', she asks, 'that all over the world, people will come flocking when you announce you are going to tell a ghost story? There seems to be an inmost interest in the world beyond the grave.' Sir Shane Leslie's *Ghost Book* underlines this interest and here we have someone telling us the ghost stories he has collected during a long lifetime. They are mainly 'Catholic' ghost stories. Some are more blood-chilling than others, but all of them are interesting, even if not always quite convincing.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

THE ANACREONTA. Translated into English verse by P. M. Pope. (Bowes and Bowes; 10s. 6d.)

The translator has set himself to present in a modern idiom virtually the whole *Anacreonta*, with one or two of Anacreon's own poems and a few epitaphs on the poet. The first problem in such an undertaking is to discover rhythms which reflect faithfully the mood of the original;

and it is here, I think, that most doubts will arise about this translation. The metres of the *Anacreonta* are simple and obvious, but evidently had, throughout the long period of compilation, the air of being appropriate to the themes of love and wine; and to employ in English simple and obvious metres may be dangerous, because of their associations with comic verse; for the *Anacreonta*, though light, are not comic. There is to my mind a considerable number of passages in these versions where the verse-form either provokes inappropriate echoes, or else by its sheer bounciness suggests a triviality or glibness foreign to the original, even though the verbal translation may be accurate. I would not suggest that all, or even most, of the versions have this fault; but it does seem to me too recurrent to be wholly ignored.

In actual translation, there are few serious misrepresentations of the Greek, though there is sometimes a tendency to prune in the interests of slickness. To say however that Orestes killed his mother when mad is to defy both mythology and the Greek text, and worse still, to spoil the progression of thought in the poem concerned; and to invent a plurality of *Bacchi*, where the text mentions *Bacchae*, the conventional figures in this type of poetry, seems indefensible. I also feel that the use of baby-talk in the poem 'Love and the Bee' is ill-suited to the grace of the original.

There are, however, many successful versions; the little drinking-songs, which call for neatness and a touch of humour, are often excellently rendered, as are the glimpses of the countryside; one short piece which Moore scorned to translate emerges here as a graceful little poem; and of the longer pieces, 'Frolic Wine', 'Love's Night Walk' and the elaborate description 'The Bowl' may be mentioned as good examples of what the translator can achieve in different styles. Altogether he has I feel not only succeeded in presenting the *Anacreonta* to suit modern taste, but has also preserved much of the spirit of the original. Here we have a translation which, despite its faults, is both gay and straightforward. It reads as though the translator enjoyed making it; many will, I think, enjoy reading it; and that is, after all, the whole purpose of such poetry as this.

DESMOND LEAHY

VICTOR HUGO. By André Maurois. Translated from the French by Gerard Hopkins. (Cape; 30s.)

It is really a tribute to M. Maurois if we say that this biography, while excellent, is, in one respect, disappointing. M. Maurois so loves his subject that, especially towards the end, we glimpse all too rarely that amused tolerance of human foibles usually so characteristic of him. Flashes of it there are, however, as in the description of Hugo 'holding