

Book Reviews

say that the poets have thereby declined from the first, soaring heights.

The play, *Iphigenia in Arsacia*, is built round the miracle worked by St. Matthew, the Apostle, in restoring Iphigenia to life. It moves through scenes of exquisite language and imagery to a dramatic close. Hirtaecus, the betrothed of Iphigenia, foiled in wedlock by the risen maid's vow of virginity, stabs her as she summons the people to honour the body of Matthew, martyred at the altar. The action is swift and incisive, the characterisation clear cut. Our Catholic players should certainly not miss this specimen of the religious drama at its best.

Above Mount Alverna, the story of the famous stigmata, needs careful reading. It reminds one of a richly-coloured window, in which every jewelled detail, perfect in itself, only serves to enhance the full effect of the whole. This piece is to be pondered privately in sympathetic mood; only thus will its transfigured language convey its message of torture and triumph.

E. E.

THOUGHTS OF THE CURE D'ARS. Compiled and arranged by W.M.B. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne; 2/6.)

THOUGHTS TWICE-DYED. By Father Vincent McNabb, O.P. (Sheed and Ward; 2/6.)

IN PRAISE OF DIVINE LOVE: An Anthology of Prose and Verse compiled by Alice Lady Lovat. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne; 6/-.)

These three books can be grouped together under the general heading, 'Thoughts.' The first is by a saint, some of whose moral sayings and fragments of wisdom are here gathered together in the form of a calendar, one suggested thought being presented for every day in the year. Their authorship is their sufficient recommendation.

Father Vincent McNabb's Thoughts—'my tangle of thoughts,' he calls them—have been retrieved by himself from his own voluminous notes and commonplace books—though no book of Father Vincent's could ever be fitly described as commonplace. Their literary brilliance and epigrammatic quality brought to mind the line 'orient pearls at random strung' as an apt description; but it falls short because Father Vincent's little paragraphs are not placed together at haphazard: there is a very definite connection of one thought with another, and every sentence is but a comment on the ONLY THOUGHT, the

Blackfriars

Verbum Caro factum. We hope the book will provoke as much thought in its readers as it did in its writer; for 'although no man by taking thought can add to his stature of body, yet no one can add to his stature of soul save by taking thought. "With desolation is the whole land made desolate because no man thinketh in his heart."' Don't read this book: ponder over it, ruminare and meditate; let it stimulate thought.

Lady Lovat's thoughts are gathered from a variety of sources, from the inspired word of God, from the saints, from poets and preachers and holy men and women. Their unifying principle is that they all speak in praise of divine love. The selections have been made with admirable taste and care. Lady Lovat's anthology is in effect a very exquisite and rare sort of prayer-book.

B.D.

A BRIEF RULE AND DAILY EXERCISE with THE ORATORY OF THE FAITHFUL SOUL. By Ludovicus Blosius. Translated by Fr. Bertrand A. Wilberforce, O.P., and Robert A. Coffin, C.S.S.R. Edited by Dom Roger Hudleston, O.S.B. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne; 3/6.)

Father Roger Hudleston has brought out this Volume VII in his collected English edition of the works of Blosius, and he tells us this will be the last volume of the series. The thick folio volume which contains the spiritual writings of Blosius aroused hopes of our one day seeing a large 'omnibus' edition of the complete Blosius in English; but Fr. Hudleston reminds us that less than a third part of this large folio is original work: more than two thirds consists almost entirely of extracts from Scripture, from the Fathers of the Church and spiritual writers, which Blosius has strung together with little of his own beyond the headings of chapters and sections. We hope that the demand for the sanctified common-sense of Blosius will make it necessary for more and more editions to be issued, and perhaps we may even still hope for that 'omnibus' of all at least that has appeared of Blosius in English.

B.D.