

teenth century that the second renaissance came across the Alps from the Italy of the late *Trecento*. Dr. Weiss has provided a definitive study of the origins of this Renaissance in England, and the first coherent analysis of its impact on the English social structure. His period sense is equally alive for Italy and for England, his scholarship has long been recognised and is meticulous, his knowledge of the unpublished manuscript sources is unique. It is at last possible to reconstruct the means by which the Italian renaissance came to England. Socially parasitic, and at best the fitting appanage to the household of some great lord, the stray Italian humanist in the north had little opportunity to cultivate his own idiosyncrasies. He was differentiated from the English clerk of his time less by the nature of his studies than by his approach to them. The movement is analogous to that of the twelfth century, for once again it was an attempt to recapture not only a style but a standpoint. But this time its effect was to be lasting. The Latin translation of Plutarch in the Duke of Gloucester's household is at the root of so much that has since been characteristically English; the Shakespearean search for a hero, the Philip Sydney standards, and that central national ideal, the Tudor variant of *The Magnanimous Man*.

For at last analysis the two senses of the term Humanism would seem inseparably linked. For the attempt of post-classical man to recapture a classical standpoint must imply a conscious severance from contemporary preconceptions which will lead naturally enough to a self-conscious and therefore often ego-centric individualism. While the sense of personality, always so much deeper than the individualism which is so often its abuse, will come with the choice of model. For the primary inspiration of each renaissance has been Graeco-Roman from the dying Republic or the early empire. Its ideals have been those of the silver age of a culture, its heroes those imagined in a world order in full flux—Lucan's Cato, the Thrasea of Tacitus, Plutarch's Philopoemon—conceived as isolated precisely by the strength of personality; alone, outlined against the dark.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

DEATH AND LIFE. By M. C. D'Arcy, S.J. (Longmans; 5s.)

In this age of windy emotionalism and intellectual sterility, publishers must, more than most people, appreciate the financial difficulties involved in the publication of a serious work on a religious topic. A public whose mental food is habitually predigested by sales-minded editors soon loses its taste for the stronger meat of reading which demands the intelligent co-operation of the reader. One can only suppose that it is a kindly desire on the part of Messrs. Longmans not to frighten off the prospective purchaser, which leads them to describe Fr. D'Arcy's latest book as one which 'everyone can read with ease and pleasure.' Most unfortunately, relatively few

people now-a-days are capable of following such a closely reasoned and accurately worded defence of personal immortality as Fr. D'Arcy has given us, and it is an injustice to him to describe his excellent and scholarly work as easy reading for a public which occasionally discovers intellectual problems even in the strip-cartoon. In this book popular sentiment, the irrational appeal to the imagination and those loose aspirations which make the effusions of certain clerical journalists not unprofitable to the Sunday press are left carefully aside. The first part of Fr. D'Arcy's argument lies within the field of natural reason and he develops his thesis surely, almost inevitably, with an amazing deftness of phrase and illustration, to the final vindication of revealed doctrine. The transition from reason alone to faith in God's revelation is made with such skill and delicacy that all but the most wilfully obstinate of agnostics will feel how necessarily the one follows on the other.

In a book which blows away the fog of popular muddle-mindedness from so many problems of cardinal importance, it is not easy to pick out the best from the good. Two things, however, stand out. The first is the author's treatment of human personality. Now-a-days, when 'personality' is generally regarded as the result of a successful course in Pelmanism or as the explanation of a successful film career, it is refreshing to read such a lucid statement of that true personality which is the substance of our claim to immortality. No less refreshing is it to read, towards the end of the book, Fr. D'Arcy's masterly exposition of the doctrine of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. It is the first time one remembers reading a discussion of these problems in English which offends in no single respect either the imagination or the intellect. His chapter on Hell is entitled 'The Loss of Heaven,' and the highest tribute one can pay to Fr. D'Arcy is to say that he is able to convince his readers that the deprivation of the vision of God is, in itself, a greater torment to the human soul than any which inspired the imagination of even the most lurid medieval fresco painters.

At a moment when some form of popular poll has just decided that only one person in three believes in personal immortality, when death and the danger of death are constantly in our minds, one is tempted to describe Fr. D'Arcy's book as opportune. It is more than opportune. It is necessary in a way which will outlast the needs of the present chaos.

CEDRIC BURTON, O.P.

As a large number of reviews is held over, the Editor hopes to provide readers of BLACKFRIARS with an augmented review section in a subsequent issue.