

## BLACKFRIARS

the little village making its boast that neither ale-house nor Protestant householder have ever been found therein. Here in this strange and unusual oasis, the old Catholic family of Blundell has since the twelfth century held sway, and at terrible cost has clung fast to the ancient Faith. In the long line of the Squires of Crosby, there is no finer figure than that of the Royalist Cavalier and 'invincible Popish Recusant' whose letters are contained in this well-produced volume. quaint, stilted, formal as they are, they yet vividly portray the dreadful times in which the writer lived, and make us realize the veritable martyrdom our Catholic forefathers endured under the Penal Laws. Yet is their dominant note cheerfulness; cheerfulness under dire poverty, crushing fines, cruel ostracism, fell imprisonment, daily peril of death, and constant solicitude for a religion dearer than life itself yet ever proscribed, condemned, persecuted unto blood. The present volume is the fourth that has emerged from the muniment-room at Crosby, and the knowledge that there is there preserved a still unpublished mass of manuscripts, letters, and records makes us hope it will be by no means the last. We should like to hear something of the subsequent fortunes of the Squires of Crosby, and find out why, when in the depressing eighteenth century, so many others of hitherto intense Catholicity fell so sadly away, they themselves remained so splendidly staunch.

F. R. B.

**A HISTORY OF ARAGON AND CATALONIA.** By H. J. Chaytor, Litt.D. (Methuen; 15/-).

The Master of St. Catharine's has produced an admirable and closely packed summary of Aragonese history. The story is carried down until the union with Castile and a brief epilogue deals with the setting up of the Catalan Government on the fall of the monarchy in 1931. The book contains a useful and reasonably short bibliography, appendices chiefly genealogical, and a complete and well-arranged index. The development of the Aragonese dominions is illustrated by seven good maps. The book is in the main a political history, and the attempt to provide a detailed survey within the compass of 284 pages must have proved most difficult. The importance and intrinsic interest of the subject, however, carries the reader forward, and the whole treatment of the subject indicates a mature and balanced judgment. If the path seems at times a trifle arid it is everywhere strewn by boulders of the most diverse information. This is only to be expected in a work which traces its descent from the *Cambridge Modern History* manner, and having regard to the subject matter of the book it is perhaps

## REVIEWS

the best way of approach. The short appreciations of individual Aragonese sovereigns are excellent, especially the character sketch of James the Conqueror, while the least satisfactory section of the book is the one dealing with the Catalans in Greece. There is also an inconsistency in the spelling of proper names in this chapter. But these are very minor points, and it is difficult to overestimate the usefulness of a volume which is the only modern short history of Aragon and Catalonia in English.

D.J.A.

LA MUSIQUE AU MOYEN AGE, par Theodore Gérold. (Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age, 73. Pp. 443; frs. 40.)

Despite its modest format, a most important work. M. Gérold begins with the plainsong of the first centuries of the Christian era, discusses its origins, its nature, and its evolution in theory and in practice through the liturgical dramas, *chansons de geste*, pastorals, etc., and the polyphony of the fourteenth century. France is the country primarily concerned, but the author finds room to deal with Italy, England, Spain, Germany. There is a special chapter on instrumental music, and the instruments themselves are exhaustively treated in another. Methods of medieval instruction are discussed, and, of course, the meaning of the notation.

It is in the last point that one feels a lacuna. The author is not primarily concerned with plainsong, but his views concerning plainsong notation necessarily determine much of his treatment of the later music, and one would be grateful for a fuller argument for those views. 'If the authority of the medieval texts were definitively established' says M. Gérold, 'the rendering of the gregorian melodies as advocated and practised by the Benedictines would be seriously *battue en brèche*'; but though the reader is referred to Wagner's *Neumenkunde* for 'numerous texts of the 11th and 14th centuries,' and some authorities are mentioned in the text, M. Gérold's mensuralist thesis is not wholly convincing. But it is undoubtedly plausible; indeed, one might almost feel inclined, after reading such a text as that of the *anonyme anglais*: 'In antiquis libris habebant puncta equivocata nimis, qui simplicia materialia fuerunt equalia, sed solo intellectu operabantur dicendo; intelligo istam longam, intelligo istam brevem,' to relapse into a comfortable agnosticism. M. Gérold's thesis should, however, at least provoke the upholders of the Solesmes system to marshal their evidence with greater vigour.

There are shrewd remarks in the direction of de-bunking the idealizing tendency one sometimes encounters; for example: *les mélismes des versets sont parfois d'une longueur*