

Since Catholic Action is a realization of that central doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, the first chapter by Père Chenu, O.P., shows the connection and interdependence of the two. There follows a chapter on Catholic Action and the Liturgy—the Mystical Body at prayer. A specially valuable section is the one on 'Catholic Action and the Priest'; for this new collaboration—or rather its revival—needs understanding; it has to be worked out. The priest in Catholic Action is both nothing and everything; nothing, because it is the lay apostolate; everything, because on him falls, to a great extent, the formation of its leaders. Canon Cardijn, the founder of the Young Christian Workers, has expressed this by saying that the priest is the *soul* of Catholic Action.

This book is one of those that sheds light, and it is vigorously written, as indeed a book of this kind should be; it is a call to be 'doers' of the word and not hearers only.'

PETER WHITSTONE, O.P.

THE NEW STATE. By Victor Pradera. Preface by H.R.H. The Prince of Asturias. (Sands; 8s. 6d.)

This was the last book written by Victor Pradera, Basque, Traditionalist, philosopher, deputy and orator, killed at the outset of the recent Spanish War. Famous for his devotion to 'the inflexible rules of logic,' and for his oratory in which 'words left his lips like sharply cut stones from a catapult' in 'the manner that became his logical and decisive mind,' he has left in this last literary bequest a work which exemplifies both characteristics. His capacity for logical thinking is displayed admirably in the running fight which he keeps up with the doctrines of Rousseau and the Revolution throughout the book. His gift of phrase is exemplified in the description of Sabino Arana, the founder of Basque Nationalism, 'interpreting the sacred Basque *Fueros* with his stunted rural intelligence,' or in his characterisation of the separatist doctrines of the Basques and Catalonians, based on unity of race, as 'zoological Nationalism.' The suffrage allotted only in virtue of age or sex, and not of class and function, he considers an example of 'gregarious animality' rather than of a human act. Not by such methods is freedom to be secured; 'liberty does not roar in the streets, it emanates from order like a halo of light.' Unfortunately this powerful combination of lucid argument and picturesque invective, is marred by a good sprinkling of passages (one does not know whether the author or translator is primarily to blame for some of them) of which the following is a brief and

typical example: 'Any conceptions elaborated beyond those specified, presuppose in political society conditions gratuitously dispensed in the likeness of man.'

Beginning with the Thomist conception of human nature, Pradera investigates the essential characteristics of political society as it should be if it is to accord as well as possible with the basic and inescapable requirements of man. The Good State, which he lays down as the pattern of the New State, is found, when the details have been filled in, to be the Old State of the Reyes Católicos, Ferdinand and Isabella. These details have been incorporated into the *a priori* scheme by the introduction of what we may call the traditionalist premiss, viz. 'Without tradition there is no nation.' We may agree that 'the true and legitimate national structure' built up of King, Church, fundamental law, Cortes, autarchies of sub-sovereign societies, Council, and Court of Justice, presents a 'picture of insuperable perfection, in which order prevails as each institution figures in its appointed place,' so long as it is realised that in their individuality these details are justified precisely by tradition. Conformably to other traditions these functions, specifically valid, can and should be realised with a world of difference.

Some small points may be noted in conclusion. One cannot admit, and from the previous paragraph (p. 65) one would not suppose the author to admit that 'if the Beatific Vision, man's final destiny, is of a supernatural order, reason previously indicates it as a destiny natural to an infinite being.' It is debatable whether the religious and civil societies, in a purely natural state of man, must be governed by distinct authorities, as it is asserted they ought to be. A reference to the *Summa* will show the exaggeration of saying that St. Thomas 'disapproves two forms of solitude' in II-II, 188, 8.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

DRAMA, TRAVEL AND FICTION

THE FAMILY REUNION. A Play by T. S. Eliot. (Faber and Faber; 7s. 6d.)

Both the play and the book in which it is made accessible to the stay-at-home public have been described in some detail elsewhere in the Catholic Press (notably in *The Catholic Herald* and *The Tablet*), so that the reviewer may be forgiven if he limits the scope of his review to a footnote on the poet's symbolism and a few reflections after the event.

The process of the play is analytical rather than dramatic,