

its greatest interpreters, accompanied by a readiness to learn of all those who have struggled in the search for truth and followed by long reflection on the knowledge thus acquired. This apparently has been Canon Mouroux's method for over twenty years and his book is a testimony to its abundant fruitfulness.

The notes are not mere references, they indicate the vast range of reading on which this essay on man is based. The author has read thoroughly, but he has also reflected deeply and wrestled with the thought thus attained until, having thoroughly mastered it himself, he was able to present it in all its limpid clarity and force to the weaker and less wise. He has even conveyed something of the same spirit to his translator: for if the Gallic precision and theological acumen are obvious enough, the language and style might well be those of an original English writer.

EDWARD QUINN

CATHOLICISM AND ENGLISH LITERATURE. By Edward Hutton. (Fredk. Muller; 8s. 6d.)

This sketch is a reprint of a book which on its first appearance six years ago met with deserved appreciation. The author first recalls how for a thousand years or so English literature was based on Catholic culture and thought. He then shows the complete disappearance of this 'universality', and its replacement by an 'insularity' which hardly knew of Catholicity except to hate and condemn it. A study of the literary mind and tone of English society during the last two and a half centuries follows, and is succeeded by some account of the partial Catholic revival and its prospects. The chapter on 'Catholicism in the English Novel' forms a complete essay in itself, and is full of original research. In some parts it is sad reading, and in others highly amusing. All sorts of weird authors have been disinterred, and their incredible folly exposed. The 'Conversion of Gibbon' which originally appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* is an extremely full and valuable section, and will appeal to many. The letters of the Swiss pastor at Lausanne to Gibbon's angry parent are very naïve and diverting. They were rescued from a long sleep in the British Museum, and are admirably translated.

F. ROBERT BRACEY, O.P.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. By David Daiches. (Maclellan; 7s. 6d.)

This book was first published (abroad) in 1944 and today Mr Daiches might perhaps reshape some of his *obiter dicta* about the 'clash between middle class standards and the "artistic temperament"', and make clearer what he certainly holds, namely that the Victorian conflict is one episode in a perennial conflict. For his view is not confined to Victorian Britain. Mr Daiches sees Stevenson's relationship to Burns and the eighteenth century Deists and even to the Wandering Scholars. Within this framework he traces the development of Stevenson's art through self-consciousness

to harmonious union of all elements in *Weir of Hermiston*, an embryo tragedy, fragmentary, but a perfect work of art. This is done by means of first class criticism. 'psychological' and 'documentary' well co-ordinated. It would perhaps be ungenerous to ask for a closer investigation of the parallel with Charles Lamb's childhood worship, but there is one tantalising loose end. Stevenson's love of the open air seems oddly English—almost pipe and brogues—and that doesn't seem to fit in. Perhaps a Scotsman could explain that as successfully as he put Stevenson right in the Scottish tradition of Henryson interiors and Dunbar's Edinburgh. This is quite excellent and Englishmen must be grateful. Finally the brief chapter on the poems and essays throws considerable light on the earlier part of the book and repays careful reading.

G. A. MEATH, O.P.

MEREDITH. By Siegfried Sassoon. (Constable; 15s.)

No doubt there are many who will be induced to read this biography because of recollections of previous diversions from the pen of Siegfried Sassoon. For who could forget the thrill of reading the 'Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man' and its sequels? The Sassoon-enthusiast who may have read little of Meredith's works, or who is perhaps aware of him only as a novelist whom one really must read some day, need have no qualms. What Mr Sassoon did for fox-hunting, he does equally effectively for Meredith. Mr Sassoon writes of the creator of *Evan Harrington* and *Diana of the Crossways* with the discriminating enthusiasm of one who has been a 'Meredithian' since his youth. He writes, too, of his subject with a sensitive understanding of the nostalgic quality in Meredith who 'can make us remember what it felt like to be young, can recover for us the rapture and dizzying uncertainty of first love, can make us breathe the air of early morning, and bring back the forgotten strangeness of mountains looked at long ago'.

The course of Meredith's life and literary development is traced with sympathetic care. And, as one would expect from a 'Meredithian' with such a reputation as a clever craftsman in the art of writing, Mr Sassoon gives critical studies and appreciations of Meredith's novels and more important poetry. 'The star of Meredith'. Mr Sassoon asserts confidently, 'burns and is alive with constant fire'. In this study of the great Victorian novelist, Mr Sassoon has achieved his purpose in revealing that 'star's' brilliance to a public from which it has long been obscured.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

HUMAN ECOLOGY. By Thomas Robertson. (MacLellan; 21s.)

The aim of this book, in the author's words, is 'to make a scientific approach to social phenomena and is a plea for a better and more extensive application of the scientific method'. The particular scientific method to which he refers is adapted from that branch of biology known as 'ecology, mutual adjustment between organism and environment.