

Antonio Tapies (at the Marlborough) is represented by eight canvases, none of them recent, which demonstrate his extraordinary power of reassurance on the spectator, together with a horrifying capacity for destroying utterly the basis for any reassurance, and this simultaneously. The colour is reassuring, the textural discoveries and liberties are shocking, and yet the harmony between the two is perfect in nearly every case. The hermetic quality of these paintings does not detract from their authority as it would in a lesser painter. Saura, in the same gallery, makes use of fashionable trends in Paris, whereas Claret is typically Spanish in making use of classical values for expressive and romantic ends, a fatal miscalculation.

Millares (at Tooths) is an accomplished technician; if I liked his pictures more I would not perhaps mind the repetitious hackings and sewings, but he seems to have limited himself, not for the good reason of heightened expressiveness, but simply because the gimmick of field surgery on a canvas is rather a successful one. I prefer the gimmicks of Victoria with his decorative sense of placing and colour.

All together these exhibitions give me the impression of a movement, if it can be called a movement, in exile, despite the officially sponsored prestige exhibitions abroad. With few exceptions it is painting of great dignity but of immense distance and detachment from the traditional subject matter of Spanish art. It seems to have a greater portion of sadness than similar western art. Whether this is due to the loss of figurative subject matter is a debatable point—certainly if Spanish figurative art continued on the lines of Zuloaga it would have been a very unpalatable thing, but Nonell shows us that there were other tendencies. How far the traditional Spanish pre-occupation with human beings and human values is lost and how far it has merely gone underground remains to be seen.

PATRICK REYNTIENS

Reviews

FATHER FABER, by Ronald Chapman; Burns and Oates; 35s.

To generations of English Catholics Father Faber has been a legend. His name conjures up the Brompton Oratory, the hymns of our childhood, Italianate devotions. When the authoress of *I Leap Over the Wall* wished to convey the less aesthetically attractive features of Catholic worship, it was inevitable that her description should include a reference to 'the more flowery and unctuous of

Father Faber's hymns'. Under this legend the man has remained unknown, entombed in Father Bowden's *Life and Letters of Father Faber*—a book not easily obtained and when obtained not, by our generation, easily read.

It is a truism that we often feel more remote from the Victorians than from those who are further removed from us in time. The introspection which was so characteristic of them, the self-communing, the analysis and justification of motives and then the setting out of it all in letters and journals all belong to an age not ours. For us the difference is perhaps intensified when we read the outpourings of Catholics of the last century. How hard it is to re-capture the image which the phrase 'the conversion of England' brought to their minds. With England enjoying the hegemony of the world the possibility of bringing her back to her ancient faith had a heady appeal and to the more sanguine—a Phillips de Lisle, a Faber—the possibility seemed at times to be almost within reach. The methods to be employed therefore were a matter of pressing moment and this brought to their controversies an urgency and an edge which is strange to us. The un-illusioned Catholics of this century may well be daunted by the reflection that the sanctity of the members will alone spread God's Kingdom: they are unlikely to think that much harm (or much good) will be done to the cause of truth by the cut of a cope or the shape of an arch.

Mr Chapman has done a great service in bringing Father Faber back to life from his shadowy world—so distant in feeling, so near in time. He has performed his task extremely well, working through an immense amount of material at the Brompton Oratory, conjuring up the man in all his ebullient vitality and letting us see him 'in the round' in relation to his back-ground and fellow actors. For too long there has been a tendency to see the history of the Church in this country a century ago in simplified terms with Newman for hero, Manning for villain and Faber, Spencer, Talbot and the rest playing subsidiary rôles. It is constantly implied that whereas Newman commended Catholic devotion in the sober tradition of the Prayer Book, Faber outraged the sensibilities of the cultured Englishman by his hot-house piety. A generation which can speak of 'Queen-mum' should perhaps not be unduly squeamish at Father Faber's calling our Blessed Lady 'Dearest Mamma'.

But in truth there is not a world of difference between the devotional ethos of Newman and Faber, as a glance at Newman's *Meditations and Devotions* will show. Intellectually, it need hardly be said, the gulf between them was immeasurable. The temperamental one was no less wide and certainly contributed more to this strained relationship. That the disciple of a great man should be in a state of intellectual pupillage is essential if the relationship is to continue, that he should be temperamentally out of harmony is fatal. Faber, who had fallen under Newman's spell at Oxford, who had delayed his conversion to Rome until Newman led the way, who after his reception desired to place himself and his band of religious followers under Newman's leadership, wanted nothing better than to sit at the master's feet. But to Newman, whose subtle and sensitive mind saw through and round every aspect of a situation, whose every

thought was a question, every statement a qualification, there must have been something indescribably irritating in Faber's warm enthusiasm. 'Guarded as Newman might be', Mr Chapman tells us, 'Faber insisted on taking every word or gesture as significant'. And again, 'All his life Faber wanted Newman to take decisions for him which Newman was not prepared or able to do'. 'It grows on me', Newman wrote wearily, 'for many reasons that separation is the only way out of our difficulties'.

A breach between them was inevitable. The occasion itself was trivial—whether it was or was not properly Oratorian work for the Fathers to undertake the direction of nuns. The estrangement was irreparable, leaving Faber wounded and bewildered and Newman offended, analyzing, justifying and implacable. Not the least devoted and distinguished of the Cardinal's present-day admirers once told me how exasperated he sometimes felt when he came upon an example of what in a lesser man would be considered morbid sensitivity. 'And then', he said 'one returns to his writings and within half-a-page one has fallen under the spell'. To his contemporaries such a recovery must have been less easy.

With the present interest in Newman in full spate it is inevitable that many readers will take up this book primarily for the light it throws on the great man. One hopes that they will put it down with a new appreciation of Faber as a character worthy of study in his own right. His demonic energy and zeal for souls run like a connecting thread through his whole life, whether as parson at Elton, convert, founder of the Brothers of the Will of God or superior of the London Oratory. His was a self-less attempt to kindle the love of God in a cold and materialistic world, a generous out-pouring of self in face of constant ill-health, misunderstanding and discouragement. He would bring to Victorian London the warmth of Philipian Rome. 'That was his great achievement', says his biographer,—to bring light and tender devotion into the darkness. He set out just to do that and he did it'. He was forty-nine when he died.

A. N. GILBEY

A SPANISH TAPESTRY: *Town and Country in Castile*, by Michael Kenny; Cohen and West; 25s.

In his introduction to Mr Kenny's study of daily life in two contrasting Spanish parishes, Professor Evans-Pritchard remarks that 'anthropology is still generally thought of as exclusively the study of primitive peoples, as barbarology'. The emergence of books on civilized communities, using the techniques if not the terminology of anthropological enquiry, is a welcome extension of the frontiers of anthropology itself, apart from the inherent interest of material that is closer to the experience of the usual reader.

Mr Kenny writes about a remote country parish, Ramosierra, lost in the high sierras of the province of Soria, and an urban parish, San Martín, in the heart