

REVIEWS

THE OXFORD MOVEMENT. Its History and its Future. A Layman's Estimate. By J. Lewis May. (John Lane; 10/6.)

Each year is necessarily the hundredth anniversary of quite a number of events, and they are not all equally interesting or important. Thus there is a certain danger in the fashion of keeping centenaries. Like flag-days, they all suffer if there are too many of them, and the deserving unfortunately suffer with the rest. The centenary of the Oxford Movement is one of the very deserving, and though religious indifference may lead many people to ignore it, it would be a pity if indifference were assisted by the unattractive nature of the flags offered to the public. Happily, Mr. Lewis May has produced a book which is everything that a centenary flag ought to be. It is very well written, and it covers some sixty years of history with an easy mastery that avoids all the defects of a summary. Moreover, his style has two of the major literary virtues: it is always clear, and never dull. It can be recommended, not only to Anglicans, or people who have themselves experienced in their degree the travail of some of the protagonists—*forsan et haec olim meminisse invabit*, but to the general reader who is apt to be frightened of books with a theological flavour. For the effects of the Oxford Movement are plain to see in English life. Barchester died hard, but it died; the Movement is still alive.

It is hard for a reviewer to be critical about a book that he has both admired and enjoyed. The pages about Newman alone should win for Mr. Lewis May the gratitude of everybody for whom that noble figure is more than a name. But he has attempted more than a mere chronicle. He writes from a special point of view, and his object is, he says, 'to draw out what I hold to be the true significance' of the Movement. It is, he holds, reunion with the Holy See, and this aim was always implicit, though not generally realized by the men of the Movement. Indeed, this view, not uncommon to-day, was for long a favourite accusation with their enemies. It naturally commands the sympathy of Catholics; but they do, I fancy, find it slightly bewildering. They do not understand how people can apparently acknowledge an authority without obeying it, or obey it without acknowledging it; and instances of both attitudes are to be found. Nor do they understand how it is that

the language of books that show every feeling for Catholicism should sometimes sound so alien to their ears. Thus the longing for reunion and the sense that it is the real outcome of Tractarian principles involve Mr. May in the necessity of admiring the men whose ideas 'transcended the merely national frontiers,' but do not enable him to admit that those ideas rightly, indeed inevitably, issued in the practical step of submission to the Holy See. Despite his skill, despite his appeal to 'fundamental differences in the heredity and environment,' the enigma eludes his solution: 'Newman departed. Keble remained.' Once indeed it is almost within his grasp: 'The living, breathing Church, not Antiquity, was the final and unanswerable Court of Appeal.' But quickly he puts it away: 'But, we must make no mistake here, this discovery was made by Newman, because, unknown to himself, he expected, nay wished, to discover it . . . the vision of the Holy Mother . . . had been gradually taking shape in his imagination.' This is the real point. Newman, it seems, made the mistake that Mr. May has succeeded in avoiding. Newman thought it was *Wahrheit*, but Mr. May knows it was *Dichtung*. I suggest—and it is put so bluntly only because space is limited—I suggest, then, that Mr. May feels like a Catholic, but does not think like a Catholic. This enables him to sympathize with Newman's Catholic feelings; but it also leads him to regard the 'shadow of a hand' as the shadow of an emotional, not intellectual, hand. It explains much else in the book as well. It explains why when its treatment of Newman—the poet—is so loving, it is charitable to Manning, and barely just to Ward. It explains passages which strike a Catholic reader as untrue: for example, 'Protestantism is a religion of reason, Catholicism of the heart. Protestantism is Prose; Catholicism is Poetry.' (Mr. May is to be congratulated on not misusing Pascal at this point; many writers would have done so.) It explains his liking for quotations from Tyrrell. It explains his seeming approval of the quotation with which he almost ends his book: 'Theology divides us, because opinion about facts must necessarily vary; but common human experience unites us.' But he does not see that in all this 'the noblest Roman of them all' would have been of one mind with the 'logicians'; that indeed it is but Newman's inveterate enemy in modern clothes. If this is the real mood of those who have 'remained,' it is comprehensible that plants should grow in Anglo-Catholic soil at which Catholics look askance. Whether it was the attitude of the original Tractarians, alike those who went and those who stayed where they were, is another story. It would be worth while to inquire whether these views are not more of a

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'departure' than that of the Oxford converts, and to discover at what point in the history of the Anglo-Catholic revival they made their appearance. If Mr. Lewis May would do it, it would also be interesting.

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A GERMAN CATHOLIC ON ANGLO-CATHOLICISM.

Continental comments on the Anglo-Catholic Movement are seldom so well-informed and so balanced as is Oskar Bauhofer's article on *A Century of Anglo-Catholicism* in *DER KATHOLISCHE GEDANKE*.¹ He holds that the Movement is not to be lightly dismissed as an example of English illogicality, but neither can the Catholic regard it with unmixed approval. The problem of Anglo-Catholicism lies in the fact that 'it is not only the bridge for many individuals from Anglicanism to the Roman Church, but it is still more the wall which dams the Romeward stream, and at once awakes and supplies Catholic aspirations within Anglicanism itself.' Its historical claims to continuity with the pre-reformation Church in England and its theological claims to form a part of Catholic unity cannot be sustained by an impartial judge; nor in fact does the success of its appeal rest on such foundations. 'In reality it is with what may be called the pragmatic argument—and pragmatic in the best sense of the word—that Anglo-Catholics ward off doubts regarding the reality of the objective Catholicity of the Church of England.' The most cogent historical or theological arguments are psychologically ineffective against the Anglo-Catholic's personal experience of God's special graces and blessings bestowed in and on Anglo-Catholicism or against the empirical fact of the Movement's marvellous and seemingly supernatural growth during the hundred years of its history. The fact of this abundant manifestation of divine favour and of the workings of the Holy Spirit in a movement which has strenuously upheld a great richness of Catholic Faith and practice, and which has derived so much from and has led so many to the Catholic Church, should cause us no astonishment. 'It seems to me abundantly clear that we are confronted in Anglo-Catholicism, to the extent that it stands for the proclaiming of Catholic truth, with an unmistakable out-pouring of divine light, and that, in so far as Anglo-Catholicism exerts a particular function of divine Providence in non-Catholic Christendom, it should inspire us with the deepest respect, joy

¹ The admirable quarterly organ of the German Catholic Akademikerverband, published by Haas und Grabherr, Augsburg.