

Blackfriars

THE COMING AGE AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: A Forecast by
William Barry, D.D. Pp. 247. (Cassell; 7/6 net.)

Canon Barry in his eightieth year writes with all his old zest, surveying the past (1870—1929), and bidding us go forth and conquer. The enthusiasm for democracy is not impaired. 'Liberty at Washington, religion at Rome—these are the highest services that can be rendered to mankind.' "Catholicism" and "Democracy" are two Greek words, signifying the same thing; for it has been said, "The truth shall make you free, *Veritas liberavit vos.*" Thus is the reader challenged at the start, and many are the challenges thrown out in the course of these twenty-four essays. For Canon Barry touches an immense number of things and discourses on times past, present and to come with vigour and enthusiasm. No doubt astonishment, startled astonishment, will at times overtake the reader. For instance, to be told 'as regards the persons who shall govern, the Catholic Church is a free elective system; Catholics are as much members of a voluntary association as are the citizens of every true republic.' But then Canon Barry finds 'genuine Tribunes of the People, with unbounded authority, such men as Mussolini in Italy, Primo de Rivera in Spain, and most remarkable of all, in Turkey, which has abolished the Caliphate, a modernising Kemal Pasha.' But surely seven shillings and sixpence is too high a price for 247 pages of very large type?

J.C.

THE CHILD IN THE CHURCH. By Maria Montessori. Edited by
Mortimer Standing. (Sands; 5/-)

This book explains how to apply the Montessori method to the religious training of children. This method attaches primary importance to the right environment, and the right environment for teaching religion to children is the life of the Church as seen especially in the sacred liturgy. The child is taught to know God by living the round of Christ's life in the circle of the Christian year: each truth must be lived before it can be explained. For example, the child is brought to the Baby in the crib and from the bended knees of the shepherds, from the star and the angels in the sky he learns that it is no ordinary baby. Only after a long time will he hear the word Incarnation. Children are easiest taught by doing things, touching and handling things, by singing and saying words accompanying the things done. A child learns first by touching, then by seeing and only lastly by hearing.

Book Reviews

A visitor to a Montessori school will always be struck by the multiplicity of apparatus. The same thing will be noticed in a Catholic Church: there is a crucifix that someone is kissing, beads that are being fingered, candles that are being lighted, and round the different Stations of the Cross someone is making a little procession all on his own. This is like the Montessori school where everyone is busy with some contrivance. Liberty in a prepared environment is the Montessori aim—liberty, not licence, for no child may misuse his apparatus.

One of the most attractive passages of this book tells how in a school in Spain the children in their own garden sow wheat and plant vines. Then in due course they gather the grapes and crush them for wine. With their own sickles they cut the wheat and grind it. Then they make the hosts from the flour. Then on their First Communion day certain of them are chosen to carry to the altar at the Offertory of the Mass the bread and wine which they have themselves so reverently prepared for God.

DEATH OF MY AUNT. By C. H. B. Kitchin. (The Hogarth Press; 7/6.)

Such a title might lead you to expect the traditional detective story, but you would be misled. There is a murder and a police inspector endowed with the limited intelligence that fiction usually accords such a character, but you will not find the sleuth-minded individual who can arrive at the right solution by improbable methods. For the book is not a study of detective work but of the behaviour of the murdered woman's relatives, and in particular of that of the young man who is represented as telling the story. His psychological reactions to the situation in which he finds himself may or may not be true to life, but they are amusing and supply a humour which adds to the interest of a story in itself enthralling.

J.R.H.

THE MASTERFUL MONK. By Owen Francis Dudley. (Longmans, Green and Co., London; 5/-; paper covers 3/6.)

It is possible that certain recent and unfortunate *obiter dicta* of Fr. Dudley have tended to produce an atmosphere somewhat unfavourable to the launching of his latest book. Seeing that I, for one, was of the number of the disaffected, it is no small tribute, from my point of view, to the author's power of writing that this novel held my approving interest throughout.