

with sanctity. While reading her life as Mauriac presents it, we can sympathise with the author's feelings, who could not prevent himself from being 'swayed, alternately, by the attraction or the irritation' which she inspires.

Margaret of Cortona was extraordinarily beautiful, a fact which probably contributed to the hatred of a jealous stepmother, and so it does not seem surprising that she should have fallen an easy prey to the flatteries of a young nobleman, whose mistress she was for nine years. At the end of this time her lover was murdered—and at once there arose before the eyes of her soul another Lover. It was one of those instantaneous conversions which know of no waverings. Henceforth her life became a wondrous pattern of super-human penance and heavenly contemplation, in which human relationships—for example that to her son—were sacrificed in a way that would not be lawful but for a unique vocation, as was the case, too, with Angela de Foligno. Mauriac, while being justifiably repelled by this and other aspects of her penitential life, yet does full justice to its essentially supernatural inspiration.

With the same understanding he treats her almost exclusive devotion to the Passion, that refuses to look beyond the Cross to the Resurrection and the glorious life of the Holy Trinity. It goes without saying that Mauriac, who is sometimes wholesomely provocative, holds the reader's interest from beginning to end. His work is another welcome addition to the modern French hagiographical books that make the Saints living people. The translation runs smoothly; the frontispiece is the reproduction of an interesting work by Gino Severini.

H. C. GRAEF

THE STORY OF MATT TALBOT. By Malachy Gerard Carroll. (The Mercier Press; 8s.6d.)

Matt's sanctity was definitely pre-ACTU; not that he would have been against it. Although he did not attend his fellow-workmen's strike meetings, he spent his savings helping their families. But Matt was of an eremitical nature. After his 'conversion' and abandonment of Guinness he lived by himself and spent all his time on works of charity and in prayer. He became foreman in a timber yard and used the old bills for noting down prayers etc. On one side: 'J. L. Green. To timber purchased—42/6', on the other, 'Jesus, says Origen, is the Sun of Justice arising with the Spring of Grace upon our hearts'. He was a good workman and respected by his fellows, who often consulted him. 'Matt's different', they said, trying to express their intuition of his holiness. Yet it was a difference rooted in ordinariness. He did not marry, but this was no part of a plan of his own. He was proposed to by a pious cook and replied that he would make a novena to see what God wished. He replied later that our Lady had told him not to marry.

This book is written in a popular dramatic style with a cascade of metaphors and Irish colloquialism—often very pointed and apt, sometimes sloppy. We think that the dramatisation and the very frequent spiritual developments from some word or action of Matt's are substantially true to the facts as they are known—and it undoubtedly paints in the Dublin background clearly and colourfully. It is a convincing description of sanctity, and a needed one. If the Church puts her seal on the holiness of this Irish ascetic (in the true Celtic tradition with his chains and fasts—and the first to be canonised for how many centuries?), 'The face of the common man will be lifted to him in heaven. The message of Nazareth—that master-message of Matt Talbot's life—will be brought again before the world'.

I would add a word of sorrow to see the Mercier Press, founded explicitly for the propagation of Truth, descending to the modern advertising habit of 'boosting' its authors in a way which is really not convincing.

JOHN M. TODD.

LE MARIAGE CHRETIEN. By Chanoine Jacques Leclercq. (Casterman; n.p.)

This is the second edition of a work characterised by exact theology and acute observation of human relationships. If there is nothing very new in it, the approach is interesting and refreshing. Particularly noteworthy is the chapter on 'L'amour affectif et charnel', which displays an unusual appreciation of feminine needs in marriage.

E.Q.

NOW WELCOME SUMMER. By Francis Herlihy. (Clonmore & Reynolds; 8s.6d.)

Any competent narrative of work in the mission fields must appeal to us, and Father Herlihy's narrative is in every way satisfying. He is unobtrusive, proving himself an admirable guide in those far-away places where, in spite of opposition and hardship, so much has been done for God. The later chapters in the book, where the experienced missionary analyses the Japanese character and discusses the missionary prospects among the Japanese, are particularly illuminating.

Looking back over his work in Korea, Father Herlihy concludes on a hopeful note. 'I have dreamed of a summer', he writes, 'slowly awakening the fields that many died to sow, and surely driving night's long black from the Land of Morning Calm.' May it indeed be so.

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