

BOOK REVIEWS

A COMPANION TO MR. WELLS' OUTLINE OF HISTORY. By Hilaire Belloc. (Sheed & Ward; 3/6 net.)

It is a pleasant thought that possibly posterity's gratitude to Mr. Wells will arise from two main facts. He is the creator of innumerable short stories that are masterpieces of their kind, and he was the cause, unwilling cause no doubt, of Mr. Belloc's writing *A Companion to Mr. Wells' Outline of History*, that is even now a classic. The work has received countless reviews, and there is little to be said about this cheap re-issue, except to welcome it. Apart altogether from the references to Mr. Wells, it deserves to be read and studied for the vast amount of instruction it affords. For many Catholics it may well be the starting point for more extended reading on the scientific points raised. A Catholic grounded in this work, and intelligently responding to the stimulus given, will be equipped to fearlessly do his part in spreading the light of Catholic Faith. No need is greater to-day than the need for keen and instructed Catholics.

F. B.

THE MONSTROUS REGIMENT. A Book about Queen Elizabeth. By Christopher Hollis (pp. 235; Sheed & Ward; 7/6 net).

'Is it a good title?' a reader may ask as he lays down this fascinating book. All sorts of variations on the theme will suggest themselves: 'Women in politics,' 'Who pulled the strings?' 'The Sixteenth Century Catholic.' None of them will do, and the reader will keep looking at the present title and saying: 'Yes, it is the right one after all, but it ought to have been in inverted commas.' Could one pay a greater compliment to a book than to worry over its title after having read it?

The book is 'about Queen Elizabeth'; it is not a portrait; nor is it a 'study.' It is rather a series of vignettes, thumb-nail sketches of a number of characters who figured on the English stage in the sixteenth century—and left it worse than they found it! For that is the fact that emerges. First of all comes the Queen herself. An atheist in practice; in theory—what? Unscrupulous, untruthful; none dare deny it. Yet possibly the victim of her age and environment, or should we say