

## CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of 'BLACKFRIARS'

Dear Sir.—Your correspondent Mr Everitt expresses surprise at the inaccuracy of my statement in an article of BLACKFRIARS, in the January number, p. 14, to the effect that 'the Church of England is a state department and its bishops and clergy are government officials drawing their revenues from the state'. Now I freely admit that these words are not intended to have a technical or specialised meaning, but I venture to think that the sense which I wish to convey by them is sufficiently clear. When I say that the Church of England is a state department I have the authority behind me of Cardinal Newman who in his 'Anglican Difficulties' wrote: 'The National Church is strictly part of the Nation . . . it is simply an organ or department of the State, all ecclesiastical acts really proceeding from the civil power'. The Anglican bishops may well be described as state officials inasmuch as they are nominees of the Crown, and exercise what authority they are allowed, at the bidding of the civil power. Even 'the Clergy in Convocation assembled has no power to make canons or constitutions whatsoever in matters of doctrine, discipline or otherwise to bind the Clergy and laity of the land without the common consent of Parliament'. (Resolution of the House of Commons, 16 December, 1640.) Although the Anglican clergy do not receive their emoluments directly out of the State Treasury, they receive their incomes from sources which have been ultimately put at their disposal by the Crown. Mr Everitt must know quite well that Henry VIII possessed himself of a vast amount of ecclesiastical property, and though much of it was squandered and diverted, some portion of it found its way back to the church, taking the shape of endowments for bishops and chapters.

Yours truly,

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

---



---

 REVIEWS

WELSH POETIC DICTION. By T. H. Parry-Williams. (Geoffrey Cumberlege; 5s. 0d.)

The Sir John Rhys Memorial Lecture delivered before the British Academy in 1946 by Professor Parry-Williams has a much wider interest than its academic credentials might suggest. It is, one need hardly say, a learned and carefully argued study of the verbal content of Welsh poetry from the earliest written fragments of the ninth century to the poetry of today. But for the English reader with only a general interest in poetry it provides a clear guide to unfamiliar territory. The mysteries of *cynganedd* and other features of traditional Welsh poetical diction and metre are indicated and illustrated by quotations (with intelligible translations). Even so

necessarily condensed a study is eloquent testimony to the wealth of Welsh poetry and its capacity for developing the resources of an unequalled classical discipline. From the unknown author of the *Book of Aneirin* (a manuscript of poetry written perhaps as early as the sixth century) to the lyrical poetry of the nineteenth century there is an essential continuity which has no rival in European literature, and one may hope that Professor Parry-Williams's paper may enlighten those who continue to ask: *Is there any Welsh poetry?*

J. A. E.

THE BASIS AND ESSENTIALS OF WELSH. By J. P. Vinay and W. O. Thomas. (Nelson; 5s. 0d.)

Basic Welsh, to the harassed student of its logical, but none the less formidable, grammar might seem an impossibility. But the latest volume in the Cambridge Orthological Institute's series of Basic text-books on modern languages is a compact and valuable guide to the foothills of that mountainous territory—Welsh. It would be absurd to claim too much for a drastically simplified introduction to what is essential, but clear arrangement (aided by an intelligent choice of printing types) and an avoidance of academic irrelevance makes this new Welsh grammar a welcome addition to the sparse selection available. It is a pity that the sound *ll* should be described as 'a voiceless lateral fricative', and the advice to go to the west coast for a Welsh-speaking holiday is, alas, too optimistic.

THE TRUE LEVEL. By Frances Wynne. (Gill; 7s. 6d.)

In her sequel to *Eastward of All* Mrs Wynne considers the effects of the Catholic faith on its possessor: the new perspectives it gives to people, places, and indeed to every aspect of created reality. Once more the discursive charm of the writing lightens a theme which might otherwise appear too naively argued. Mrs Wynne is always at her best when she is describing the double world of Ireland and Wales, whose mutual understanding is certainly being fostered by her books. Her account of Garthewin, no less than that of Mass in Dublin's crowded churches, reveals her generous mind as an interpreter of loyalties she understands and shares. One reader at least would prefer more about Wales (and Ireland) and less literary criticism and fewer essays in the perilous matters of political theory.

Mrs Wynne has what one can only call an international view of life, and nothing is more attractive in *The True Level* than a constant return to the deep, though at the time unsuspected, meaning of events and meetings. In all her travels she is haunted by the heavenly fingerprints in all she sees, and her account of Wales in particular is thereby greatly enriched. It is good to find the last chapter of the book devoted to the memorable celebrations last year at the Abbey of Valle Crucis.

J. A.