

opens up the correlative question of the nature of the act. What, in the end, are we to say of an act which is at once intensely vital and the consummation of the voiding and spoliation of all soul-activity, when the void produced is not the mere condition of a contemplation of which the formal medium is positive as in the case of supernatural mystical experience, but is itself stated to be the formal medium of the experience in question? That these questions persist in spite of an essay which in effect is largely concerned to elucidate them, is perhaps due to the brief space which such a mode of presentation can afford to a new development of thought.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

#### HISTORY

THE ANGLO-SAXON TRADITION. By George Catlin. (Kegan Paul; 10s. 6d.)

It is easier to recognize Anglo-Saxony than to define it, and Professor Catlin clears many ideas in his defence of its spirit and his lively and learned account of some of its characteristics. It is not a *völkisch* philosophy of life, bounded by race, nation, or state; for it leaves close breeding to dairy cows and the like, would have frontiers no barrier to intercourse, and no longer aims at political centralization. It is held together not by blood nor by economic interest, but by a community of rational custom, a habit of mind. Dagoes begin at Calais . . . we make the joke at our own expense, and that kind of satire goes back at least as far as Defoe. Those who belong to this tradition know its faults as well as do those from outside, saying, 'there, there,' to the criticisms, like a tolerant grandmother taught how to suck eggs. And grandam she seems to the Gaydas and Göbbelses, to the boys all biceps but butterless; a selfish old lady, time that she died, but still in her mittens she holds tight to the bonds, and doles out the pocket money. She never had rickets as a child, still less a psychological birth trauma; always she knew what she wanted, and got it. Now her wild oats are porridge.

This is a book to dispose of such nursery fancies, and it is a warning as well, for it takes as a text the words of Robert Burton, 'We are of the same humours and inclinations as our predecessors were: you shall find us all alike, much at one, we and our sons.' I must confess to pausing at the word Anglo-Saxon, but considering that the substance of the book was delivered in the form of lectures in areas from the Great Lakes to the Deep South, that the values exhibited in its pages have not an exclusively, nor even mainly, English accent, and that now it

does not put over the Hengist and Horsa stuff, then the word is inevitable. This manifesto makes articulate something stubborn if silent, the challenge of an old culture to the raw ideologies of Race and of Class. Often we may differ, and pungently, and that is the point; we can if we want to. For the ideal is one of experimental variety and an open world, not dogmatic uniformity and a closed system. And if the solemn frivolousness of cricket is sometimes present, who will misunderstand?

The argument is that there is a Grand Tradition of human values, formed by Christianity from Judæa, Hellas and Rome, corroborated by Confucianism, agreed upon by men of insight throughout the world. The very norms of civilization spring from this perennial culture and decency. Within this general tradition, a specific stream is noticeable, common to the Anglo-Saxon people, but not nationalistically limited to them, which takes its rise in the sixteenth century and continues to this day. This Anglo-Saxon Tradition has certain definite notes: humanism and respect for personality, liberty, experimentalism, tolerance, accommodation in social method, federalism, democracy, and certain qualities of moralism and of public spirit.

These notes are considered at length, the author leaving on one side such themes as the Common Law and Constitutionalism. St. Thomas More is the pattern of the English humanist, with his sense of liberty under law, his rejection of the vulgarity of Tudor power. The spirit still lives, if only in the distaste for barbaric tribalism and the boss in jack-boots, though we may suffer from him in slippers. The author is not unaware of the devils that attend on freedom, Whiggery on one side, intellectual immorality on the other: or of those that attend on moralism, hypocrisy and the idea that England expects every American to do his duty. Not least interesting are the contacts he indicates with the French Catholic Tradition, the spirit of respect for reason and personality, and the regard for voluntary societies.

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

CUTHBERT TUNSTAL. By Charles Sturge. (Longmans; 21s.)

In giving us so much on so prominent an historical personage as Cuthbert Tunstal, Bishop of Durham, Dr. Sturge is at once to be congratulated and thanked. But I think Catholic readers will agree that he has not by any means arrived at a complete, probably not even at a correct estimate of his hero, for hero Tunstal was, although it was not until his eighty-fifth