

us the meaningless hyperbole which an artist of Nash's complexity sometimes inspires in less accomplished critics.

This is a book to which all students of Nash's works will constantly feel the need to refer. Unfortunately the limited number of plates is infuriating to the reader who is forced to turn constantly to the Nash: Eates edition. Surely the publishers would have been wise to add an extra guinea to the price of a volume, which is already beyond the popular range, in order to illustrate it more amply.

MARIA SHIRLEY

LISZT. By Walter Beckett. (Dent; 10s. 6d.)

When a publisher embarks on a series such as the *Master Musicians* it is almost inevitable that at least an occasional volume should be written to fill a gap in the list rather than to meet a real need. It would be surprising if Dr Beckett's book on Liszt had completely avoided this charge, for Sacheverell Sitwell has already given us a characteristically *soigné* biography, while Humphrey Searle has published a detailed and penetrating study of the music itself. But there are so many aspects of Liszt's life and work, varied, contradictory even, that a book such as this which succeeds in relating them all and in showing their interdependence is nevertheless illuminating and valuable.

The difficulty of writing about Liszt, though, is that he is such an interesting figure in himself that it is not easy to hold him at arm's length to see him in a historical perspective. Dr Beckett's Liszt is too isolated a figure. It is not enough to admit flaws in Liszt's music, or to write it off as largely a failure. However often Liszt's 'ideas' and 'experiments in composition' failed in his own hands they had a considerable influence upon other composers, and thus have an importance beyond their intrinsic artistic value. Dr Beckett's natural anxiety to mention as many works as possible, however briefly, leaves him no room for an evaluation of the significance of Liszt's composition as a whole, or its impact upon the history of music.

ERIC TAYLOR

## NOTICES

THE SPIRIT AND FORMS OF PROTESTANTISM, by Louis Bouyer (Harvill Press, 18s.), is an English translation by A. V. Littledale of *Du Protestantisme a l'Eglise* which was reviewed in the March, 1956 number of BLACKFRIARS pp. 130-132). This, together with JOHN HENRY NEWMAN: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS, edited with introductions by Henry Tristram (Sheed and Ward, 18s.), are books of outstanding worth which will be invaluable to all interested in our separated christian

brethren and the question of their transition to the unity of the Catholic Church. A French edition of these Newman writings is discussed in the course of an article in the December, 1956 number of *BLACKFRIARS* (pp. 516-525).

*THE STUMBLING BLOCK*, by François Mauriac (Harvill Press, 9s. 6d.), is a translation by Gerard Hopkins of articles which first appeared in that admirable review, *La Table Ronde*, in 1948. M. Mauriac's religious allegiance has never been uncritical, and these essays on the difficulties of a believer (sometimes already a little out-of-date in their emphasis) reflect a mind that is honest, impatient of credulity and convinced of the primacy that charity must have. The Catholic Church for him is 'that ancient vessel of antique shape', but he never fundamentally questions that the cargo she carries is the Truth.

*EARLY ITALIAN PAINTING, 1250-1500*, by F. M. Godfrey (Tiranti, 21s.), is a useful addition to the series of 'Scopas Handbooks' for students. To deal with two and a half centuries of Italian painting, from Cimabue to Bellini, in less than two hundred pages must test a writer's capacity for economic commentary, and Dr Godfrey provides a temperate, if unexciting, guide to a complicated territory. The book's usefulness for students is enhanced by the inclusion of a good biographical index and a list of standard books. There are 137 illustrations, necessarily reproduced on a small scale but providing the indispensable accompaniment to the text.

*THE BOOK OF LIFE: THE STORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT*, by Daniel-Rops (Kency, \$3.75) starts engagingly with a boy and girl of ancient Rome entering the catacombs and with what they found there, and then proceeds to retell our Lord's life in a simple yet vivid way for children. This is a companion volume to the same author's child's history of Israel, *The Book of Books*.