

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

REUNION WITH THE EAST. We usually associate the word Reunion exclusively with the reclaiming of our non-Catholic fellow-countrymen to Catholic unity; but the immense work which is being undertaken towards reunion with the separated Eastern Churches should not be passed over. **PAX**, the monthly review of the Prinknash Benedictines, takes the lead in making the history, thought and spirituality of the East better known to English Catholics. Each quarter Pax appears as an 'Eastern Churches Number' to which those who do not wish to take the review monthly can subscribe for 2/- yearly. The number for July contains a gentle criticism of the reply of the Archbishop of Athens to the Encyclical *Lux Veritatis*, and an interesting account of the Uniat Melkite Church. It is not, perhaps, generally realized that it is the Melkite patriarch who 'unquestionably by direct descent and undoubted historical continuity represents the original line of Antioch.' Another step towards understanding with Eastern Christians has been taken by the 'monks of reunion' at the Prieuré Benedictin, Amay s/M., Belgium, the editors of the quarterly review *Irenikon*. They have now opened a 'School of Byzantine Ikonography' to make the ikons of the Easterns better known in the West, and with them a deeper appreciation of the riches of Eastern spirituality. They produce not only ikons themselves, but pictorial reproductions in all sizes. An illustrated catalogue of their productions may be obtained for 2.50 Belgian francs. Their enterprise is well calculated, not only to foster that understanding with Eastern Christians which is the necessary prelude to reunion, but also to provide Westerns with *objets de piété* more worthy than many to which they are accustomed. The French Dominican review **LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE** also devotes regular sections to Eastern Christianity. The number for June 25th contains an important article by Père Congar, O.P., on *Orthodox Thought regarding the Unity of the Church*. The theories of recent Russian theologians on this point have so much in common with theories put forward by non-Catholic writers in the West, notably by those who have come directly or indirectly under the influence of the *Kon-*

fiktstheorie of such writers as Sabatier, Sohm and Heiler, that his criticism has an interest considerably wider than its title might lead one to suppose. A new review, **RUSSIE ET CHRETIENNE**, published by the Dominican *Editions Istina*, 59, rue de la Barre, Lille, reproduces all the articles concerning Orthodoxy from *La Vie Intellectuelle* as well as exclusive contributions. It seems very well informed on happenings in the Orthodox Church both inside and outside the Soviet Union.

THOMIST METAPHYSICS AND AESTHETICS. One is often asked for a simple presentation of the elements of Thomist metaphysics in plain English. **F. E. McMahon** has rendered a great service in reducing them to less than twenty pages in **THE NEW SCHOLASTICISM** for July. Particular points of Thomist doctrine are never fully intelligible until the metaphysical foundations of the whole system have been mastered, and we strongly recommend this article even to the most casual students of Thomism. One or two reservations are nevertheless called for. The statement of the object of metaphysics according to 'some modern Thomists,' which the writer endorses, is very misleading, since metaphysics abstracts from 'this and that.' The presentation of the essence-existence distinction is considerably better than most, and should help to dissipate perplexities and misconceptions, but it is not, verbally at least, that of St. Thomas himself.

In the same number appears a long-needed attempt to compare and synthesize the aesthetics of St. Thomas and Kant by **A. W. Levi**. His article should help to elucidate the thought of both philosophers and to show that their teaching on the nature and perception of beauty, far from being contradictory, is largely complementary, though they differ widely in their angle of approach. We believe that the differences which the writer nevertheless finds between them would be found to be not very profound as a result of further study and thought.

CATHOLIC CRITICISM. Fr. **M. C. D'Arcy, S.J.**, contributes an admirable article on *The Functions of a Catholic Newspaper* to **THE CATHOLIC HERALD** of June 30th. After explaining the distinctive ideals of a Catholic Press, and the par-

ticular difficulties which confront it in this country, he continues:

To overcome these and other difficulties will need time and persevering labour, and there is **always** the danger of being forced into a false attitude or a one-sided and cranky view by tinmerited criticism. The image which Chesterton used of the Church as a chariot careering down the middle of the road with the heresies swerving into the ditch can be applied to newspapers. That balance of judgment, that breadth of understanding, that smiling incredulity when friends are beseeching us to accept a new and simple solution to pressing problems is a virtue which is rare and hard to keep—because it is another word for wisdom. And when we fail in wisdom we are almost certain to fail also in charity. It is neither wise nor charitable to treat those who oppose Catholic views as vicious-minded, to reckon error **as** sin, to be harsh and ever anxious to rebuke. The Holy Ghost tells **us** faith is a gift of God and not the reward of our own cleverness. and nevertheless we write at times as if the conclusions we have been taught **by** our faith gave **us** the right to despise the intelligence of men far abler than ourselves. We have so much to learn from others **of** human wisdom that we should be grateful to thrm and be gentle with their mistakes. It is so un-Catholic to try to score **off** others, to review their books with scorn and to praise up the flimsiest of writings just because its author happens to be a Catholic. **A** Catholic newspaper should be strict in its criticisms and estimates for fear of lowering its tone and giving ground for the reproach that it likes tittle-tattle, that it praises to order, and that it has no appreciation of sound learning. If reviewers require a very high standard of excellence before they indulge in superlatives, Catholics will be able to choose much more fortunately what to read and what to leave alone, and the level of Catholic writing will rise.

To help the latter full opportunity should be given for the expression of opinion within the limits of orthodoxy, and a variance of opinion and discussion is thoroughly wholesome, even when they seem to be in conflict with current beliefs and the opinions generally held **by** the Editor and his colleagues. The latter, if they are free from vanity and too much self-esteem, will be glad to ventilate all manner of views **on** subjects which are of vital interest to Catholics.

ROVE'S VOICES. Any sign that Fr. D'Arcy's ideals are likely to **be** realized and that Catholic journalism has ceased to be an uncritical and mutual admiration society **is** very welcome. But it **is** necessary to insist that the individual critic

must be fully conscious of his own limitations: he will **not**, for instance, arrogate to himself the rights and duties of the supreme teaching authority of the Church by pronouncing on the orthodoxy of a fellow Catholic writer, still less will he assume the business of the Almighty by impugning another's sincerity. Variance of opinion and constructive criticism are alike impossible if the views of an individual writer are to be taken as those of the Vatican. The announcement by the CHURCH TIMES of a variance of opinion between a BLACKFRIARS contributor and a TABLET note-writer as *Rome's Two Voices* is not yet so patently, stupid as it should be. It also shows that the spirit of cheap-jack controversy is still far from dead.

THE DECENCY CAMPAIGN. 'Damning sewers' might not be thought a hygienic or beneficial occupation, but it is Bishop Cantwell's description of the activities of the American Legion of Decency. Those who have the good of society and of the screen at heart will regard some of the Legion's activities with mixed feelings. Doubtless the Americans know best how to conduct their own business, but the Legion's publicity is not always such as to inspire confidence in its competence to reform film entertainment. THE UNIVERSE for July reproduces both the pledge issued by the American Legion and that issued by the Westminster Catholic Federation: the sobriety of the latter compares favourably with the sensationalism and priggishness of the former, and it may be hoped that, in other respects also, the 'Clean Film Movement' in this country will not imitate too closely its American counterpart. The method of boycott is not **one** that, under ordinary circumstances, would recommend itself, but organized attack on the box-office seems to be the only effective means of dealing with an evil whose root is a corrupt industrialism. It is to be hoped that the awakening of the Catholic conscience in the matter will, when the immediate objective has been pinned, issue in something more positive and constructive than can be effected by abstention. The call on the Catholic Press to undertake serious film criticism is more urgent than ever. The publication of black and white lists based exclusively on considerations of decency, without reference to aesthetic and entertainment value, will never effectively improve our programmes. There is a crass vulgarity,

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besides that of indecency, which is no less degrading, morally and culturally, and in this respect there does not seem to be much to choose between the publicity methods of the Hollywood and the Decency rackets. All this is said with full appreciation of the good work the Legion is doing in removing a particularly gross evil from Hollywood productions.

Timeo Danaos The enthusiasm with which the British trade-journal, *THE ERA*, has greeted the American decency campaign is probably sincere, but points to the danger of the British campaign being used as another stick to beat Hollywood by the 'British' film interests. The *Eta* (July 4th) pronounced that Hollywood's sex-talkies 'are deliberately designed to weaken the bases of civilization.' Charged by Nerina Shute, film-critic of the *SUNDAY REFEREE*, with a lack of humour, *The Era* has replied (July 11th) with an indignant and impassioned defence of the Honour of Womanhood. Law and Order and a repeated declaration of Hollywood's deliberate determination to wreck all three. 'The Catholic Church,' it says, 'in its campaign against obscenities is fighting the battle of womanhood, but it is a battle which should not be left wholly to the Churches.' The *Era* has indeed consistently fought against obscenities—on the strict understanding that they emanate from *American* studios. On another page it urges that all American (nothing is said of other) exported films should be compelled to be censored by the League of Nations. And 'as for the institution of monarchy, we (The *Eta*) are unable to recall any Hollywood film in which a throne and its heirs have not been portrayed as half-wits, poltroons or creatures of farce.' Compare, of course, Garbo in Hollywood's *Christina* with Lughton in London's *Henry VIII*.

THE CHURCH AND WAR. A powerful indictment of the private armament concerns by Mr. John Eppstein appears in the July *MONTH* under the heading *The Reapers of Death*. While the information he supplies will not be new to readers of such books as *The Bloody Traffic* and *Patriotism, Ltd.*, Mr. Eppstein's article is timely in drawing the inexorable conclusion that 'a Catholic who owns shares in Vickers-Armstrong or Schneider-Creusot, whether he in-

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tends it or not, is, under existing circumstances, committing sabotage against the Papal endeavour to establish a Christian peace in the world.' He believes the only practical remedy to be the nationalization of the industry, or, at least, State control of the final stage of manufacture. He justifies this **programme** by reference to the pronouncement of the Holy Father that: 'It is rightly contended that certain forms of property must be reserved to the State, since they carry with them an opportunity of domination too great to be left to private individuals without injury to the community at large.' He pleads for the adoption of the Traffic in **Arms** Convention of 1925 as a first step. 'Given the driving power of public opinion, comparable to that which Cardinal Lavignerie aroused against the African slave trade half a century ago—and nothing less is needed for the purpose—the above system would cut at the root of the evil.'—A useful history of the Church's attitude to war, with special stress **on** the teaching of St. Thomas and the Spanish Thomists, over the signature of Fr. Honorio Muñoz, O.P., begins in the June **CONTEMPORANEA** of Valencia.

FATHER BEDE JARRETT. Readers of our May number will welcome another—and longer—memoir of Fr. Bede by Fr. Bernard Delany, O.P., to be found in the current **DUBLIN REVIEW**. Fr. Gervase Mathew, O.P., contributes an excellent memoir to the **DOWANHILL MAGAZINE**.

PENGUIN.