

been easier if the territories of the tribes to which reference is made had been marked on the end-map. The excellent plans and illustrations help the reader to visualise life in the towns and on the country estates, though one misses the re-creation of atmosphere possible in a more leisurely book such as Dill's *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Roman Empire*. His appreciation of the circles of Ausonius and Sidonius Apollinaris is a useful complement to Mrs Brogan's fuller treatment of the more mundane side of Gallo-Roman life. In the chapter on religion, which includes a sober sketch of the development of Christianity in Gaul, mention might have been made of the Gnostic sects in the Greek trading communities. These, however, are only minor omissions in an otherwise most informative and interesting book.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

ST AUGUSTINE: ENCHIRIDION. Translated by Ernest Evans (S.P.C.K.; 15s.)

ST AUGUSTINE: LETTERS 83-130. Translated by Sister W. Parsons, S.N.D.
(Fathers of the Church, Inc.; n.p.)

St Augustine never, so far as I know, put a line of Greek or any other language into Latin. Yet in his fashion he was a very great translator. He took hold of the Catholic faith, which is at once something timeless and revealed in time, and translated it whole into contemporary Latin Africa. He had a keen sense both of eternity and time, especially his own time, and it is thanks to his understanding of the tension between the two, his holding on to both of them together without pretending they could ever fit, that he is never out of date and always in need of retranslation.

This need is not really met, one feels, by such translations as these. The English seems unreal and lifeless—deader than the dead language it is translated from. It is marred by unnecessary archaisms and pedantry. Sister Parsons, for example, allows one of Augustine's correspondents to address him as 'your venerable Unanimity'. That is just transliteration, not translation. As a result we really get no echo of that modern ring which, as she rightly says, many of these letters have about them.

Canon Evans provides his translation with notes which on the whole are very helpful. But he permits himself at times to condescend to St Augustine from the height of his modern certainties in the matter of exegesis and biblical criticism. He implies that Augustine's whole conception of the Scriptures and their inspiration is outmoded, and corrects his interpretation of one or two passages with more assurance than the matter warrants.

No one indeed expects a modern commentator simply to surrender his judgment to St Augustine or any other human authority, and swallow him whole. Many of his opinions are as untenable as the faulty text and the antique science they were based upon. But he usually expresses them with great caution and reserve, and in any case they are not what we read him

for. Since he is a Father of the Church, one would like to see in a Christian commentator at least a certain reluctance to dissent from his views or assert their insufficiency. There is room even nowadays for 'pious interpretation'. Unless we are prepared at least to suspend judgment on the many things in St Augustine which we find hard to accept or understand, and are willing simply to learn what he has to teach, we can never hope to translate into our own idiom of thought the truly Christian wisdom of this great scribe learned in the kingdom of heaven, who brought forth from his treasure so many things new and old.

E.H.

MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS HOUSES, ENGLAND AND WALES. By David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock. (Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd.; 42s.)

The authors have achieved a fine work in producing this book of reference on a subject that so constantly crops up in almost every branch of English history, whether religious or political, artistic or economic.

In a valuable prefatory *Notitia Monastica*, Dom David Knowles traces the development of the study of monastic remains from the notes of John Leland, who wrote in the days of the spoiler, down to the work of the great cardinal, Dom Aidan Gasquet, whose list of religious houses printed in 1888 as an appendix to the second volume of his *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* 'has remained the only tolerably complete catalogue available to the general reader'. It is fitting that another Benedictine, assisted by Mr Neville Hadcock, should now give us what we may well call 'the complete catalogue', for it is difficult to imagine their combined work requiring in future years anything beyond small additions or corrections.

Dom Knowles has likewise contributed an excellent essay of some fifty pages on the origins and development of English religious life, whilst Mr Hadcock, the compiler of the map, *Monastic Britain*, published in 1950, has provided some interesting tables (pp. 359-65) showing the increase and decrease of the religious orders both in number of houses and of persons. From these we gather that the Austin Canons led the way with 230 establishments until Henry V in 1414 suppressed all alien monasteries, namely such priories or abbeys as depended immediately upon foreign ones. This first monastic suppression did not however affect religious who were subject to a central authority abroad such as the Cistercians or the friars. Benedictines before Henry V's reign possessed 225 houses, Cistercians 76, Premonstratensians 36, Gilbertines (the only English Order) 24, Franciscans 60, Dominicans 53, Carmelites 37, Austin Friars 32, Hospitallers 53. There were nine Charterhouses and a number of smaller orders owning about half-a-dozen houses each, and in all there were 1,053 religious establishments in this country.

It is with this vast amount of material that the bulk of the work (pp.