

Blackfriars

appearances of such. Dr. Atkins speaks in more than one place as if mystics replaced Catholic doctrine by individual experience and obscures the fact that the greatest mystics have been those most faithful to Catholic doctrine and practice. The free approach to God, which he repeatedly assumes to be denied to Catholics, is uniquely theirs. Scientific knowledge can only be obtained by those who know and observe its implicit principles: the freest approach to God is open to those who accept and follow what revelation teaches. It is curious to find cropping up repeatedly in the minds of devout non-Catholics the *naïve* belief that a licence they would be the first to condemn in any other branch of knowledge or practice will be a paramount aid where religion is concerned.

F.B.

MEMORIES AND MUSINGS. By the Right Rev. Sir D. O. Hunter-Blair, Bart., O.S.B. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd. ; 7/6. i-vii ; 284 pp.)

Although Abbot Sir David Hunter-Blair does not himself care to read autobiography he wisely realises that not everyone shares this dislike. 'Memories and Musings' is so full of interesting facts and fancies that one cannot but marvel at the retentiveness of the writer's memory. Few have the opportunity of meeting so many famous people and even fewer have a pen so quick to record. To the 'Memories' belong facts and information about almost everyone of note in the last fifty years. Into the 'Musings,' whether on umbrellas or angels, there ultimately creeps the fact. The monk chroniclers have not entirely disappeared. Whether it be in correcting a false impression of Trollope or in adding 'more than a touch of romance' to the prosaic newspaper notice that the King of Spain has arrived at Dunrobin Castle on a visit to the Duke of Sutherland, the book always holds our attention.

Those who did not read these essays when they appeared over the *nom de guerre* Nestor in the 'Catholic Times' and come upon them in book form with their authorship revealed, will realise that Abbot Hunter-Blair is certainly not among those writers of memoirs of whom it has been said that they have either entirely lost their memories, or done nothing worth remembering.

G.