

REVIEWS

THE CARDIJN STORY. By Michael de la Bedoyère. (Longmans, Green and Co.; 15s.)

Monsignor Joseph Cardijn is the founder of the Young Christian Workers Movement, and so much are the man and his work bound up that *The Cardijn Story* is as much a history of the one as a biography of the other. However, Mr de la Bedoyère does not claim to have written a full biography, but merely to have attempted to convey something of the spirit and personality of 'one of the most remarkable priests of our time', and his attempt has been largely successful. Not completely successful, though: partly, perhaps, because of the difficulty in writing one of the first books about a man and a society distinguished by a 'lack of self-contemplation' and partly because of a seemingly somewhat uncritical approach. He admits that there are aspects of his subject's character (and, consequently, of the spirit of the Y.C.W.) that do not at once appeal to English people, and whilst he is at pains to show that these traits are hardly of fundamental importance, he seems to have hurried over one or two incidents that might have helped to complete the picture. What, for instance, were Cardinal Mercier's own reasons for finding it necessary to suppress the nascent movement? and why did Tonnet, a founder member, eventually resign from it and so soon afterwards find himself in disagreement with his former colleagues?

But these are small matters, and do not detract from the real merit of the book in bringing out the force and single-mindedness of this dedicated priest and of the greatness and potentialities of the Y.C.W. Movement. In doing this it is timely and welcome, and to none will it be more valuable, surely, than to those who are still sceptical or ill-at-ease about the 'apostolate of the worker'; it may not convert all critics, but it should at least allay their more serious misgivings.

M.T.

THE FAMILY CLINIC. A Book of Questions and Answers. By John L. Thomas, S.J. (The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland; \$3.95.)

This well-produced book is compiled from an American syndicated newspaper column in which Fr Thomas gives short answers to readers' queries on social and moral problems; in this country a somewhat similar series is run by Fr Lawson, S.J., in the monthly *Christian Democrat*. Fr Thomas has divided his questions and answers into four main categories: husband-wife relationships, parent-child relationships, pre-marital problems, and the family and society. Altogether there are

over eighty of these essays, each covering about two pages. Some of these questions sound alarming to our ears, for instance, 'Is it All Right for a Boy to Marry While Still in School?' It transpires that the anxious prospective bride is twenty and her likely husband is a college student of twenty-four whose course will not finish for another two years. On the other hand there are many of these questions and answers which, within their compass, give valuable guidance; the author handles in a masterly fashion the perennial problem of 'How Parents Best Give Their Children Sex Instruction?' and his summary of why the Church is so critical of mixed marriages is also well done.

Several of the questions and answers in *The Family Clinic* are addressed too exclusively to the American public to be relevant in Britain; for instance it is improbable that a priest or a parent would have to worry about whether girls in senior high schools should wear engagement rings or not, and the question, 'I'm Irish; He's Italian; and Mother is Upset' is unlikely to crop up over here. Nevertheless, in spite of these limitations, Fr Thomas does sometimes give a fresh trans-Atlantic approach to the more normal queries that a priest or a Catholic social worker will have to answer. Written in a popular style, and covering a wide range of topical problems, *The Family Clinic* puts across Catholic teaching in a straightforward manner, and should be especially helpful to the enquiring non-specialist, whether Catholic or not.

E. M. G. BELFIELD

THE ENGLISH RELIGIOUS HERITAGE. By Conrad Pepler, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 27s. 6d.)

A musicologist, writing recently to one of the Sunday newspapers, attributed modern neglect of English late medieval and early renaissance church music to 'the anglophobia of the Roman Church'. Although Fr Conrad Pepler's thought and language are more reasonable than this, *The English Religious Heritage*, like so much else of his admirable work, springs from his conviction that the general indifference, an indifference sometimes hardly to be distinguished from hostility, among Catholics in England to this country's medieval heritage deprives them of a valuable aid to the spiritual life in the writings of the medieval mystics. He begins this present work by asserting that the 'infused contemplation' of which they treat is 'in the normal progress of the Christian in his ascent to God', and that the applicability of medieval mystical writing to the life of prayer of the ordinary man today will be more clearly seen if, firstly, we divest our minds of the language and thought which we have learned from more recent French and Spanish teachers, and, secondly, avoid the common