

Blackfriars

TWELVE YEARS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. By John L. Stoddard. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 7/6.)

This book contains much that will be of interest to English readers. Mr. Stoddard tells us that it was written to reaffirm and justify his belief in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. It is to some extent autobiographical, and his memories of American agnosticism since the days of Colonel Ingersoll and the 'Infidel Lectures' give it a particular interest. As a controversial work it is of unequal value. He writes on Biblical Criticism as a disciple of Dr. Hilarin Felder. But his use of historical evidence is not always satisfactory, for the distinction between a corroboration and a proof sometimes seems to be ignored, and there are several minor errors—the name 'Chrestus,' for example, is not a form of 'Christus,' nor are titles unknown in early Christian epitaphs. Still his theories will always be found interesting, and his facts often incontrovertible. The book also includes essays on the Papal attitude to the Lausanne conference, and on secular education in the United States, besides several discussions between an agnostic named 'Arnold,' his Catholic friend 'Ernest,' and a 'Fr. X.' Both the essays and the discussions are illuminating, and if there are some things in this book that may seem strange to the present generation of English Catholics, this should only enhance its interest for them.

G.M.

The **FLORILEGIUM PATRISTICUM** edited by Professors Geyer and Zellinger, of Bonn and Munich respectively, continues to appear in a series of *Fasciculi* of which Nos. iv, viii and xxi, containing Tertullian's *De Praescriptione*, to which is appended St. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haereses*, III, iii-iv, the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix and St. Cyprian *De Lapsis*, all critically edited by Professor Martin of Wurtzburg. Great labour has been expended on the text and it is interesting to note how Tertullian's crabbed and difficult legal Latin led to corruption as early as the tenth century owing to well-meant endeavours to make him more intelligible. The dependence of Minucius Felix on Tertullian is worked out in detail. Even in those early days poor old England had a bad reputation, for Minucius tells us that though God had deprived Britain of the sun He has made up for it by giving her a warm sea! Hartel's edition of St. Cyprian comes in for some shrewd knocks, but presumably it will long hold its place despite the many defects which have been repeatedly pointed out. The notes in these *Fascicules* are most of them concerned with textual questions. We could have wished that space had been

found for some at least of the admirable theological and historical notes which were given in the handy little editions by Hurter, SS. *Patrum Opuscula Selecta* which, alas, are rapidly disappearing. This is not to disparage the admirable work here presented by Dr. Martin and the general Editors; Hurter's editions were not meant to be textually critical.

General interest in Patristic studies grows apace. Bardy's INTRODUCTION TO EARLY GREEK PATRISTIC LITERATURE has been well translated by M. Mary Reginald, O.P. (Sands; pp. 192; 3/6.) It would be superfluous to praise Bardy's work, which in its English dress forms Vol. II of *The Catholic Library of Religious Knowledge: Greek Literature of the Early Christian Church*. If it only serves to make people know something at least of St. Chrysostom this excellent little volume will have done good work.

Another admirable piece of translation appears in ST. GREGORY THE GREAT, by the late Mgr. Batiffol, translated for *The Saints* series by J. L. Stoddard (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; pp. 292). The original French was reviewed in these pages some months ago.

UNDER THE PENAL LAWS. By Richard Simpson. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 3/6.)

A reprint of four contributions to *The Rambler*, with a foreword by Cardinal Gasquet; scholarly accounts of the sufferings and death of Dr. John Storey, Fr. John Hambley (*alias* Tregwethan), B. Richard White, schoolmaster, and B. Thomas Alfield. The longest and most interesting contribution is that concerning B. Richard White, a contemporary document briefly prefaced by Mr. Simpson. B. Richard, the Protomartyr of Wales, was a most lovable man, gentle, learned, courteous, gay. Oftentimes in court his jesting, bantering replies moved the people to laughter. He met his death smiling. His last words to his fellow men, spoken as the ladder was about to be moved from under him, was an apology for any jests that had offended others: 'I have been a jesting fellow, and if I have offended any that way, or by my songs, I beseech them for God's sake to forgive me.' So loved was he that it was hard to provide the necessary things for his execution: the gaoler had to steal the ladder by night, send his own servants to fetch the coals (none would hire or lend him a horse), take the axe from a butcher's stall. Bd. Richard will have not only the reverence, but also the affection, of his countrymen.

A.M.B.