

medieval English ceramics is in its infancy, and perhaps the chief value of Mr Rackham's preface is that it indicates so many puzzles still waiting to be solved—the sudden apparently transient appearance of *sgraffiato* technique in the fourteenth century or of *repoussé* decoration, the purpose of the grotesque head from Nottingham or of the Cambridge piper, even the first provenance of glaze.

G.M.

SAINT CATHERINE IN TUSCAN PAINTING. By George Kaftal. (Blackfriars Publications; 10s.6d.)

Dr Kaftal's *St Dominic in Early Tuscan Painting*, published last year, was recognised as a notable work of scholarship and also as an altogether delightful piece of book-production—an alliance sufficiently rare to be remarkable. Using the same methods, and aided by the same collaboration by his publisher and printer, he has now provided a companion volume on Saint Catherine of Siena which should receive an especially enthusiastic welcome from the countless thousands who look to St Catherine as their patron, whether as religious sisters or as Dominican tertiaries in the world. But the interest of the book is not confined to what may be called its domestic features, any more than was St Catherine herself confined in her apostolate to her immediate world. The representations of St Catherine, from the familiar portrait by Andrea Vanni (supposed by some to be a portrait, but this Dr Kaftal thinks to be doubtful) to the scenes of her life by Giovanni di Paolo (accompanied by extracts from the charming seventeenth century English translation of the Italian life by 'the Reverend Doctor Caterinus Senensis', alias Ambrosio Politi): all alike reflect that grace and integrity which so impressed her contemporaries and have gone on drawing men and women to St Catherine ever since. The iconography of the saints is a matter of more than academic consequence, and it is absorbing to watch its development under the guidance of an expert who shares the painters' devotion for the woman they intend to honour.

Dr Kaftal provides a useful introduction and detailed notes on each of the pictures reproduced. It must remain a matter for admiration that so exquisitely produced a book (there are thirty-nine full page reproductions of quite exceptional accuracy and definition) should be sold for half-a-guinea. ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

TRADITION IN SCULPTURE. By Alec Miller. (Studio Publications; 30s.)

Art manages to keep alive today less by the efforts of modern artists than by the boundless enthusiasm of a few people whose minds really are warmed and nourished by the contemplation of things excellently made. For such as these no art book can ever be a tenth part as exciting as some common object made with skill and love. For such a beholder no craftsman ever laboured excessively or in vain. To him beauty's action is everywhere stronger than fire.