

went out to help in the work, as other modern Congregations have done in different parts of the world.

Lancastershire, on page 258, is surely only a misprint; but all the way through the bulky volume it is slightly irritating to the English reader, accustomed as he is to hearing of the doings of *Propaganda*, to see that Roman institution always referred to as *the Propaganda*. Such a tiny blemish as this, however, is immediately swamped by the absorbing interest of the book—in all that is given, for example, concerning the Ven. Libermann's spiritual teaching, which was essentially robust and practical; in what is recorded too of the opposition originally to the very idea of local, not to call them native, vocations, as well as of the difficulty experienced in trying to instill into the minds of Catholics belonging to African tribes, or people of African descent, the ideal of Christian marriage.

RAYMUND DEVAS, O.P.

MACHIAVELLI AND THE RENAISSANCE. By Federico Chabod. (Bowes and Bowes; 30s.)

Professor Chabod is one of the most distinguished of Italian historians and this volume contains the translation of four of his essays published between 1924 and 1952.

The essay of widest interest is that on 'The Concept of the Renaissance'. The nineteenth-century belief that there was a Renaissance, which followed abruptly on the Middle Ages and which may be sharply contrasted with it, is becoming very outmoded among professional historians. Those who still cling to it should be delighted with Professor Chabod's vivacious re-statement of their case. Those who, like this reviewer, consider that a Renaissance was a recurrent phase throughout the long history of medieval civilization will feel that Professor Chabod's enthusiasm has tempted him towards special pleading. Few medievalists would agree that in the Middle Ages classical antiquity 'was purely an ornament, a decorative foliage, a stylistic pattern'; from Aristotle to Ovid it had become integral to medieval thought. They will note that 'the excellence of man' was a theme in the twelfth century as well as in the fifteenth, and that the 'delight in living', Professor Chabod's other quattrocento 'novelty', was only a variant of the emphasis on the joys of heightened sensibility common in the 'Spring Songs' and in the 'Romans Courtois'.

The other three essays deal with Machiavelli. Professor Chabod is the Director of the Croce Institute at Naples. It was Croce who first wrote of Machiavelli's 'austere and painful moral awareness'. Those who consider that Machiavelli was frequently Machiavellian and that 'Il Duce' was the embodiment of 'Il Principe' will regret the Crocean

framework of Professor Chabod's research. The preface to the volume by Professor d'Entreves is characterized by expected brilliance and by unexpected charm.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

THE MYSTICAL THEOLOGY OF THE EASTERN CHURCH, By Vladimir Lossky. (James Clarke; 16s.)

Dr Vladimir Lossky's *Essai sur la Théologie Mystique de l'Eglise d'Orient* was published in Paris in 1944. It is a most admirable introduction to orthodox theology and teaching and we must be grateful to the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius for at last having it translated. It contains some unintentional travesties of Catholic teaching. It often presupposes an antithesis between Catholicism and Greek and Russian orthodoxy where in fact they are in agreement. But that is as often the fault of the poorer kind of Catholic propagandist as of Dr Lossky. Few modern books convey so clearly our common Patristic heritage.

G.M.

GOD'S TREE. ESSAYS ON DANTE AND OTHER MATTERS. By Kenelm Foster, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 10s. 6d.)

Though some of the fourteen essays composing this volume have been previously published we must be grateful to Father Foster for collecting them and adding others to form a single book. They range from six essays on Dante to subjects as diverse as a philosophical examination and correction of Mr Aldous Huxley's distinction between two 'selves' in man, the distinctive characteristic of St Thomas's genius, French seventeenth-century literature, and the lives of Savonarola and Rosmini.

The Dante essays constitute the heart of the book, not only because of their number but because they set the tone, so to speak, for all the others. As a layman in this matter I am not competent to judge the originality and finality of two of these contributions (chapters II and III) to Dante scholarship, but it would be surprising if the particularly difficult allegory and the symbol here discussed have ever been expounded with greater learning, acuteness and lucidity. The general reader should find chapter IV easier to follow and of absorbing interest. He will probably not have realized that despite the extensive discussion of Dante's treatment and classification of sins in the *Inferno*, nobody has really asked what general notion of evil is implied by the poem as a whole. Father Foster supplies a closely reasoned answer: the predominant evil in Dante's hell is injustice, understood as the violation of the natural bond of love between men; when to the violation of reason is added the injury done by the betrayal of the bond of trust between