

REVIEWS

ST TERESA OF JESUS, MISTRESS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. By Father Gabriel, O.D.C. (Mercier Press; 10s.6d.)

The conferences which form the contents of this book are an excellent introduction to St Teresa's mystical doctrine. Though only the first chapter is headed 'Moral Perfection', this is really the dominant note of the whole book. We think this particularly important, because so often the great St Teresa is admired either as the practical businesswoman and charming author, getting her own way both with clerical and secular authorities (this is found especially in Protestant writers) or as the mystic enjoying visions and ecstasies almost every day, and who is therefore relegated to the ranks of those saints who are admirable rather than imitable—a view still frequently to be met with in Catholic writers. Fr Gabriel, however, shows us the mystic as the great soul of heroic virtue, enamoured of the divine Majesty, who valued her contemplative graces only in so far as they increased her charity and brought her closer to God. It is the 'true union with the will of God' which she calls 'the union I have ever desired and never cease to ask of God, for it is the surest and safest'. The author insists on this conviction of the Saint throughout his book, and substantiates it with numerous well-chosen quotations, especially from *The Way of Perfection* and *The Interior Castle*, to each of which two works he devotes a chapter.

As in his book on St John of the Cross, where he dealt particularly with the subject of acquired contemplation, Fr Gabriel here discusses again a burning problem of modern mystical theology, namely the question whether infused contemplation is a *conditio sine qua non* of sanctity. Pourrat, in his work *La Spiritualité Chrétienne*, had written that on this subject 'The Saint's thought remains fluctuating' (cited p. 22 f.); but the Carmelite theologian, after a detailed interpretation of the Saint's words, comes to the conclusion that she held infused contemplation to be the more frequent, because the easier and shorter, way to sanctity, but did not deny that sanctity could also be reached without it, though with far greater difficulty. This view seems to us very convincing, because it gives to infused contemplation its rightful place as the *via normalis sanctitatis*, without precluding the other possibility, which is also realised from time to time.

H. C. GRAEF.

SAINTS ARE NOT SAD. Assembled by F. J. Sheed. (Sheed & Ward; 12s.6d.)

In spite of a tiresome title this is a delightful book, well produced and (a rare thing in these days) with a dust cover of some originality which does not inspire one at sight to tear it off and put it on the fire.

Forty saints, men and women, picked out not at random we feel sure, from the centuries, beginning with St Paul and ending

with St Thérèse of Lisieux. Care has been taken too not only in the choice of the saints, but in the selection of the writers who tell their life-stories. Archbishop Goodier, Father Martindale, Father Steuart; we feel safe with them. It is good to meet again the old friends among the saints whom in some cases we first learnt to know in such books as *Saints for Sinners*, *Diversity in Holiness*, and in the many works of Father Martindale. Of all these forty sketches only two are being published for the first time, having been specially written for this collection. Father Hilary Carpenter, the Dominican Provincial, has given us a brilliant study of St Dominic. There seem to be saints who are easily seen, everyone knows them; there are others who appear to hide themselves. St Dominic is well known by name as the founder of the Order of Preachers, and yet for many he has been one of the hidden saints. In his sketch of the founder of his Order Father Hilary has shown us the man Dominic himself rather than a series of events and dates. He has drawn aside the curtain and we get a glimpse and begin to understand. 'He was afire with a passion for souls because he was aflame with the love of God; it was said of him that he spoke only to God or of God.' That was St Dominic. The other sketch especially written for this book is 'St Anthony of Padua', one of the best known of all the saints. Those who have read Alice Curtayne's charming *Life of St Anthony of Padua* published in Ireland will know what to expect, and they will not be disappointed.

Among the saints known and less known in this collection are St Columba, St Malachy, St Edward, St Francis of Assisi, St Margaret of Cortona, St Catherine of Genoa, St Benedict Joseph Labre, St Teresa and St John of the Cross, and St John Bosco. Anyone interested in St Joan—and who is not?—should read Ida Coudenhove's remarkable sketch in this book. More than a sketch, it is a pen portrait, of one of the simplest and bravest of God's saints, whose single-minded sanctity has surely never been better shown than in these few pages. It cannot be commented on, it needs to be read.

FFLORENS ROCH.

CHURCH VESTMENTS: THEIR ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT. By Herbert Norris. (Illustrated. Dent; 42s.)

Despite the 8 pages of photographs, 8 drawings in colour, and 270 in black and white by the author, not to mention a vast amount of historical information crammed into 189 pages, this superbly produced volume, for which the publishers must be complimented, cannot be described truthfully as 'an indispensable work of reference to all concerned with ecclesiastical costume'. Rather is it an encyclopedic hotch-potch, which badly needs careful editing. One is reminded of an overcrowded medieval museum in which the exhibits have not been properly catalogued. Clerical celibacy, altar and dedication crosses, and lamps are mixed up with valuable data on the historical development of ecclesiastical costume up to the