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dependence on faith, gives a vigorous and mature quality to enterprizes which have a negative value elsewhere. Instead of being preventive or curative this movement forms "whole men" and as such augurs well for the rising generations of workers. This "comradeship in Christ" should go a long way towards realizing the social order advocated in *Quadragesimo Anno* and the writer looks impatiently for the first fruits of the English experiment.

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HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

A HISTORY OF EUROPE. By the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher. Vol. I, Ancient and Medieval. (Eyre & Spottiswoode; 18/-.)

In these days when historical writing consists almost entirely of either detailed monographs for the specialist or fictional biography for the general public, it is with a pleasant sense of surprise that one welcomes a book meant for the intelligent reader as well as for the professional historian. Mr. Fisher's history of Europe, the first volume of which has just appeared, succeeds in making useful reading for members of these two classes and as such it constitutes a remarkable achievement. Its starting point is the ice age, and, as the author informs us in his introduction, its third volume will reach our own times. Volume I goes as far as the fifteenth century, thus embracing the whole of the ancient and medieval world. In it, Chapters ii to v give us a clear bird's-eye view of the rise, decline and fall of Greek civilization. Though it seems to be at any rate open to doubt that the Greeks were so uninfluenced by older civilizations, the account of Greek history doubtlessly constitutes one of the best parts of the work. Very good too is the part dedicated to the history of Rome, which shows uncommon knowledge of the latest contributions to Roman history. The very high standard of the chapters dedicated to the history of the ancient world is maintained in the part of the work dedicated to the middle ages. In this part, the chapter on the Norsemen is perhaps the best, just as the one on the Catholic mind is the most stimulating and controversial. Those strange passages in this last chapter dealing with the theories of the "laborious friar," show how in spite of the recent revival in Thomistic studies the doctrines of the Angelic Doctor still remain obscure to the layman. But then one can perhaps say of St. Thomas what Voltaire said of Dante, "Everyone talks of him, no one reads him." While a perhaps excessive importance is attached to Siger of Brabant, we find only a scanty mention of Scotism, which played such an important rôle in the history of medieval thought. It is disappointing to see that the old-

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fashioned views on the nature of the black death and on the invention of gunpowder are still accepted, and it seems a pity that such an important work should contain a fairly large number of incorrect statements. To take a few examples at random: at page 94, "Greek fire which was first put to decisive use in the sea fight at Actium." Was not Greek fire invented by Callinicus in the sixth century A.D.? Again at page 156, "It is thanks to the forged donation that Constantine is so eloquently consigned by Dante, the imperialist, to the horrors of his inferno." Actually Dante put Constantine in heaven, in spite of his donation. At page 276, "The cruel murder of his young grandson Conradin on the field of Tagliacozzo": Conradin was defeated at Tagliacozzo but he escaped and was subsequently betrayed by the Frangipani to Charles of Anjou, who had him publicly beheaded in Naples. At page 304, "Edward I is the English Justinian. His reign is marked by such legislative activity as this country has only twice witnessed (in the reign of Henry VIII and again under the Commonwealth)"—what then of Henry II's legislative activity?

Religious, not racial, are the characteristics of European civilization according to Mr. Fisher. While accepting this view, it is interesting to note incidentally how never throughout the history of Europe have spiritual and political unity been achieved together. The Romans achieved political unity but neither attempted nor succeeded in uniting their empire under one form of worship. Medieval Europe on the other hand offered the spectacle of spiritual union and political disunion at its zenith.

As a work this history of Europe has a permanent value and fills up a long felt need. In it the intelligent layman will find a well-balanced account of the growth of his own civilization which will enable him to realize to what he owes the conditions of the present day. But the real importance of this book lies in the fact that it shows in a clear way the real causes of historical events lying deep beneath the apparent ones. It could hardly be expected of anyone that he should be able to write a history of civilization completely free from his established prejudices. On the contrary it is only natural that the author's own ideals should have influenced the work. As a Liberal of old standing Mr. Fisher has made Whig ideals dominate the whole structure of his work; this is only natural and is not to prevent one from admiring the admirable architecture, its remarkable sense of proportion and the fine Gibbonian prose, which makes it so attractive to read. One can disagree with some of its theories or disapprove of the scarce sympathy given to religion as an institution, but one cannot fail to admire its brilliant summings up of the characteristics of individual periods and its concise portraits of the principal actors.

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