

his achievement suggested, the literary forms of the letters elaborated. Altogether the volume is a model of patient and exacting scholarship. Only once indeed does the work seem to falter, albeit not very seriously, when, in a translation of a reply of Innocent's to some points raised during the Interdict, we read (pp. 108-9): 'Although the last communion seems essential to the confession of the dying, yet if this cannot be held, we believe that in this case the famous saying applies—"Only believe and thou hast eaten"; for it is the contempt of religion, not the co-incidence of the Interdict, that debars from the sacrament, and it is hoped that the Interdict will shortly be removed'. It would seem, however, that 'if it (the viaticum) cannot be held' does not do justice to Innocent's *si tamen haberi non possit* ('if it cannot be obtained'); that to render Augustine's *Crede, et manducasti* as 'Only believe and thou hast eaten' is to interpret rather than translate; and that the phrase 'the co-incidence of the Interdict' is too narrow a translation of *necessitatis articulus* since it obscures the fact that Innocent is applying Augustine's well-known dictum about spiritual communion to cases in general where the viaticum is unobtainable, of which the Interdict, the occasion of the present statement, is only one.

LEONARD BOYLE, O.P.

JERUSALEM JOURNEY. By H. F. M. Prescott. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 18s.)

At the season of the year when everyone anticipates the pleasures of pilgrimage, sacred or profane, at home or abroad, this charming compendium of the voluminous *Wanderings of Felix Fabri* deserves to be remembered as a companion for the road.

Felix Fabri, a fifteenth-century Dominican from Ulm, was able, hurriedly in 1480, and again at greater leisure in 1483, to satisfy his devout desire to visit the Holy Places. The idea had, he tells us, obsessed him for many years, inspired as he was with St Jerome's conviction that there could be no more satisfactory training in the niceties of the letter of Scripture, and piqued by the fact that laymen who had braved the journey were able, on their return, to correct the errors of the clergy on the topography of Jerusalem and its environs. Fortunately for his brethren at home in Germany, Felix was also a born traveller, and the account he wrote of his two journeys, besides being a handbook of medieval legend and tradition about Palestine, is a diary, shrewd, chatty, and circumstantial. In Felix's day a project such as his was indeed no small undertaking, and he records that a noble count, whose advice he had asked before setting out, had said: 'There are three acts in a man's life which no one ought to advise another to do or not to do. The first is to contract matrimony, the second is to go to the wars, the

third is to visit the holy sepulchre.' This confirmation of Fabri's own justifiable fears did not, however, damp his ardour, and he survived to make the claim that he was the first Dominican ever to sing Mass in the inner chapel of the Sepulchre, 'and it seemed to me that my voice was much clearer and louder than usual'.

What were the perils and the hardships of the pilgrim's route in the fifteenth century is Miss Prescott's subject in *Jerusalem Journey*, and Felix Fabri is her hero and guide. She sets him first in the company of a number of contemporary travellers whose narratives have come down to us, and finds Felix's 'little book' greatly superior. From this point onwards his two journeys provide the plan of the book, which picks its way most judiciously through the jungle of his information and anecdotes, drawing attention to things most likely to appeal to readers who nowadays would scarcely trouble with the garrulousness of the original. The result is a fresh and well-managed account of what it was like to travel by galley from Venice, under captains none too scrupulous about keeping their contracts, with a berth one and a half feet wide in a crowded unlit cabin, destined for a land where Christians were only allowed under sufferance and stone-throwing was the order of the day. In spite of all this, there were some determined old ladies who made the trip, enduring with patience the dust and the brawling, and one of them, accidentally left behind after an afternoon's bathing in the Jordan was, whether from fatigue or the serenity of her detachment, discovered by an anxious search-party 'lying asleep in a bed of reeds'.

Felix's story is always enlivened by his own homely observations and comparisons. He finds the Chapel of the Sepulchre itself situated 'just as the sepulchre is placed in the parish church at Ulm on Good Friday', but being no credulous tourist he looks for a break in the marble casing of the tomb in order to decide for himself whether it is still in its original condition. Wherever he goes he notes the food they ate (including a confession of the disastrous effects of too much melon), the landscape through which they passed, the clothes the people wore. He even jots down the unison chant of the little Moslem boys repeating their lessons in one of the Jerusalem schools. Indeed, in contrast to his entirely conventional disdain for the schismatical Christian bodies he met in the Holy City, his descriptions of the Moslems he saw or made contact with has all the warmth of real admiration. He contrasts the filth of the church of the Lateran and European churches in general, 'people walking through them as though they were inns', with the scrupulous cleanliness of the Dome of the Rock; and sleeping one night on a high Jerusalem roof, he notices how the Christians on the other roofs begin the day with chatter, while the Moslems turn towards Mecca in prayer.

The text by itself should prove a sufficient recommendation for Miss Prescott's book, but its excellent illustrations, the fifteenth-century maps and views and line-drawings are an added pleasure, the fulfilment of the promise of an unusually gay and delightful jacket.

ÆLRED SQUIRE, O.P.

THE GENTLEST ART IN RENAISSANCE ITALY. An Anthology of Letters in Italian, compiled with an Introduction by K. T. Butler. (Cambridge University Press; 50s.)

Letter-writing was cultivated as an art in Europe so long as the three conditions that favour it obtained; 'the existence of a cultured society with a good deal of time on its hands; a regular, but not too frequent postal service, and no speedier means of communication. In the Italy of the sixteenth century these conditions prevailed to an admirable degree.' So writes the late Mistress of Girton in the Introduction, composed before her death, to this collection of Italian letters of the Cinquecento; now published, posthumously, as a memorial to Miss Butler's work in Italian studies. And in some ways it is a worthy memorial. She loved beautiful things, and this book in type and format is a beautiful object. It is also, so far as the letters themselves are concerned, probably the best anthology of Italian letters of the Renaissance period—when Italy was a century ahead of the rest of Europe in this art—ever published in England or perhaps anywhere. There are 260 letters, all written before 1600; and most are here reprinted (many for the first time) from *Epistolari* of that period or a little later, or 'come from manuscript collections edited in more recent times'. The letters are grouped under eleven headings ('The Family Circle', 'Friendship', 'News', etc.), and their writers include, of course, such famous people as Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Cardinal Bembo, Isabella D'Este Gonzaga (who appears, if I am not mistaken, twice over in the index), Tasso and St Aloysius Gonzaga (the only saint in the book, represented by his last letter to his mother written ten days before his death).

Scholars, however, will be quick to remark blemishes. The index is, as I have suggested, imperfect. There is a teasing lack of biographical, historical and textual information. The letters are in old Italian, but there is no glossary. There is no critical apparatus at all. And even the choice itself of the letters may seem a bit one-sided. Why, for instance, does the religious revolution of that age leave hardly a trace in this book? There may be a good reason for this, apart from the anthologist's *placet* which, from one point of view, is reason enough; but the fact remains. Did one not know it already one would hardly suspect that all these busy, cultivated, vivid people were contemporaries of the Reformation; and that if Luther was not an Italian, St Ignatius became,