

that she is a teaching Sister of the Order of St. Dominic.) The theme and the technique are sustained throughout, the doctrine is developed through the intermediation of vivid characters and some drama. Perhaps only in the last phrase of the book does Homer nod. Others will probably agree that this spiritual epic should have ended abruptly with the words of Baptism. But how small a criticism is this in a book that is otherwise a superlative type of what a Catholic novel should be!

HILARY J. CARPENTER, O.P.

TIME'S WALL ASUNDER. By Robert Farren. (Sheed & Ward; 3s. 6d.)

There is much that is striking and promising in this collection of poems by a young Irishman who is faced with the difficult task of carrying a stage further the erratic development of English verse in his country. The death of Yeats has now drawn a line below the whole wonderful chapter of political crisis and poetic achievement which began fifty years ago. Mr. Farren is one of those who feel it is impossible to be satisfied with Yeats' ideas or to repeat his literary forms, but who give the impression of being rather uncertain of the best direction in which to go to escape his influence :

He has left all words behind
but kept the word-subduing mind.
Nowhere in our earth is hid
the wheat he made into our bread;
wind has withered up the vine
which glorified our house with wine.

Mr. Farren is, however, a Catholic, and he has also devised for himself an idiom which serves to distinguish him clearly enough from the poets of an older generation. Although this idiom bears traces of several influences (those of Hopkins and more recent English and American poets among them), it is most remarkable for its confidence of rhythm and its personal inflexions. Its individual qualities outweigh any weaknesses and eccentricities. Again and again Mr. Farren surprises and charms: even in the midst of a poem whose beginning seems flat or unreal (I must confess that some of the religious pieces in this volume affect me little), a fine phrase or image leaps out and recaptures our attention. In those poems which seem to be most under Gaelic influence this effort and accomplishment are greatest. It is interesting to find that two of the poems most immediately concerned with contemporary Ireland—*Folk-*

Song in a Drawing-Room and *After the Fianna*—are among the most powerful in the book.

This poet is in no need of a strong emotional or rhythmical impulse, a fine sensibility or a directing intelligence. But even with these gifts, the writer who lacks a passion for formal beauty may find himself unable to develop an instrument suitable for all his purposes. For all his interest in the problems of verse and speech, Mr. Farren may not feel 'the fascination of what's difficult,' as it was felt by, say, Gautier or Baudelaire; and if he does not, his poetry may fall into mere obscurity and oddity. Whether that happens or not, his future development will be significant: it may be brilliant and in any case it will be worth watching.

F. T. PRINCE.

MEDIAEVAL STUDIES

Two new volumes have lately enriched the 'Publications in Mediaeval Studies' of the University of Notre Dame, Indiana (U.S.A.). The first volume contains a twelfth century commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and the second on the Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians and Ephesians.¹ Two forthcoming volumes will comprise the commentary on the other Epistles. The text is critically edited by Dr. A. Landgraf, so well known for his many contributions on twelfth-century thought, from the only known manuscript, MS. 37, Trinity College, Cambridge. Although the commentary is anonymous, Dr. Landgraf has conclusively shown that all the fourteen Pauline Epistles were expounded by the same author, and that he belonged to Abailard's school; both wording and doctrines are undoubtedly Abailardian. The evidence is marshalled in the appendix. A certain *philosophus* is cited time after time, and constitutes one of the main sources of the work. The Editor with great acumen identifies him with Abailard himself. It is true that more than one quotation is not to be found in Abailard's known works; but this difficulty does not rule out the suggestion, since, as is plausibly pointed out, the author might have used not only his Master's writings, but also his oral teaching, as did others of Abailard's disciples. This identifi-

¹ A. LANDGRAF. *Commentarius Cantabrigiensis in Epistolas Pauli e schola Abaelardi*: 1. *In Epistolam ad Romanos*. 2. *In Epistolam ad Corinthios, Iam et IIam ad Galatas et Ad Ephesios*. Notre Dame, Indiana (U.S.A.). (Publications in Mediaeval Studies, The University of Notre Dame, II). Pp. xlii-223; 322. (\$1.75 each).