

BOOK REVIEWS

THE POWER AND SECRET OF THE JESUITS. By René Fülöp Muller. (Putnam; 21/-.)

The importance of the Society of Jesus in the modern history of the Catholic Church has no need to be emphasised. To the outside world it has been an impressive embodiment of the Church Militant; inside the Church its influence has been, in every sphere, profound. This book tells the story of the Jesuits in a brilliant and attractive way. It will be useful as providing a general view of the activities of the Society. On the other hand, it cannot be considered as a serious contribution to religious history. In all critical questions it is entirely vague. To mention one point only: the Jesuit approach to the spiritual life. Both ancient and—since the liturgical movement—modern spirituality is characterised by corporateness and objectivity; it is averse altogether from the *solus cum solo* attitude. (We may instance such writers as the Abbots Marmion and Vonier, Père Clerissac and Karl Adam.) But Jesuit spirituality laid its emphasis on the individual; it was introspective and self analytical. Its method may be seen in elaborate examinations of conscience, systematic meditation and the Exercises. These are generalisations demanding detailed study. The author of this book, however, is content to solve the problem at once by attributing to St. Ignatius a frank confession of Pelagianism! The will of man is sufficient to attain perfection by itself alone!

The author may have been stunned—as we are—by his bibliography. A bibliography is certainly essential, but it has value only if it is a *selection* according to some standard. Mr. Fülöp Muller would probably have obtained a fairer idea of the true Jesuit spirit if he had concentrated on one book admittedly informed with that spirit—for example, Rodriguez, and contrasted it with a work of a different school, let us say, the Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena.

A.M.

THE PREPARATORY SCHOOL. By Reginald Jebb. (Sheed & Ward; 3/6.)

A man writing about his own particular trade or craft or profession is worthy of our attention because he may be supposed to know what he is talking about. Of course there is a taboo against talking 'shop,' but that prohibition should only be urged (and if it has to be urged, let it be urged vehemently)