

T. S. ELIOT. *The Design of his Poetry*. By Elizabeth Drew. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 12s. 6d.)

In a useful study of Mr Eliot's poetry Miss Drew offers the student little new material but does put some order into critical ideas by treating the poetry as an organic living whole. We are shown a steady development and clarification of view and a pattern of thought corresponding to a pattern of life. This elucidation is achieved principally by the use of Mr Eliot's own notes and critical work and the study of the psychological research of Dr C. G. Jung. That is not to suggest that the criticism is either superficial or is replaced by psychological investigation. Mr Eliot's ego is left politely alone. But there is a massiveness and erudite quality about Mr Eliot's poetry which asks that its critics shall master the sources; and that is asking a lot. Unfortunately, and against the author's wish it would appear, one receives the impression from Miss Drew's study that Jung is the chief critical source. Jung is of course a very important source because he has done more perhaps than any other man to explain and co-ordinate the traditional images which Eliot uses. But the older sources of the images themselves need to be in the front of the mind because Eliot's poetry lies in the central European tradition, harking back even to its pagan roots; and the ancestry of his images can be traced through the Apocalypse, the Pastor of Hermas, St Augustine, Dante, Piers Plowman, Rembrandt. From that ancestry they derive much of their power and significance. This, however, is only one weakness in a good book and is due to unbalance rather than any critical inaccuracy. It would also have been interesting in a work of this sort to hear something of that little discussed problem of Eliot's poetry, namely, the unresolved puritanism that is revealed in some of the imagery, and which may be in part responsible for the restraint and the limits of his religious vision.

G.M.

THE ENGLISH CATHOLICS 1850-1950. Edited by Bishop Beck. (Burns Oates; 35s.)

Those who feel depressed by the slowness of the conversion of England or by the magnitude of the 'leakage' should read this book as a tonic. Here is a record of the steady growth and solid progress of the Church in England during the past century, in the face of difficulties more formidable than our own. Here is the counterpart to the great pageant at Wembley, less emotional, less moving perhaps, but equally impressive and more compelling. Whether one studies the progress statistically in the lucid articles of the Fr Morgan Sweeney, Denis Gwynn, or Bishop Beck, or pictorially in the photographs of noble churches and colleges, the sense of great achievement is equally strong.