

## *Blackfriars*

PRAYERS FROM THE EASTERN LITURGIES. Compiled by Donald Attwater. Preface by Abbot Cabrol, O.S.B. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 4/-.)

It is difficult to describe the beauties of this little book in anything less than superlatives. It is a collection, small and carefully selected, of the most beautiful prayers in many of the Eastern Liturgies, set forth in good translations. Rarely does one feel that a translation is being used, one can simply *pray* without distraction. These prayers breathe the true spirit of the Liturgy, and, though their Liturgy has a different flavour from that of our own Western rites, yet the same breadth of thought and feeling underlies each, both are equally far removed from the flowery piety of too many modern devotions. One is immediately struck by the doctrine contained in these prayers, they breathe that full air of 'classical Catholicism' of which a well-known author has lately written. A few striking features may be mentioned; a beautiful prayer to the Altar after the offering of the Holy Sacrifice (p. 31); an almost perfect prayer with which to begin Mental Prayer (p. 53); a new title for Our Lady—'Mother of Light' (p. 27)—mother of the Light of the World, may not this one day find its way into the Litany of Loreto?

F.M.

THE FRANCISCAN ADVENTURE: A Study in the First Hundred Years of the Order of St. Francis of Assisi. By Vida Dutton Scudder. (Dent; 15/-.)

Here is a big book containing well over four hundred pages, with an excellent index and a valuable bibliography. It is evidently the fruit of much reading and study, and one would like to call it a fine book, for it contains much excellent matter, gathers within easy compass a vast amount of information not otherwise easily accessible, and is consistently well written. Wise treatment and sober judgment mark Miss Scudder's handling of many difficult questions and enigmatic personages. 'Things would have moved much the same way had he never existed,' is her comment on Brother Elias; and nothing could be truer. Her pages on John of Parma, her Notes on Franciscan Literature, her chapter on *The Sacrum Commercium*, and many other sections of the book are good. However, as a whole, the book is vitiated throughout by a false perspective, a warped sense of proportion. It purports to be a study of the first hundred years of Franciscan history, yet the main bulk of the work is concerned with disputes—vastly overcoloured, for Miss Scudder follows, unquestioning, Sabatier's well-worn tracks