

Blackfriars

Dickens, in 1857 and 1859, describing visits to the reformatory school of the Cistercian monks at Mount St. Bernard's, in Leicestershire, where nearly a hundred London boys were placed. Dickens was highly pleased with it all, and as for the interview with the Abbot—well, 'I am somewhat taken aback on finding my hand cordially shaken by a middle-aged, stout, genial gentleman, who warmly welcomes me, deploras the bad weather, hopes I had a pleasant journey, and who, but for his dress, might be a county member of the Conservative Club, whom I had come to visit for a week's shooting.' Father Lawrence, the director of the reformatory, died suddenly of heart disease at the very time of his visit. It was Dickens who caught him in his arms and bore him into the nearest room—the kitchen. 'An hour since, and he was expressing his hope that he should die amongst the boys : now the hum and bustle of the playground swells upon us, as lying in the midst of us, he passes out of the world.'

It was a very happy thought of Canon St. John to add these pieces from *All the Year Round* and *Household Words* to the fine story of Manning's work for children.

J.C.

DORIA'S RING AND GALLIPOLI. By A. D. Russell and Jacqueline Stoer. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd. ; 3/6.)

Doria's Ring, a poem in rhymed couplets, running to almost seventy pages, is a tale of Genoa in 1515. An historical introduction and synopsis of the story prepares the reader for the poem itself, and there are three pages of notes to explain the historical allusions.

This tale of Genoa in the sixteenth century concerns the broken romance of Andrea Doria and Mirabel, sole heiress of the head of the Spinola family. It makes pleasant and easy reading, and if the style is lacking in any real poetic distinction—it does sometimes halt and stumble—this by no means spoils one's interest in the story itself, for the poem will be read primarily for the tale it has to tell, not for any intrinsic merits of its own.

Whilst we are sure that many will find a quiet delight in reading this romance of *Doria's Ring* (what an excellent film it would make !), we cannot help feeling that the poem would have gained enormously in dignity and strength, besides being easier to manage by the author, if it had been written in pentameters, instead of the measure adopted.

Gallipoli, with its war-time associations, is an unfortunate and misleading title for a poem intended 'for little children,

Book Reviews

and those who seek to become as such.' Its sub-title is 'Roses in mid-winter,' and its story is founded on the authenticated facts of a miracle wrought through the intercession of St. Theresa of Lisieux, in a convent at Gallipoli, in Italy, in 1910.

The sixty stanzas that describe the miraculous discovery of money, when the convent funds were exhausted and creditors pressing, are written with the simplicity and delicacy of style that befits their subject, and a helpful explanatory note is prefixed to each. Perhaps children will find the frequent scriptural allusions a trifle bewildering, but in spite of these and a few clumsy verbal inversions, they will certainly enjoy the story itself.

The fine production of the book makes us marvel at its cheapness. But we dislike the woodcuts intensely. E.E.

THE DOMINICAN SAINTS. By Father Raymund Pius Devas, O.P. (S. Walker, Hinckley; pp. ix, 1-51; 1/6.)

The Book of Life, in which are written the names of all those who have won the Kingdom of Heaven—with room to spare for those who are to come between now and doom's day—must be a prodigiously gigantic tome. (Or have the recording angels adopted the card index system?) The Book of Life is always growing; it follows, therefore, that our 'Collected Lives of the Saints' must be subject to constant revision. The Bollandists, Surius, and Butler have periodically to be brought up to date: and Father Raymund Devas points out that since 1901, when the volume entitled *Short Lives of the Dominican Saints* was first published, sixteen more *Beati* have been added to the Dominican list. Fr. Raymund in this little volume has given short lives of these new *Beati*. Our only regret is that they are so short. There are two very valuable lists which must have entailed a very considerable amount of minute research—a chronological list of all the Dominicans who are honoured as Saints or *Beati*, and then another list of the same names arranged alphabetically with their dates and feast days. This list will be a revelation to many. How many of us, for instance, knew that we had a martyr, Bd. Francis, aged 5, and another, Bd. Dominic, aged 2?

The book really is worth the modest one and sixpence, and it ought to be procured at once by everyone who is interested in the Dominican Order. Cannot Fr. Raymund be persuaded to follow up the work so admirably begun by bringing out a revised edition of *The Short Lives of the Dominican Saints*? It certainly needs doing. O.P.