

colour in great washes till it dripped down again on one's face in floods of rich and mingled colour like some strange fairy rain. This reckless and riotous splashing about of colours, laid on thick, hot and strong, is surely a primary quality of G.K.C.'s poetry and prose. No one could ever call him colourless, though fortunately he has never deserved the unpleasant description 'colourful.' Scarcely a page he wrote but glows with colour. Speaking of the virtue of purity, he says that chastity does not mean mere negative abstention from sexual wrong: it means something flaming like Joan of Arc. Even whiteness is a rich, living reality; and God paints most gorgeously, even gaudily, when He paints in white. White is not a blank, colourless thing, negative and non-committal: it is a colour, affirmative and constructive.

It is not surprising then to find that G.K.C. has left behind among his papers a delightful fairy tale, *The Coloured Lands*. This and a glorious collection of other fragments, written for fun and not for publication, are included in this posthumous volume, edited by Maisie Ward. The only principle of unity in the book is *colour*, and the net result is something like a delightful and ingenious patchwork quilt. Stories, poems, essays—and above all, illustrations, in line and colour—make up an excellent lucky-bag with nothing but prizes wherever the reader dips. Different folk will have different favourites. The *Despair of Herod on finding Children convalescing from the Massacre* and *Job playing patience* especially tickled our fancy. The binder has ruined the particular copy sent to us for review by omitting sections of the book. We have thus been robbed of the complete joy of *The Taming of the Nightmare*; but for the more fortunate who can lay hands on the book—whole, entire and unimpaired—it will be a precious possession.

BERNARD DELANY, O.P.

BRAMSHILL: Being the Memoirs of Joan Penelope Cope. (Constable; 7s. 6d.)

This is an amazing book and 'may fairly be described as unique,' in the words of the publishers' blurb. The author was twelve years old when she began, a year ago, to pen her 'Memoirs' during her play-time, 'in order,' as she explains, 'to retain a vivid picture of my "young days"—spent in the glorious surroundings of Bramshill—our beautiful Hampshire home.' She has succeeded remarkably well not only in retaining that vivid picture for herself, but in painting it with uncanny skill for others; and this is all the more effectively done because,

to use again the words of her own apologia, 'they (her "memoirs") were never intended for publication—or they would have been more discreet . . . '—which one can easily believe, but would have regretted! The whole volume makes a curious *mélange*; yet it achieves an undoubted balance. For instance, the contacts between this unusual and evidently 'psychic' child and the shades of her beloved ancestors are somewhat startling. Indeed, at least in so far as that element in the narrative is concerned, this child's book is not a book for children. But that is only one facet of this literary gem. There is such a wealth of imagery, such an appreciation of the beautiful and the dramatic, such repeated examples of fine descriptive prose and restrained artistry, that the authenticity of the 'memoirs' might be in doubt were it not supported by the occasional blatant *cliché* and the wholly youthful reactions and vitality which appear.

Joan Penelope is the daughter of an ancient Catholic family (wherefore the incident of the automatic writing is odd), and lived for the most of her twelve years in the lovely Jacobean house called *Bramshill*, until financial difficulties in the family necessitated a (for Joan) tragic removal. Her naïve pride of race and her deep appreciation of *Bramshill*, combined with the grief of severance from her home and all it meant for her, moved the youthful author to use her many remarkable nascent gifts in producing this unique record of child memories. The publishers and others responsible have wisely left the original manuscript entirely untouched. They have been even wiser in letting Joan Penelope not only illustrate the volume, but also design the cover, the title and contents pages, and the chapter headings. Her artistic taste and her draughtsmanship are as remarkable as her literary excellence. We wonder what this child will become?

HILARY J. CARPENTER, O.P.

PROVENCE. From *Minstrels to the Machine*. By Ford Madox Ford, LL.D. Illustrations by Biala. (Allen and Unwin; 12s. 6d.)

This is a guide-book to a country which Mr. Ford Madox Ford's life experience has brought him to identify as Europe's Garden of Eden. A guide-book in the active sense, for its purpose is to start a migration to that paradise or at least to induce us—*i.e.*, the rest of Europe—to become Provençal by desire. Perhaps never since Moses waved the children of Israel on into Canaan has a prophet been so advantageously placed for the