

## *Blackfriars*

Father's meadows, inviting all and sundry to go and help them gather the flowers of joy which abound there even among the briars and nettles. Who would not wish to do so?

The book, rather un-English in both type and style, is perhaps rather obviously a translation, yet not so much as to detract from its power of appealing to many minds.

It is Mère Agnès de Jésus herself who gives these 'Words' to the public. Either to her or in her presence they were all spoken, and so we take it that it is St. Thérèse's wish also that we should know them. Much indeed we had heard before, yet often-times now we feel that we are playing the eavesdropper. We have to remind ourselves that a Saint's words are sacred things, spoken, God permitting, for our help and guidance. Yet this saint is a saint dying by inches, speaking her soul's confidences day by day, in utter intimacy, to the one person on earth by whom she knows herself to be understood. We in reading do not see the expression of her face nor hear the tone of her voice. How can we hope fully to understand? Yet with her help we may do so, for even while speaking she knew that many would hear her words—strange trial for her simplicity, and one perhaps unique in the history of the saints. The translation is curiously uneven—so much is very good, but the perpetually recurring 'My Mother' as a form of address is irritating, and sometimes the saint's simplest remarks are rendered in an English so stilted and strange that an effect of priggishness is produced. Surely this is to be deplored, and may we not hope to see a revised edition in the future? The book is attractively got up and contains excellent photogravures. One alone, taken on little St. Thérèse's sick bed a month before she died, is so appealing that for it alone the book would be worth having.

M.M.

**SAINTE THERESE OF LISIEUX.** A Biography by Lucie Delarue-Mardrus. Translated by Helen Younger Chase. With an Introduction by Michael Williams, Litt.D. (Longmans; 7/6 net.)

This biography of Saint Thérèse is the tribute of an unbeliever who is, like the saint herself, a native of Normandy. Madame Delarue-Mardrus thus explains the purpose of her book: 'My desire is to make this new saint known to a world not yet interested in her, a world indifferent to religion but responsive to art' (p. 29). She is writing, therefore, for those who are not of the 'household of the Faith'; but she knows many believers will read her book, so she writes: 'If in the

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simple language of one unversed in religion there creep in words that pain the faithful, I ask to be forgiven, as my intentions are pure . . . . Lacking the treasure of belief, I still retain a love for that which is Catholic' (p. 30). Let us keep these words in mind as we follow Madame Delarue-Mardrus in her study of the Saint, and in her analysis of the *Little Way*.

By the light of faith alone can a saint's life be adequately interpreted, and this light has not yet shone upon Saint Thérèse's latest biographer. 'I am of the group at the door of the Church, one of the unquiet souls.' But: 'I believe in the influence of the saints, I believe in the possibility of miracles, I believe in the force of prayer' (p. 97). She also believes in moral beauty, in charity, in renunciation—although the Saint's renunciation makes her shudder—and in much more besides, so that we must often find ourselves in sympathy with her, although not always in agreement. Her transparent sincerity commands our respect, for, as she says: 'We do what we can with the means at our disposal' (p. 133).

The translation is pleasant reading, except for a few words and sentences which sound odd on this side of the Atlantic. Two passages from *L'Histoire d'une ame* do not give the Saint's real meaning, and it is surprising to find Dom Guéranger's well-known work called *The Liturgical Week*.

M.S.

THE BENEDICTINES OF COLWICH, 1829-1929. England's first House of Perpetual Adoration. By Robert Eaton. With a Foreword by His Eminence Cardinal Gasquet. (Sands & Co., London and Edinburgh; 6/- net.)

Fr. Eaton has here compiled an interesting history of the English Benedictine Community which originated in Brussels at the time of the suppression of the religious houses in this country. Banished to England in 1795, after many wanderings and hardships, the nuns finally settled at Colwich, which in 1829 became the first centre of Perpetual Adoration in England. This work was inaugurated, just prior to the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act, by Mother Mary Clare Knight (whose biography forms the second part of the volume), and it seems peculiarly fitting that in this centenary year English Catholics should be given an insight into the history of a Community whose hidden intercession will no doubt in God's