

## Book Reviews

make the play go. He did not write his plays first in an attic and later in a library, but always in and for the theatre. The pressure of the financial mind bent on giving the public what it wants, bore against the poet aching for self-expression, just as much in the spacious days as in our own pinched and dozing time. The vocal splendours of the great playwright must have occurred to him as this or that play went on ill or well in his hearing as he waited for his cue, and improvements in event or plot of well-known or unsuccessful dramas grew and grew in his mind. Was he not the Johannes Factotum, the Jack-of-all-trades in Globe and in Blackfriars? Whatever his work was, it is never tight, always leaving room for either broadening or condensing. Why, cutting him down has become a habit with actors. He was an actor himself, never a mere literary gent, and he wanted the play to pay, first, last, and all the time.

We cannot close without noting a few samples of good sense and good criticism taken almost haphazard: for instance, on pp. 35-6 a long-felt want is met and well met by many proofs that Shakespeare did *not* believe in comic relief to the tension of a dreadful culmination. But the common actor did, as the common fool is the first to break a heavy silence and most silences to him are heavy.

Of Swinburne: 'His concern is always to fulminate rather than to reason, even when he is right. To build up polyphonous periods was his notion of critical method, I am afraid.'

'He was always the *enfant terrible* of criticism,' said Robinson reminiscently, 'and our great monopolist of fugal falsetto prose.'

Of Bacon, Derby, Oxford, Rutland: 'Imagine any one of those aristocratic personages doing perpetual recasting and revising work for the theatre, yet never being known by Ben Jonson or Heywood to do so!' (*and* is misplaced in printing).

A useful and informing book.

J.O'C.

DIE PASTORALBRIEFE DES HEILIGEN PAULUS, übersetzt und erklärt von Dr. Max Meinertz. (Bonn: Peter Hanstein. Mk. 4.50. Bound, 6.40.)

This, which will be the eighth volume in the complete work, is the third to appear in the new edition of the Catholic series of Commentaries on the books of the New Testament published in Germany under the general editorship of Dr. Tillmann. Dr. Meinertz, who has been known for many years as a very capable exegete, is the author of the volume, and it shows the same

## ***Blackfriars***

solid qualities as its predecessors in the series. There are twenty or thirty pages of introduction, giving among other good things, an adequate defence of the authenticity of the epistles, a point on which even conservatively minded critics sometimes speak timidly. (Thus the recent edition of the useful Oxford *Heiþs to the Study of the Bible* adds to its assertion that 'there is no adequate ground for refusing to accept the Pastoral Epistles as genuine works of St. Paul' the qualification 'as least in part.')

Hence Dr. Meinertz holds the reasonable position that I Timothy and Titus were written during a journey which St. Paul made in the East after his release from imprisonment at Rome, and II Timothy during a second Roman imprisonment shortly before his martyrdom in 67. The commentary itself is clear and to the point, and here and there are about a dozen useful excursions on important points, the longest dealing with the ever actual question of the constitution of the primitive Christian communities.

L.W.

**WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM : A COMMENTARY.** By G. C. Heseltine. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 6/-.)

The author explains in his foreword that this book is 'more properly a commentary on the life of William of Wykeham than a biography in the traditional sense.' Rejecting what he calls 'the obfuscation of the contemporary-background school and the over-illumination of the more scholarly school,' allowing no footnotes, for 'the footnote habit is pernicious and misleading,' Mr. Heseltine prefers 'to compare the philosophy of the Bishop, as deducible from his acts, and the state of society in which it was practised, with those of our own day.' This comparison 'necessitates a deal of digressive comment.' And very unfavourable comment at that. Modern history fares badly. The nineteenth-century historians, we are told, had a 'habit of copying one another's minor errors' and are reproved for 'their unscholarly inaccuracy of detail.' Even the 'brilliant and careful Lingard' is convicted of repeating slanders concerning Wykeham, derived 'ultimately from the garrulous gossip of St. Albans.' And 'that, once more, is how most modern history is written. That is why most modern history is bad history.' Many other modern things beside History come up for reproof in Mr. Heseltine's 'digressive comment,' including the operations of the Stock Exchange, the admission of women students to universities, the conduct of newspapers and the high profits of traders. Comparison is also made between Wykeham as a