

amply justified. English readers will regret the omission (on the grounds that it is already available in French in the *Sources Chrétiennes* collection) of Diadoch of Photikos; on the other hand, they will be grateful for the inclusion (notwithstanding the recent French translation in *Sources Chrétiennes*) of Maximus the Confessor's *Four Centuries of Charity*. These *pensées*—whether written very early or very late in this great theologian's career—contain little of his deepest or most original reflection; but their interest lies precisely in the extent to which they echo traditional ways of thought at the time of the final flowering of Greek patristic theology. Behind them stands the picture of Christian *askesis* developed in an unbroken tradition from Origen, in the spirituality of the desert-monks in writings like those of Evagrius (of whom there is a fair selection included in this volume), and in that of the Cappadocian Fathers. The devotional life of the desert and a theology cast in Platonic moulds have here entered the sober common life and the learned theology of the cloister, and become a part of its permanent possession. Without this crowning work of assimilation and synthesis the selection would have been grievously incomplete.

The value, indeed, of this anthology, judiciously selected, well translated and beautifully produced, is to be found precisely in that it makes accessible to English readers one strand in the heritage shared by Eastern and Western Christianity: a strand which is often lost sight of. To reaffirm it and to place it within our Western spiritual perspective is surely the best preliminary to gaining some insight into the characteristic temper of Eastern Christianity.

R. A. MARKUS

AN ELIZABETHAN RECUSANT HOUSE. Edited by A. C. Southern.
(Sands; 6s.)

When in April 1559 the Bill of Supremacy was read for the first time in Elizabeth's first parliament, the only lay peer to side with the bishops in opposing it was Anthony Viscount Montague. Thereafter till his death in 1592 he remained an outstanding opponent of the church by law established. He was ably supported by his wife, Magdalen, daughter of the third Lord Dacre, who survived him by sixteen years. During the last few years of her life she had as her chaplain Dr Richard Smith, later Bishop of Chalcedon, and when she died in 1609 he preached her panegyric. This was published at Rome a year later in Latin. In 1627 an English Translation appeared from the pen of Dom John Cuthbert Fursden, o.s.b., and it is this work that has now been reprinted.

Works such as this were written for edification rather than for

information, but amid much that is conventional there are passages of considerable interest to the historian of the penal times as well as to the general reader. There emerges from these pages a woman of character and of great courage and exceptional piety. It was an age when half-hearted Catholics sooner or later succumbed and only the valiant and the truly pious stood firm. What is so significant is the type of prayer that nourished these souls in the dark days of persecution. In spite of the secrecy of all their worship the educated Catholic layfolk were still using some form of liturgical office in Latin. One of the commonest books found in the searches of Catholic houses was *Officium Beatae Mariae*. Lady Montague was no exception:

'She did every day say three offices, that of the Blessed Virgin, of the Holy Ghost and of the Cross, whereto she added at least three rosaries, the Jesus Psalter, the fifteen prayers of St Bridget, which because they begin with O are commonly called her fifteen Oes, and the common litanies, and finally sometimes the Offices of the Dead.'

Dr Southern has modernized the spelling and provided a useful Introduction and notes, but it is doubtful whether users of the Douai Bible will need his many explanatory footnotes.

GODFREY ANSTRUTHER, O.P.

THIRTY STORIES. By Elizabeth Myers. (Macdonald; 12s. 6d.)

STRANGERS. By Antonia White. (Harvill Press; 10s. 6d.)

There could hardly be two books of short stories more dissimilar. The late Elizabeth Myers' are quick, pointed and poetic; they start usually with a bang and often finish with one. In a letter quoted in the Introduction by her husband, Littleton Powys, who has made this collection, she says, 'No one likes telling stories better than I do, just for the pleasure of telling them', and this is evident, for the chief pleasure that one derives from them oneself is the rich and personal language in which they are told. 'This is one of the stories Willy Gannister tells about that hell-tasting, wild and wasteful tough of a son of his, Rory.' Many are set in Ireland, but the Ireland of James Stephens, not of James Joyce.

Miss White, on the other hand, is subtler and more consciously craftsmanlike, her language sober and more exact, so that one is aware of what is being said rather than of the way. Her portraits of an old expatriate English governess in the witty 'Aunt Rose's Revenge' and of a terrifying would-be Carmelite in 'The Exile' emerge all the more strikingly for this reason and must be among the best of her always distinguished writing. Both books are worth reading, but perhaps by different readers.

B.W.