

SAINTS FOR THE MARRIED. By Elizabeth Whitehead. (Mercier Press; 10s.6d.)

We are told in the Introduction to this little book that there is a prevalent idea that married people have never been saints. The purpose of the book is to show that heroic sanctity can be found in all states of life, even the married. The writer has chosen seven married people to illustrate her theme. It happens that only two of these are men; St Thomas More, the Englishman, well known as a model husband and father, and St Nicolas von Flüe, the Swiss countryman. The other five are women, the earliest in time being St Monica of the fourth century and the latest Blessed Anna Maria Taigi, who died in 1837.

It is a little surprising that St Nicolas von Flüe has been chosen as an example of a married saint, for he left his wife in order to become a hermit, left her moreover with ten children, the youngest of them being still a baby in arms. She had given her consent of course, but what else could poor Dorothy do when she found Nicolas so bent on becoming a hermit and living somewhere in a cave? She loved him very much, and did not want him to leave her, but she made no fuss at the parting. Moreover she never asked him to come back. By dint of hard work and the help of the older children on the farm she kept the home together. Twenty years later when she heard he was dying in the little mountain cell that had replaced the original cave, she went to him, bringing all their children with her. He spoke to them as they knelt round him, and then he received the last Sacraments in their presence. It may be that Dorothy von Flüe is one of the hidden saints of the world. She only appears incidentally in this book, but she makes an impression.

Among the women saints of the book the life of St Monica is the most poignant. The keynote of her life (motive would perhaps be a better word) running alike through her tragic sorrows and through the joy that came in the end, is told simply and with understanding.

FLORENCE ROCH.

THE VATICAN: *The Story of the Holy City.* By Ann Carnahan; with photographs by David Seymour. (Odhams; 12s.6d.)

This book is remarkable for its beautiful photographs. There are unusual and fascinating shots of 'the world's smallest state' and 'the world's largest church', and particularly of the Piazza San Pietro. Mr David Seymour's camera takes Bernini's colonnade ten times in all, once from behind the statue of Pio Nono, once from behind the nine-foot apostles on the roof—so that a large stone hand is in the foreground—once so as to catch three Sisters of Charity fluttering against it. And usually the wide sweep of the sunny piazza is included covered with small figures converging towards the facade.