

Book Reviews

logical, uncompromising French mind, preaches that Our Lady should be given all the honour allowed to Her by theologians, and not merely some of it.

'*Through Mary, with Mary, in Mary and for Mary*'—that is the most express route to the throne of the King of Kings.

The Bishop of Menevia's foreword—dare we label it 'racy'?—should encourage the timid Catholic, with the 'inferiority complex,' as his Lordship styles it, to cultivate a fuller, more whole-hearted, practical devotion to the great Mother of God and men.

R.L.H.

LAS COSTUMBRES ASTURIANAS, SU SIGNIFICACION Y SUS ORIGENES.

By Constantino Cabal. (48 Serrano, Madrid, 1931, paper, 5 pesetas).

This work in his native language by one of the foremost exponents of folk-lore in present-day Spain deals particularly with the customs of the peasantry in the province of the Asturias and recalls the fascinating chronicles of Spanish popular customs and traditions of Fernan Caballero more than half a century ago. Moreover, in the words of the eminent author A. Palacio Valdés it is '... a conscientious as well as a delightful study of which our [Spanish] literature offers not many examples ... it will have to be consulted now and hereafter by all those who aspire to understand or to depict the peasantry of the Asturias ...'

F.M.

THE RACE PROBLEM IN AFRICA. The Merttens Lecture, 1931.

By Charles Roden Buxton, M.P. (The Hogarth Press; 1/-.)

Mr. Buxton is a warm-hearted man, with a sense of duty to his fellow man—and he seems to think that the duty of a Christian is to make black men live like white men. Throughout the lecture he is telling himself that if the Black African only had a chance—that is, if his country only had a climate like those parts inhabited by the Society of Friends, and had been rich in coal and iron—the Bantu would now be at the same high level of the Protestant Evangelical. He mourns the missing opportunities and environment as though it were Christian duty to supply them.

Such conclusions are self-condemned. The form of government and the types of institutions that will be best suited to any particular race are secrets hidden in the heart of that race. The most that any 'superior' race has any right to do is to

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teach the lower race first principles, the truths of Christianity. Thereafter, the higher race must be the servant of the lower, helping it to develop its characteristic potentialities.

One point in this lecture that is worthy of praise is the plea that Governments should consider the good of native races rather than the best means of exploiting them for the benefit of white settlers. Thus stands condemned the beautiful model towards which we are to train 'backward' peoples! Man, eternally afflicted with a sense of his own impotence, looks a little further for support than to the League of Nations. Thus numbers of people to-day, knowing nothing of the Church, or of grace, and forgetting entirely the fall, call upon the League, or the British Empire, naming them each 'The greatest Christianising influence in history.' And of course, in due time, it will be the Church that has to fight the battles of the black man against these 'Christians.'

What the black man needs is the knowledge that the Church can bring him, and the support of her sacraments. Then with the help of the white man, he can develop such institutions as suit himself in his own particular environment.

N.H.

HALF HOURS WITH ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL. By Charles F. Blount, S.J. Two vols. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 3/6 each.)

Everyone knows the advantage gained by reading some well known work in a different translation or in another language. Such reading brings many new points to light. The late Fr. Blount's two little volumes contain a paraphrase of St. John's Gospel, placed in parallel columns with the Douai text. The whole is divided into one hundred sections, each of which concludes with a 'Reflection.' The result is very helpful. Perhaps the modern mind lacks that true knowledge of human nature which made it possible to write a Life of Our Lord in the compass of a C.T.S. Pamphlet; or perhaps our power of appreciation has been spoiled by modern psycho-analytic literature. At any rate, such a development of the text as the author has accomplished helps considerably to make the Gospel story vivid. Some theological points have been very effectually expanded. The author modestly remarks in his Preface that he knows the text might be paraphrased quite differently. We wish he had lived to comment in like manner upon the other three Gospels. The aim of any book on the Bible must be to send us back to the Bible, and this is certainly the effect of this paraphrase.

N.H.