

There, indeed, is what might serve as a model for the peculiar fascination that excessive nastiness induces. And of the fascination there can be no question for Miss Lane's story compels one's attention throughout, although her treatment of it, in style at any rate, will not place her book among the great biographies. She is at her best when, as in the concluding paragraphs, she writes with great feeling of the tragedies in noble and innocent lives produced by the insane exhibitionism of this once obscure and always warped and evil man.

C. J. ACHESON.

GOETHE: UNESCO'S HOMAGE. (N.p.)

One's first reaction on seeing this volume is one of surprise that an organisation whose capacity for using an unnecessary amount of paper has become a byword, should, when it produces a work that may have a permanent value, do so in a limited edition of 2,500 copies. This, Unesco's contribution to the literature commemorative of Goethe's bicentenary, consists of a collection of essays by eminent writers of many races. Dare I confess I had not heard of all of them? Some familiar names there are, however: we have Benedetto Croce on 'Goethe and Germany', Jules Romains on 'Goethe's Secret', Thomas Mann with a rather disappointing essay on 'Werther'; Stephen Spender represents England with 'The Last Prince of Poets'; and we have contributions by an Indian professor, a negro intellectual, and an Egyptian man of letters—these last to emphasise Goethe's all-embracing 'humanity' and his oriental interests. I may mention too a poem in Spanish by the Chilean poetess Gabriela Mistral, the blasphemous opening of which: *Padre Goethe que estas sobre los cielos*, reminds us that Goethe, if he did not compare himself with God the Father, did occasionally, with that misplaced frivolity characteristic of his usual attitude towards Christianity, suggest a parallel between himself and the Son (cf. *Diner zu Koblenz*, last 4 lines).

Goethe is, I suppose, the obvious lay patron saint of Unesco.

In the midst of much that is worth while in this collection, one cannot help remarking a note of unhealthy adulation, of that Goethe-cultus which sees in the Sage of Weimar the new Messiah of humanity. Here indeed lies the insidious danger of Goethe, against which a certain Catholic periodical has recently warned us; but the danger is mainly for those in whom Christianity has dwindled to a mere sentiment. Goethe appears to his devotees as the incarnation of the 'complete man', embracing all nations and all ages with his message of 'peace on earth, goodwill towards men' (the famous mistranslation is actually used on p. 108). No doubt Goethe regarded himself as having a mission, the laudable one of spreading understanding between the nations; but he was much too easy-going to assume a Messianic rôle.

Let us salute with Stephen Spender 'the Last Prince of Poets'; but let us keep our sense of proportion. Much of what Goethe said

was prophetic, much too shows the wisdom born of experience; but as a philosopher he was neither original nor profound. As an example for the conduct of life the Christian will no more be tempted to follow him than to imitate Byron or Catullus. Goethe the poet is pre-eminent: a dilettante besides (in the true sense) and a man of affairs, he was in the centre of his time as few poets have been or are likely to be in the future. Modern conditions and modern educational methods are not suited to the fostering of genius, universal or otherwise. 'We shall not look upon his like again'.

S. A. H. WEETMAN.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Burns, Oates and Washbourne.* M. Digby-Beste: *The Pilgrim's Rome*, 3s.6d.; Archdale A. King: *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, 2 vols., 63s.
- Casterman.* Victor Bindel: *Claudiel et nous*, 33 frs.; A. Mabile de Poncheville: *Vie de Louis le Cardonnell*, 75 frs.
- Chatto and Windus.* H. J. C. Grierson: *Criticism and Creation*, 8s.6d.
- Collins.* Arthur Bryant: *Samuel Pepys the Saviour of the Navy*, 15s.
- J. Stevens Cox (*Published by the Author*): *The Almshouse and St Margaret's Leper Hospital, Ilchester*, 2s.6d.
- Andrew Dakers.* Jack Lindsay: *Charles Dickens*, 18s.
- Peter Davies.* Frances Bellerby: *The Brightening Cloud*, 7s.6d.
- Herder (Vienna).* Missarum Sollemnia, DM.50.
- Herder (Freiburg).* Anton Anwander: *Die Religionen der Menschheit*, DM.16.
- Hodder and Stoughton.* Cyril Garbett, Archbishop of York: *Church and State in England*, 15s.
- Longmans Green.* Arnold Lloyd: *Quaker Social History 1669-1738*, 21s.
- Pennsylvania University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege).* Katherine Fischer: *The Burgundian Code*, 18s.
- Phœnix House.* G. H. Cooke: *Portrait of Salisbury Cathedral*, 12s.6d.
- Routledge and Kegan Paul.* Otto Demus: *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily*, 84s.; R. Schlesinger: *Marx, His Time and Ours*, 30s.
- S.P.C.K.* E. H. Blakeney: *Lactantius' Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, 11s.
- Sheed and Ward.* Christopher Dawson: *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, 15s.; Oscar Halecki: *European History*, 10s.6d.; Alfred Noyes: *The Unknown God*, 8s.6d.
- Samuel Walker.* Dominican Sisters: *Stone and the Catholic Revival*, 2s.

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