

Blackfriars

. . . . You shall not—you *shall not* destroy the calm of my anguish.' It was, and he knew it, the childish sulking of a wounded pride.

His letters, impassioned contradictory appeals for the humanly impossible, pour forth in abundance, and reflect the terrible conflict within. Letters cross in the post; Jacques has not the patience to wait for an answer. The letter of to-day brushes aside the difficulties of yesterday's, and demands he knows not what to heal he knows not what fresh bruises. Paul Claudel answers all with consummate coolness and sympathy. Now he will be giving an explanation of some point of Catholic teaching or Scriptural exegesis. At another time it will be a question of philosophy. This will be less satisfactory, for Claudel confesses to have neither the taste nor the facility for philosophical discussion; and Rivière's was not the philosophical bent of mind which seeks the meaning of mysteries, but the religious bent of mind which was to find meaning *in* mysteries. So Claudel insists above all on the necessity for the *practice* of religion. Jacques must read the Bible; he must go to Mass, to Confession, to Communion; he must read St. Thomas—'Read him when you can, but not all at once; he is an affair of years'; he must visit the poor—'As soon as possible become a brother of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.' But first and foremost Jacques must pray. It is not that he is to auto-suggest himself into Catholicism; his sincerity would never permit of systematic self-deception. But Paul Claudel knows that Jacques must go to God if God is to come to Jacques. 'Acquire the habit of speaking to God every day, were it only for a few moments, were it only to tell Him that you do not believe in Him, and that He bores you.'

Rivière's letters—so intimate, so unrestrained, so intense—read a little strangely in English. But the translation is a clever one, in spite of its distracting Americanisms. It is good that there should be translations to bring these treasures under our insular notice.

V.W.

THE ENGLISH MARTYRS. Edited by Dom Bede Camm. (Heffer and Sons; 5/- net).

The English martyrs suffered gloriously for the Catholic Faith, but while we read of their heroic sufferings it may be well to remind ourselves that they were caused by the sins of Catholics. The whole truth about the 'Reformation' when, by God's mercy, it is told and told by Catholics, must necessarily

Book Reviews

tell us not only about the Catholic martyrs but also, and as fully, about the Catholic traitors to the Faith. And it may be that, before our country wins back its national allegiance to the Church, God may demand of us Catholics in England a full and adequate historical confession not only of the virtues but also of those sins of our Catholic forefathers, which led to the loss of the Faith at the time of the 'Reformation.' And, consequently perhaps, in the years to come, we may have a special Catholic Summer School at Cambridge to effect this very thing. But the time can hardly be yet. So much honest, quiet, patient historical research has to be done. And only Catholics can be equipped to do it with anything like discriminating justice. A great work in this direction, therefore, lies before us.

But this very well balanced book does help us to appreciate the credit side of the Reformation balance sheet. We understand from it as never so well before the grand and cumulative witness borne to the truth by so many variously situated martyrs, laymen, Jesuits, Benedictines, the Carthusians, the Secular Clergy, the Franciscans and, lastly, the very special personal witness borne by Blessed John Fisher and Blessed Thomas More. Or, again, on the other hand, what was done against the Faith by those who opposed it whether officially or personally, whether laymen or clerics. Nothing more valuable, if a layman may presume to speak of such matters, is to be found in the volume than the very clear relation of the Spiritual to the Secular Power as it varied throughout the Middle Ages summed up in fact and effect by Father Bede Jarrett. One wishes that it could be printed separately and used by every accredited teacher of English history in the kingdom; and one is sure that it would be as much appreciated by those who are not Catholics as by those who are. Another subject very difficult of treatment in class teaching is the reign of Queen Mary. Dom Dunstan Pontifex will be a just and sure guide on this topic. If all the questions which are still at issue in our English schools between what was thought to be history and what is history could be explored and re-stated after the manner of many of these papers, Catholics in our country would soon be put in proper possession of what rather perhaps through prejudice than deliberate intention has so long been denied them. One or two questions suggest themselves, as for instance: Is it certain that Fisher, as well as the rest of the clergy in Convocation, gave to Henry VIII the title of Supreme Head of the English Church? (p. 87). Why did the Elizabethan Catholic bishops, unlike those in Henry VIII's time, stand firm? (p. 92).

Blackfriars

Why did the memories of the 'Marian burnings' imprint themselves so indelibly on the national consciousness? (p. 152). It is a special tribute to this sheaf of fine historical wheat that it suggests many more searching questions than it answers. No volume as yet produced by a Cambridge Catholic Summer School is more deserving of a place among our books of permanent historical interest.

W.E.C.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE CATACOMBS FOR THE DOCTRINES AND ORGANISATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. By Oratio Marucchi. (Sheed and Ward; 3/6.)

Professor Marucchi has written a useful little book that should be of great service to English readers. The evidence afforded by the inscriptions, *graffiti* and pictures found in the Catacombs is of the utmost importance as affording concrete and tangible witness to the antiquity of Catholic doctrine. It is to be feared that, apart from scholars, the weight of this evidence is too little known. Visitors, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, to the Catacombs often receive a sort of shock at the sudden unexpected sense of nearness to remote historical fact that they experience. Professor Marucchi's last chapter is a summary of the latest researches under the pavement of the Church of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way. The invocations to St. Peter and St. Paul, *Petre et Paule in mente habete*, scratched on the walls in the third and fourth centuries, the tombs below, one of which contains the Greek symbolic name for Christ, lower still a staircase leading to a burial vault with more invocations to SS. Peter and Paul on its walls. The evidence points to this as the place where the bodies of the Apostles had temporarily rested. There is no need to stress the importance of these discoveries. Tradition had pointed out this spot as the place where their bodies had been temporarily placed, probably in the third century, when they were removed for safety from the original graves in the Vatican and on the Via Ostiense. Prof. Marucchi shows how these discoveries confirm the old tradition and the celebrated inscription composed and erected by Pope Damasus in the fourth century, 'Roma suos potius meruit defendere cives.'

Another point of great interest is the Moses-Peter. There is the third century picture of Moses striking the rock: the water that flows representing Baptism, Penance and the Eucharist. Often Moses bears the traditional features of Peter and on some glass cups and a plate the word *Petrus* is written in gold letters beside the figure. The conception was known even in Egypt,