

## NOTICES

LET DONS DELIGHT. By Ronald Knox. (Sheed and Ward; 7s. 6d.)

A conviction of profound and half consummated change has always been a note of the unaltered continuity of Oxford, and *Let Dons Delight* is singularly fortunate in its motto, 'Plus c'est la même chose plus ça change.' The first six conversation pieces in the common room of Simon Magus form a sustained achievement. They take place in 1588, 1638, 1688, 1738, 1788 and 1838, but the sense of period is unflinching, and the imaginary biographical extracts that close each scene are too near to their originals to be parodies. Not unnaturally it is the early eighteenth century that is most alive; for it is to this period that Mgr. Knox can ascribe Dr. Johnson's memories of Mr. Jonathan Shillett and the very winning character of Provost Trumpington. Victorian Oxford seems incomplete without a description derived from Tuckwell and by 1888 the senior common room at Magus has come to reflect too many contemporary movements in a single evening to be completely convincing. Yet the series of gaffes by Mr. Battersby at the dinner on which his fellowship depends is possibly the most perfect of Mgr. Knox's creations. It is only in the ninth chapter when the guest has woken from his dreams that *Don's Delight* becomes actually unreal. It would be difficult to conceive that the discussion attributed to 1938 had any parallel in an Oxford common room last year while Mr. Drechsel is very fortunately on the wrong side of credibility. But *Don's Delight* belongs most authentically to an unalterable Oxford when it conveys a sense of impending disintegration. It is a pleasant fact, and illuminating, that no book produced in Oxford since the last war would seem to have been more widely appreciated among the senior members of the University.

G.M.

THE JEWS: ARE THEY HUMAN? By Wyndham Lewis. (Allen and Unwin; 3s. 6d.)

It needs only the most cursory examination of the usual anti-semitic arguments to convince oneself that, as Maritain has put it, 'it is impossible to hate the Jews and remain intelligent.' There is a Jewish problem: anti-semitism misses it, and fixes its unintelligent regard upon a number of pseudo-problems. In this country the present plight of the Jews has evoked a great humanitarian response; but humanitarianism is a poor basis for

policy; and it may lead, in the absence of intellectual conviction, to an equally strong reaction. That is why it is necessary to examine and de-bunk even the most stupid of the anti-semitic arguments. This task Mr. Wyndham Lewis carries out with success. He addresses himself simply to the reason; and if he does not go to the depths of the problem, he does some very sound work on this more superficial but extremely important plane. The Jewish financial racket, for example: how obvious it is that they are merely making use of a system which we ourselves invented, and that if they were not there we should not be a whit better off—there are plenty of Anglo-Saxons ready to take their places. And so with the rest of the arguments; and it is a sorry commentary on our civilization that stupidity should be so successful. We need shaking up, intellectually as well as emotionally; and Mr. Wyndham Lewis does it for us; for if at times a bonhomous humour seems a trifle out of key, on the other hand again and again a mordant sentence gets right under the skin. Events have thrust upon us the necessity of thinking this problem out as quickly and, above all, as rationally as may be; this book should help to clear away a number of falsehoods, and so to put us on the right road.

G.V.

PREFACE TO STATECRAFT. By Desmond FitzGerald. (Sheed & Ward; 3s. 6d.)

Mr. FitzGerald, who is both Thomist and politician (he held office in the Cosgrave Government), presents a *summula* of the principles of Thomist political theory. The earlier part, which deals with the idea of man as political animal, the rational and juridical foundations of society, is a clear and useful summary. The latter part is less successful, especially in its dealing with private property. The idea that ownership is, in fact, stewardship might have been underlined. But, more important, the essence of private ownership in the world of to-day is insufficiently defined. Communism is criticized; but without doing justice to the problem with which, after all, Communism has sought to deal: large-scale production. The form of private property which is, or rather ought to be, characteristic of our age is *collective* private property: the many whose labour combines to work a large concern ought collectively to own the concern. That surely is the thing that needs most to be said; and if it is omitted, any treatment must smack of the academic and the unreal.

There is another startling omission. A *Preface to Statecraft*

should presumably include a summary survey of the main problems which confront the statesman. The international problem, which is of supreme importance to-day, and in which there is so much tragic misunderstanding and ignorance, is not touched on.

G.V.

LA FRANCE VEUT-ELLE VIVRE? L'Exemple de l'Allemagne. Par Joseph Aynard. (Collection *Qu'en Pensez-Vous?*) (Editions du Cerf; 3 fr. 75.)

Once again the directors of this collection have put us in their debt. This is a disturbing book; primarily addressed to Frenchmen, it is of equal importance to us, whose difficulty is essentially the same. Statistics are kept down to the minimum to avoid making the book difficult to read: they are quite sufficient. The decline in the birth-rate means, not that France will be depopulated, but that she will be—already is to a large extent—invaded by foreigners to an extent which threatens the traditional culture and character of France, for, as the author points out, it is necessary to ask oneself whether the immigrants will be assimilated by the French, or the French by the immigrants. The land is too often held by ageing people whose children, if they were not killed in the war, have gone to the towns; their places will be filled by aliens; the mines have to be worked; and in the mining districts of Lorraine the number of Italian workers given (1928) is over 100,000. The French are not racists; they are grateful for what their immigrants have done for them in the past; they are ready to open their doors to the homeless; but they are concerned, and very rightly concerned, for their traditions and their culture; and anyone who loves the European heritage must share their anxiety. If Europe were to lose the savour of Provence it would not be France merely that would suffer. The achievement of Germany in redressing a very adverse balance must be studied, and is here studied. This is our problem also.

G.V.

THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY STORM. By Dorothy Mackinder. (Sheed and Ward; 6s.)

The publishers declare that this is 'the sort of novel Catholic publishers ought to have and long to have but only rarely do have.' They might well have added that it is the sort of novel that Catholics ought to read as an antidote to many of the Catholic novels they do read. Miss Mackinder is to be congratulated on having produced, in her first novel, a story

founded on good theology rather than on sentimentality. She ran a terrible risk, and we shiver at the thought of what a less capable writer would have made of this plot. The street-girl who became a famous actress and then finally enters Carmel. The holy young priest, Paloma's one ideal to which she clings during the course of her successful and immoral career, whom she meets in later years as the proud and worldly Monsignor, and for whose sake she makes her supreme sacrifice. The reviewer of such a story can choose either of two extreme verdicts—there could be no middle course. It must be either condemned as positively nauseating or praised as an outstanding success. By her very delicate and confident handling of her plot Miss Mackinder merits decided praise. Her style is consistently good—although it has the peculiarity of reading more like a translation than an original work. The book, as was to be expected, contains the minor imperfections of a first attempt, but criticism on that score would be banal. It is a sound Catholic novel which we read at a sitting—and that is more than we can say of many another which has come our way. D.F.

FROM AN OLD MONK'S DIARY. By Father Martin Dempsey.  
(Talbot Press, Dublin; 2s.)

When first I took this book from its wrapping, I did not intend to read it there and then but only to glance at a page or two to see what new ground Fr. Dempsey was breaking with his capable pen. It was not, however, until I had read a hundred pages that I put it down, and then only because there were no more pages to read. Even two-thirds of the way through this fascinating volume I was still wondering just why it had been written and at the same time being extremely glad that it had been written. Then it dawned upon me that these vignettes of religious life were building up a single true, vivid and novel picture of that life as it is in fact lived. I realised that I was recognising all the Fathers and Brothers in the narratives, though they were composites, and recognising all the incidents, though they were all new to me. There was the humour and the deep seriousness, the natural so closely interwoven with the supernatural, the little human weaknesses next to heroic virtue, all the lovable variety of characteristics that make religious life the fine, full-blooded thing it is, in contrast to the meagre and almost inhuman thing that many tend to consider it. Of course the high lights and the shadows are somewhat over-emphasised, and of course Father Dempsey's own keen (and sometimes a little caustic) sense of humour makes the most of the situations

he creates; but, as with any good picture, the best and truest effect is obtained when you are just sufficiently far away to see the canvas as a whole and to be out of range of the individual brush strokes. This book is the outcome of the author's long and fraternal associations with religious of many Orders and with their homes, and his composite picture is fundamentally sympathetic and true to real life.

H.J.C.

SERMON IN THE SAHARA. By Charles de Foucauld. Translated by Donald Attwater. (Burns Oates; 2s. 6d.)

Here is the Catholic Catechism as thought out and expounded by the saintly hermit, Charles de Foucauld, for his simple, unsophisticated Touaregs. The exposition is straightforward and unadorned, but the whole is suffused with the author's ardent spirit of prayer; prayer is mingled with exposition, and, taking a leaf from the Mohammadan book, de Foucauld, from time to time, utters some ejaculation of divine praise after mentioning the name of God (All glory and praise to Him!). It is good to find that the author completes his summary by chapters on Duties and Counsels, on Vocation, on the need of Spiritual Guidance (the Mohammadan Pir u Murshid), and, finally, the Cross.

Recommended for Schools!

C.R.

CANTERBURY BELLS. A Novel. By Harold Webb. (Sands; 6s.)

Although the title of this novel and the sprays of Canterbury Bells on the dust cover seem to me to be badly chosen as representative of the theme of the book, yet the theme itself is developed with a vivid freshness and lightness of touch which carries the reader along and sustains interest throughout. Historical in the sense that it deals with the events that occurred in England between the years 1515—1558, leading to the breaking up of the Church in England *as by Divine Law established*, and to the substitution of a Church *as by law established*, the book is yet not overloaded with historical details. We see, or perhaps rather feel, the gathering up of the tremendous forces that, like a river that has long been held back, but of which the dam is being gradually undermined, will soon break loose and spread ruin all round. That dam is the supreme power and the teaching and governing authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ. Henry's break with Rome is the bursting of the dam. 'Only the Rock of Peter standing up amidst the waters still checks it. When it breaks loose from *that* the flood-gates will indeed be open' (pp. 175-6).

The spirit of St. Thomas the great Martyr-Archbishop of Canterbury is the inspiring genius that moves luminously in the background. And when it seems as if the King has conquered, and that more decisively and permanently than the short-lived triumph of the Henry of the martyrdom, there comes the concluding episode of the book, in which Henry's nefarious design of desecrating and destroying the Martyr's bones is foiled. Surely indicative of the fact which we realise so well to-day, namely that victory for the powers of evil is always short-lived, that the tide of battle has long since turned, that the Rock of Peter on which the Church stands, is often battered but never crumbles, while all man-made institutions are foredoomed to disintegration and inevitable destruction.

E.K.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

- ALLEN & UNWIN: *The Jews, Are They Human?* Wyndham Lewis (3s. 6d.).  
 BURNS OATES: *The Companions of Mary Ward*, Mother Mary Philip, I.B.V.M. (6s.); *Joy in Believing*, Vincent McNabb, O.P. (5s.); *The Human Soul*, Abbot Anscar Vonier, O.S.B. (6s.); *Two Years Public Ministry*, Edmund F. Sutcliffe, S.J. (7s. 6d.); *Two English Carmelites*, Sister Anne Hardman, S.N.D. (7s. 6d.).  
 CASSELL: *The Unbroken Heart*, Robert Speaight (7s. 6d.).  
 COLDWELL: *The Women of the Bible*, M. Card. Faulhaber, tr. Rev. Brendan Keogh, S.D.S., Foreword, Most Rev. Abp. Goodier, S.J. (7s. 6d.).  
 FABER & FABER: *The Family Reunion*, T. S. Eliot (7s. 6d.); *Salazar*, Antonio Ferro (8s. 6d.).  
 FORDHAM UNIVERSITY PRESS: *Beyond the Altar Rail*, Thomas H. Moore, S.J. (\$1.25).  
 GABALDA (Paris): *La Liberté et les Libertés dans la Vie Sociale, Semaines Sociales de France, XXXe Session* (38 frs.).  
 HERDER (Rome): *Christus als Mittelpunkt Religiöser Erziehung*, Josef Andreas Jungmann, S.J. (RM. 80).  
 JAMES CLARKE: *The Crime of Conscriptio*, E. I. Watkin; *Bombs, Babies and Beatitudes*, Donald Attwater; *Common Sense Christianity and War*, Gerald Vann, O.P. (Pax Pamphlets, 6d. each).  
 LONGMANS: *Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures. The Old Testament. First Book of the Psalms, I-XLI* (5s. 6d.).  
 OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS: *Rehabilitations, and Other Essays*, C. S. Lewis (7s. 6d.).  
 SANDS & Co.: *The New State*, Victor Pradera, Foreword by His Royal Highness the Prince of Asturias (8s. 6d.).  
 SHEED & WARD: *The Violent Take it by Storm*, Dorothy Mackinder (6s.); *Chosen Races*, Margaret Sothorn, Tr. Maisie Ward (7s. 6d.); *Preface to Statecraft*, Desmond Fitzgerald (3s. 6d.); *The Human Caravan*, Comte du Plessis (10s. 6d.).