

THE VOICE OF LATIN AMERICA, by William Benton; Weidenfeld and Nicolson; 21s.

BEYOND ALL PITY, by Carolina Maria de Jesus; Souvenir Press; 21s.

The perilous drama of the 'Cuban Affair' is already slipping into the obscurity of forgotten newspaper files. And yet it may well be that by focussing world attention so acutely on the Latin American scene this incident has acted as a catalyst in the process of these countries' economic and political development. In 1960, Senator Benton and Adlai Stevenson (who, for an American, has the rare distinction of being popular south of the Rio Grande) went on an extensive tour of Latin America. Senator Benton's 'The Voice of Latin America' has been written around this experience.

The Senator is the publisher of the Encyclopaedia Britannica and this is reflected in his tireless accumulation and arrangement of factual material. In a generously spaced two hundred pages the political, economic and sociological anatomy of the twenty Latin American countries is sketched and analysed and some comprehensive suggestions for American policy are made.

Economic development is widely and in a sense quite rightly, regarded as the central Latin American problem and Senator Benton devotes his longest chapter to this subject. He argues that the main obstacles to progress are the low rate of advance of agricultural productivity, the unbalanced and chaotic development of the large urban and industrial centres, the fantastic rate of inflation, the decline in world primary commodity prices and the anti-social characteristics of the Latin American capitalists. Senator Benton makes a particularly strong case for the vital and enlightened role played by U.S. capital in the process of industrialization. But unlike his contemporary American counterpart, the indigenous capitalist hinders economic progress at every turn. He revels in inflation, exports billions of dollars of capital to Europe and the United States, pays no taxes, is lacking in enterprise and generally relies for assistance and industrial leadership on a Government whose officials are mostly within the influence of his patronage or bribery.

The most striking argument in the book, however, is that educational reform is the most indispensable feature of any solution to Latin American problems. The Senator illustrates the way in which the present educational arrangements have hindered economic development, accentuated and hardened class divisions and generally failed to produce societies with the prerequisites for political stability.

Senator Benton concludes his book with some sensible suggestions for American businessmen, politicians and the public at large. Many of these have subsequently been incorporated into the President's 'Alliance for Progress' and even, it would appear, the diplomatic practice of the State Department.

Any reader who is unmoved by Senator Benton's panoramic view of the Latin American crisis might profitably turn to the microscopically detailed

account of life in the slums of Sao Paulo to be found in 'Beyond All Pity'. This is a selection of entries from the diary of a highly intelligent and sensitive mother of three illegitimate children, who until recently lived in what she herself quite reasonably described as a garbage heap. The slums of Sao Paulo are a typical by-product of violent and unplanned economic development and Carolina spells out in detail features of the daily life of their inhabitants; continual hunger, violence, promiscuity, disease, cynical contempt for the democratic political system, despair and the erosion of all the lineaments of civilized existence.

'I saw a poor woman collapse near the pump because she slept last night without dinner' . . . 'I didn't take the examination (for snail disease) because I can't afford the medicine to cure it,' are typical entries, 'shut your tubercular mouth', a characteristic piece of abuse. The diary is of especial interest to sociologists but even for the lay reader Maria's entries illuminate in a way that nothing else could, the tragic significance of Senator Benton's statistical tables. A neighbour commits suicide because of the cost of living. 'There are so many beautiful things in the world', Maria writes, 'Only one thing saddens us: the prices when we go shopping. They overshadow all the beauty that exists'.

CHRISTOPHER HOWE

PSYCHIATRY AND THE CHRISTIAN, by J. Dominion; Burns and Oates (Faith and Fact); 8s. 6d.

Catholic psychiatrists and psychologists have, for the past twenty years or so, deplored the gap between modern psychology on the one hand and Catholic belief on the other. Not of course that there is, or has been, nothing to correct and criticize in the assumptions or practice of, say, medical psychology applied to the treatment of human ills. But this must come from unprejudiced and well informed minds.

The present book should fill a long standing need for a short and authoritative statement and discussion of the subject, and it seems right that the word 'Christian' and not 'Catholic' should appear in the title.

In a work of 130 pages it seems to me that Dr Dominion has performed a feat of prestidigitation in being able to include such an overall picture of modern psychiatry, which includes the following sections: personality, psychological maladies, child psychiatry, sexual problems, the role of the priest, and much else. One wonders indeed whether it was quite the best way to tackle the subject, because so much has been said about the matter of psychiatry in a popular way, e.g. about physical methods of treatment, in other places, that more room might have been given to the dialogue between the claims of psychiatry, especially psychotherapy, on the one hand and the philosophic or pastoral aspects of the matter on the other; and the author shows us very briefly that he would be well able to do this.

In 'The Role of the Priest', a chapter of only four pages, he talks of the need for