

BLACKFRIARS

with the Goths and Swedes and with Visigothic Liturgy is considered by J. Zeiller of the Sorbonne and Dom P. Séjourné, O.S.B. Z. Garcia Villada, S.J., J. A. de Aldama, S.J., A. Vaccari, S.J., present a good survey of Isidore's writings. Prof. A. E. Anspach of Freiburg i.Br. investigates Isidore's influence from the seventh to the ninth centuries. All the essays contribute worthily to celebrate and preserve the memory of the great encyclopædist who nourished the erudition of the Middle Ages.

DANIEL A. CALLUS, O.P.

MISCELLANEOUS

THE MEDIEVAL LATIN AND ROMANCE LYRIC TO A.D. 1300. By F. Brittain. (Cambridge University Press; 15s.)

Mr. Brittain has provided the first satisfying analysis of the relation of the Roman lyrics of the 12th and 13th centuries to Latin liturgical verse. The first sixty pages treat of the sources of sentiment and the development of metre. They are followed by two hundred pages of annotated anthology in which the greatest of the lyrics of the North French, Provençal, Galician and South Italian schools are printed with representatively medieval Latin verse, whether devotional or parodies of the devotional. The need for such a volume had long been apparent and Mr. Brittain has fulfilled it. Throughout, his study is marked by a sensitive scholarship, a perception of beauty, a poised judgment.

It is natural therefore that his conclusions should remain refreshingly tentative. "There was a tendency for secular Latin poetry to be influenced by Romance rather than for the reverse process to take place, and liturgical Latin did all that could be reasonably be expected of it when it provided the early Romance poets with examples of metrical form and polished technique." Through quiet analyses of individual detail we have passed far beyond that wide sweep of dogmatic generalization which has so often obscured the study of the sources of medieval lyric.

For the first time St. Thomas's sequence for the feast of Corpus Christi is printed with the love poetry of his brother Rinaldo. Mr. Brittain has, in effect, achieved an anthology of four literatures. Inevitably with so great a scope there are details that could be criticised in attribution or in choice of text. The author would seem to be unfamiliar with Prof. Meylan's recent research and still confuses Phillipe de Grève with Philip the Chancellor (pp. 18, 58, 167). The lines of *Lauda* 93 (p. 207) are artificially arranged and the metre would have been better preserved if the ruling of the Francesconi edition of 1923 had been accepted and

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the verses printed as in the *editio princeps* of 1490. Again, it is to be regretted that no Perdigon or Pseudo Perdigon is included among the Provençals. No lyric could have illustrated more aptly the resemblance and divergence of Romance and Latin devotional approach than

*Verges en bon' hora,
Portes lo Salvaire*

Yet such slight criticisms do not affect the unique value of Mr. Brittain's achievement and no recent study has illustrated so aptly the diversity within the unity of 13th century culture.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

EASY ESSAYS. By Peter Maurin. (Sheed & Ward; 3s. 6d.)

Peter Maurin, Christian and Social Philosopher, has invented a new and very telling form of journalism. By it he is enabled to get over simple and primary truths, in the most simple of language and without trappings of example, and yet in such a form that they cling to the mind. This he achieves by having only one idea to each line in his printing—so that you get the full weight of it before you go on—and by giving his prose a rhythm which makes it attractive. Here is a good example:

What we give to the poor
for Christ's sake
is what we carry with us
when we die.

Again:

A common belief
is what makes the unity
of a community.

Reading him you do not so much learn more as realise more. He strings out his rhythms over the whole field of Catholic Social Ethics—sometimes with American slickness:

Modern Society
calls the beggar
bum and panhandler
and gives him the bum's rush.

This small book, carried in the pocket, would stimulate much good thought.

Ada de Bethune's forceful woodcuts of Christ the Worker, the Black Blessed Martin of Porres, the Driving of Usurers out of the Temple, etc., help too.

FINBAR SYNNOTT, O.P.