

Blackfriars

ledge of the Prehistory of Western Europe; and to them we are indebted for having established 'digging with spade and bucket' as a genuine and worthy science. But lest it may seem that I exaggerate, let me quote *The Times Literary Supplement* of August 13th, 1925:

'Of its two professors, MM. Henri Breuil and Hugo Obermaier, one can but say, "Arcades ambo!" leaving to posterity the invidious task of determining which of the two has done—or, rather, since both of them are still at the full height of their powers, will have done—more to establish prehistoric archæology on as sound a basis as any department of the science of man can be shown to possess.'

But apart from what other authorities may say, these few names will suffice to suggest that there is indeed some wheat among the tares of Prehistoric Archæology.

KEVIN CLARK, O.P.

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS.

Sir,—Allow me to make a public statement of my deep gratitude to Father Kevin Clark for this list of Catholic Prehistorians, with whom and with whose work, thanks to Father Kevin himself, and the library of fascinating literature to which he has introduced me, I was already perfectly familiar. But I cannot be thankful enough for having been reminded of their names at this important juncture, when by my eloquent and learned contribution to your pages I had almost induced Holy Church to condemn Prehistoric Archæology as an immoral and diabolically dangerous pursuit. This number of good names would have been more than enough to save Sodom. It shall suffice to stay my hand against Archæology. And, with Archæology spared, may we not hope that Sodom

itself will soon be disinterred? I devoutly pray that the discovery may fall to the lot of one of the Catholics in the list. How pleasant it will be to read in Father Kevin's litany :

' Among his many achievements in the service of Archæology it is sufficient to mention the famous discovery in 1927 of the most perfect skeleton known of Peccaminous man. It re-established the faith of many in several passages of the Bible, and definitely proved Original Sin to be at once more and less original than was commonly supposed.'

It is surprising how quickly, in an honest and intelligent man like myself, prejudice breaks down in the face of facts. Father Kevin's handful of names has reconciled me to Archæology in all its branches, hopes, failures, hypotheses, fallacies, nay, even flippancies, to which in the ordinary way I am temperamentally averse. In my new enthusiasm I do not even pause to ask what Father Kevin himself means by calling Neanderthal man an 'extinct race.' The association of Catholics with M. Marcellin Boule quite reconciles me to that gentleman's view that some of the extinct races now accounted for are related to myself not as members of the same human family, but through the kind mediation of a remote animal ancestor with whom Adam could have had no more than a nodding acquaintance.

These better feelings towards Archæologists and all experimental scientists are surely more in keeping with Christian charity than my former antipathy. I am now adopting Father Kevin's example of a list of Catholic names for application to other professions towards which I still entertain a lingering prejudice. I am compiling a list of eminent Catholics actively engaged in the motor industry. I am advertising in the Catholic papers for the names of all the book-makers, boot-leggers, and insurance company pro-

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moters amongst their regular readers. I am already on the track of forty Catholic millionaires, who are said to have escorted a Papal Nuncio through the streets of Chicago. And I am sending for my own baptismal certificate in the hope of improving my opinion of my own literary, scientific, and philosophical achievements.

JOHN BAPTIST REEVES, O.P.

BOOK REVIEWS

POMONA, OR THE FUTURE OF ENGLAND. By Basil de Sélincourt. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd. ; 2/6.)

English has tripped off many tongues and dripped from many pens throughout the ages. It has a past, a rich and glorious history, a noble literature: it is like a great tree whose roots reach down to our dearest and even most forgotten traditions, whose branches touch the stars, and in the branches are apples of gold. Well and good for the past and the present; but what of the future? That is the fascinating subject of Mr. Basil de Sélincourt's brilliant little essay. Will the apples lose their gold? Will they go rotten? Will the tree survive? The danger lies across the Atlantic, you may be inclined to say, especially if you have read Mr. Fred Newton Scott's S.P.E. Tract XXIV on American Slang. But the danger is more apparent than real, and, in spite of a telephonic link between London and New York, the optimist may still hope that American slang is largely an affectation, little practised; and as little likely to influence the language as, say, the eccentricities of slang indulged in by the cockney.

It is difficult for an essay of less than a hundred short pages to avoid generalisations which will provoke discussion because they are undeveloped. Some readers will quarrel with the statement that 'our literature, indubitably, shows signs of fatigue'; others will ask what precisely is meant by saying that 'the jesuitry of religion is bad enough, but at least it secures us against succumbing to any jesuitry of science'; but all will find this elegant and delightful essay stimulating and inspiring.

K.