

Blackfriars

THE WITNESS OF THE MARTYRS. By Lady Catherine Ashburnham. With a Foreword by H.E. Cardinal Bourne and an Introduction by Joseph Keating, S.J. Pp. 179. (Sheed & Ward; 3/6 net.)

THE GOOD FRUIT OF TYBURN TREE. By Dom Bede Camm, O.S.B. With Preface by the Most Rev. Richard Downey, Archbishop of Liverpool. Pp. 67. (Sands; 1/- net.)

Cardinal Bourne in his foreword points out the special value of Lady Ashburnham's work: it gives 'in the words of the martyrs themselves, or of the contemporary records, the real grounds of their condemnation to death.' It is plain in the case of the one hundred of our English Martyrs reported by Lady Ashburnham that the 'treason' and 'felony' which brought Catholics—priests and layfolk alike—to the gallows in the persecutions under Elizabeth and the Stuart kings were but names for one thing—loyalty to the 'old religion' of England; but for an unwillingness to subscribe to the new-fangled doctrines of Protestants, to give up saying or hearing Mass, and attend the services of the Church of England, pardon, in every case, would have been granted. A quite remarkable collection of evidence to that effect has been collected by Lady Ashburnham, and in every case the source is mentioned. Quotations from various Acts of Parliament, relating to the persecution of Catholics, add to the usefulness of the book. Since these martyrs were done to death in most horrible fashion by the authority of Anglicans—and the persecution was exclusively the work of members of the Church of England—Father Keating is somewhat impatient of the 'continuity' myth of Anglo-Catholics. If it is still doubted that 'the Elizabethan religion was so radically different from the old that no Catholic could embrace it without making shipwreck of the Faith,' then let this 'most eloquent catena of testimony from the victims of Anglicanism—a few links from a golden chain of much greater length be studied; as it deserves to be.'

Dom Bede Camm is untiring in the cause of the English martyrs, unresting in his determination to proclaim the sanctity of Tyburn. In the eight chapters of this little book—written, the Archbishop of Liverpool points out, 'with the simple charm which has given distinction to Dom Bede Camm's earlier works'—the place of martyrdom is discussed and fixed, the significance of the capital sentence for treason explained, and many incidents of the journey of the martyrs to Tyburn tree and of the scenes at the scaffold are retold. They were lovers

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of England, our martyrs, on that Dom Bede Camm insists, confident that as 'they become better known to our separated brethren, their witness to the old faith of England must strike a chord in the hearts of all men of good will.' For the enlargement of this better knowledge no man has striven more devotedly than the gatherer of this *Good Fruit*.

J.C.

ARTHURIANA. Proceedings of the Arthurian Society, Oxon.
Edited by E. Vinaver, M.A., B.Litt., D.-ès-L., and the
Rev. H. J. B. Gray. (Blackwell; 4/6 net.)

We join with Professor Faral in wishing every success to this new enterprise in mediaeval research work. With so formidable an array of contributors, the French scholar's prophecy is certain of fulfilment: 'Vous ferez régner l'ordre dans le désordre; vous établirez cette conviction que la recherche de la vérité est supérieure aux jeux de la frivolité; vous rendrez à l'histoire des droits usurpés par la littérature, par une mauvaise littérature.' Soon the last vestiges of the neo-Gothic groups of Tennyson and Morris will be swept away: 'The courtesy of Knights, fair calm and sacred rage . . . vanish those high conceits.' The Victorian Arthur 'patient and colourless' may become a heathen kinglet, bartering Cornish tin to Semitic merchants, not of Arimathea, but of Tyre in Chanaan.

We are indeed grateful to Sir Edmund Chambers for rejecting the amazing theories put forward in 'Celtic Myth and Arthurian Legend.' He shows us, in particular, how unscientific are the assumptions that Mithraism lingered on in Britain for eight hundred years following the Roman evacuation, and that there is a correspondence between modern occult societies and the mysteries underlying the Grail Cycle.

Fr. Gray's textual examination does not convince us that there is a doctrinal similarity between the *Queste* and St. Bernard's Sermons. By means of the triple appearance of the phrase 'par le conseil de la flor,' he infers that here is a clear indication of belief in the then growing cultus of Our Lady's Mediatorship. Until more conclusive data is brought to light, we feel bound to favour M. Pauphilet rather than M. Gilson.

For a student of Middle English, and for every lover of folk-lore, we would recommend this little book. We look forward to the publication of the next number.

G.A.F.