

and thence back across the Indian Ocean to Massaweh, and the settling of the nomadic court in the palace of Gondar, it met a heavy and impenetrable survival, a mixture, among other elements, of Judaism and a 'filtered' Byzantinism. There was the *coup* of the conversion of the Emperor Susenyos to Catholicism, but the Jesuit mission ended in failure. 'It was not the world of Bellarmine, but something more archaic, that would call to this ancient and unimpeded sovereignty'. In the years that followed, the throne was reduced to a shadow by the feudal barons, until power was centralised again by the Shoan Emperors a century ago. Their sanction was more practical, and less hieratic, more like that of the later medieval Kings of France, less like that of the Holy Roman Empire. The revival, tragic and fascinating in Theodore of Magdala, was triumphant in Menelik of Adowa.

There is a perception of scenery and weather throughout this study, 'the high thin air, the euphoria in blossom', the eye for detail, 'the light blue and silver of the Bombay Light Cavalry', and the turn of phrase: 'the *abuna* was an object of reverence, anxiety, and un-fatigued suspicion'. The pleasure of reading it is enhanced by the anticipation of more studies by Dr Mathew in African history.

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

EVERYMAN'S DICTIONARY OF MUSIC. Compiled by Eric Blom. (Dent; 10s. 6d).

To review 700 pages, double-columned and closely printed, is to attempt the unprofitable, if not the impossible. It is enough to say that Mr Blom's name is a guarantee of accuracy of definition and objectivity of comment. The omission of all living performers avoids the embarrassment of discrimination, and the space saved permits the inclusion of a new and valuable feature, namely references indicating the literary sources drawn upon by composers of all ages and countries. A key to the abbreviations used would have been helpful. It is at first a baffling business to entangle such arcana as 'Fr writer on m. & comp.' or 'Among the most common orch. insts. Eng. hns., cls., hns. and tpts. are T.I.'. But with familiarity *Everyman* becomes a friend, and it will be indispensable for that large public which wants to know just enough to give a piece of music its setting. And the definitions are masterpieces of economy and clarity.

J. S. B.

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF WRITING AND LETTERING. By Jan Tschichold. (A. Zwemmer; 15s.)

The author introduces his subject with the words: 'The immense flood of printed matter which characterises the present day has not only diminished our reverence for *language*. It is also beginning to destroy our living sense for the visible representation of language, for *writing and lettering*'. But the seventy excellently produced half-tone illustrations, beginning with a vivid bison from the walls of the Altamura cave of some twenty or thirty thousand years ago,

go to disprove his opening words. For after reviewing the first attempts at writing and showing us the glories of the Greek papyrus, the perfections of Chinese calligraphy, the solemnities of the Roman inscriptions, the magnanimity of the uncials, he reviews the elaborations of the later Middle Ages which lead eventually to the flounders in the nineteenth century through the perfection of printing machines. But that was not the end of the story, and he concludes with three beautiful pages—the Dacre Press Bible, Gill's *Joanna* and the written style of the Bremer Presse. It is strange that the author should continue to suspect a decline, for this art of calligraphy and printing is surely one of the great hopes of the times. For it reveals a final revulsion from the slavery to technique and ornament. There is today a far greater tendency to employ and to prefer simplicity in lettering, title page and book production: vulgarity is more frequently reserved for the jacket. Perhaps there is too much reliance on the sculptured traditions set up by men like Bodoni, but there has been a considerable return to the calligraphic forms in part due to the great influence of Edward Johnstone, who with William Morris justly finds a mention in these pages. But the recent history offers hope that in other forms of mechanised art men may learn to throw off the bondage of industrial production, and the worship of the tawdry and the elaborate—though there does still remain the decline in personal handwriting. The book contains a valuable pedigree tree of the European styles, and it should certainly be acquired as a collection of milestones in the story of the art. It is instructive and leads to the very serious consideration of an art which is now 'employed and desecrated' by all in a universally educated world. It is of course itself finely produced.

C. P.

THINKING IT OVER. By Thomas F. Woodlock. (Declan X. McMullen Co.; \$3.00.)

This is a refreshing book. It is especially so to one who was nauseated for five and a half years by the opportunism, the bowing to expediency, the soft-peddling (to use a very mild term) of Papal pronouncements, the exceptionally feeble response given by English Catholics to Papal leadership and to the ordinary appeals of humanity.

Here are a hundred or so essays selected from the late Thomas Woodlock's column in the *Wall Street Journal*. They cover the war-period and the crisis that preceded it; they deal with all the problems that latterly have been uppermost in men's minds, juridical, educational, scientific, social and economic. It might be thought that these short topical papers date. They do not: they are remarkably pertinent. To disagree radically with some of the author's implications in the field of economics is merely to witness to the stimulating forthrightness of his opinions. No one will deny that the body of them shows a sanity in the fullest sense and a knowledge of the affairs of mankind that is more than worldly wisdom. The book is unmistakably the work of one who has made full use of access to the ideals and traditions of the Catholic Church.

J. F. T. PRINCE