

## REVIEWS

dining outside the common refectory, and that is the reason why the Master-General of the Order, the Franciscan Minister-General, Electors of the Empire, and bishops were permitted to dispense all the friars dining with them from silence. This could also be done by the Prior-Provincial, whereas the Conventual Prior could give permission to only one other friar to speak with himself. All this is made very clear by Fontana, *Constitutiones O.P.*, a work that would have greatly helped the author. It does not appear, however, that he has used it. In Appendix iii a very incorrect impression is given concerning Dominican devotion to Mass, through ignorance of the position the Conventual Mass occupied in all monastic Orders. The insistence on hearing *one Mass* has consequently bewildered the author who attributes it to some unsacerdotal tendency in St. Dominic and his Order. The explanation, a quite simple one, is that the Conventual Mass forming the principal part, the centre in fact, of the divine office, had to be attended by all, just as all had to be present at Matins. That particular Mass was a community obligation. "*Matutinas et missam simul audiant fratres nostri.*" This obligation, it is needless to add, was not "typical" of the Dominican Order; it has been the rule through many centuries of all religious Orders and resident Cathedral Chapters. Of course the friars who were priests, like St. Dominic who "*fere singulis diebus celebravit missam*" said Mass daily and these many private Masses were served by the students, novices and lay-brothers.

On pp. 24 and 52 the impression is given that the attendance of St. Dominic's seven companions at the lectures of Alexander Stavensby rests only on a tradition, preserved by Blessed Humbert; but as the latter was already a Dominican of fourteen years standing when Alexander died in 1238 tradition is scarcely the correct word. Moreover the English friar Nicholas Trivet, although much later, also relates it as a fact.

These criticisms however are not intended to belittle the extreme value of Mr. Bennett's book, which is an earnest endeavour to give a living picture of the work done by one of the greatest organizations the middle ages gave to the Catholic Church.

WALTER GUMBLEY, O.P.

## MISCELLANEOUS

NORTH COUNTRY. By Edmund Vale. (Batsford; 7s. 6d.)

This is perhaps the best volume of the very fine series from Messrs. Batsford under the general heading *The Face of Britain*.

Mr. Vale explains in his preface that he has chosen, in pre-

## BLACKFRIARS

ference to a single broad picture, the easier way of presenting to the reader the "requisite number of cubes, ready made in their proper shades of local colour, for him to make up his own shape," and yet, nevertheless, the book has retained a remarkable unity of construction—perhaps due to the easy flowing style of a traveller who knows something of the beauty of good English. But there is a unity in the subject matter which gives the whole study such a fascinating character—the unity of that little-known and still less little-understood country which we in England call "the North." It is this indescribably stirring and romantic word—"North"—which, as the author truly says, "accidentally expresses a great truth obliquely"—for behind its tense solemnity we bring up grit, steeliness and enthusiasm fostered under conditions of hard living and hard weather.

Beyond the general introduction the book is divided into studies of Northern Industry—with many most interesting sidelights on the particular conditions and difficulties of the depressed areas—Northern Towns; and lastly, the unbeatable open country of the North.

There is evidence of a subtle knowledge, not generally associated with travel or topographical books, of the sociological and psychological foundations of present day conditions in the penetrating account of visits to the coalfields of Durham and West Cumberland and to the mills of Lancashire and Yorkshire. There is an interesting analysis of the practical working of the "merger scheme" which is rapidly destroying the local independence and local enterprise once so strong in the North. The local tailor and bootmaker have practically gone. The countryman's suit is made by female labour in a clothing factory in some distant town, and there the money goes to pay for it. If there is a real shoemaker still to be found who was properly apprenticed and trained, his art and skill will be limited in their exercise to the mending of shoddy, mass-produced boots or fitting ready-made handles to damaged cardboard suitcases. Again, the great merged industry of trawling has ruined local fishing and reduced coastal industry to the letting of seaside lodgings. The economic centralization of industry along with the crushing effect of uncontrolled monopoly, have so inverted the social order that profits, instead of going to the localities of production, are distributed wherever the shareholders happen to live. In the case of the cotton spinning districts we get the added psychological difficulty of what the author aptly terms "respectability complex." The term "mill-girl" is held up in the twopenny novels and by the films as the "label of work inconsistent with the term 'young lady'." Clogs and shawls have been given up and dressing rooms have been provided for those who still "condescend" to employment in the mill. But the

## REVIEWS

demand is unfulfilled because it is thought more ladylike to "go to business" at a mass-production tailoring establishment.

In the chapter *No Man's Land* we have accounts of visits to the derelict areas of Tyneside. A most depressing account is given of Hebburn, but at Crook, where 85% of the population are unemployed, we have an entirely different picture—smart, architecturally attractive Council houses, clean and well-dressed children and well-kept homes. Reading these pages we begin to see the dire results of bureaucracy and delegated responsibility, the distressing phenomenon of the rapidly growing power of town- and county-councils. These bodies with their powers of veto and sanction have gradually absorbed all the privileges of church, parish and people. What is even more significant, they are destined to become large landed proprietors, they already own more valuable estates than the monasteries at the time of the Dissolution. "The commercial wangler, the demagogue and the busybody" constituting our Councils, are our future landlords.

Along with an interesting account of the rise of the purely industrial town we get a sidelight on the decay of the English village. The author maintains that in spite of all their beauty, the English villages are rotten at heart—and this because the industries of the village have gone and the place is no longer a hive, it has become dull; imported amusements from the town, cinemas, wireless and dance halls, have spread the belief that it is better to be amused than to amuse yourself.

The last half of the book is devoted to an account of the scenic beauty of the North and its wealth of historical association. The descriptions of the Yorkshire dales and the romantic Border country of Northumberland could hardly be matched for conveying something of the puissant spirit of the loveliest of England. The book is excellently illustrated with many fine photographs.

BERT WATTS.

HEIMWEH NACH GOTT. By Pieter van der Meer de Walcheren. (Herder, Freiburg i. B.; RM. 3.20 and 4.40.)

This Diary of Pieter van der Meer appears opportunely in our troubled and uncertain times. Vividly, in unadorned language and with the unsophisticated simplicity of his childlike heart, he lays bare to us the record of the most important period of a human life: the strife for truth and faith.

This man is thorough. Superficial phrases and assumptions will not content him; he must thresh things out completely. Hence his path is a long and difficult one, beset with inward