

BLACKFRIARS

without significance that she called the Mother House in Rome "Calvary Hospital"—a fitting name for a home of suffering erected upon a hill overlooking the Eternal City.

In the accomplishment of this sublime ideal the saintly foundress insisted on the spiritual life as the foundation of all activity: "Be good nuns first," she used to say, "and then you'll be good nurses." But not for that did she neglect their training in the art of healing. Quite the contrary; it was her wish that the Sisters should be thoroughly trained. She had no use for half-baked nurses. *La piété ne dispense jamais de la technique*, we read somewhere recently. The principle applies to all professions, but it needs to be specially borne in mind in all that concerns the care of the sick. There was and is still a real danger of people imagining that piety will supply the lack of technical training. Mother Mary Potter would have none of this. She insisted on her Sisters being thoroughly skilled and efficient in every way. But where she was quite up-to-date and indeed ahead of her time was in her views regarding maternity nursing. With what joy would she not have welcomed the recent *Instruction* published by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide on this most important matter (February 11th, 1936).

There is one point about which, we think, much more might be said, and that is the *inner* life of Mother Potter. Mrs. Healy did not write this book with the purpose of proving that the Foundress of the Little Company of Mary was remarkable for her holiness of life. There is no trace of special pleading in this respect. The glimpses we get here and there of her interior life are all the more forceful for that and make us long for more.

T. E. GARDE, O.P.

MEDIÆVAL STUDIES

The third volume of *European Civilization*¹ will be welcomed by all those who cherish serious and well-informed reading. It is a matter for satisfaction that this part of the work dealing with such an arduous subject as the *Middle Ages* has been entrusted to such highly qualified contributors as D. C. Douglas of the University of Glasgow, Professor Jean Guiraud and Professor A. E. Taylor.

To trace the development of mediæval civilization in Europe and to explain the causes of that unique growth is the purpose of Mr. Douglas's contribution (pp. 5-350). And he has succeeded exceedingly well in driving home his argument with clearness,

¹ *European Civilization. Its Origin and Development.* By various Contributors under the direction of E. EYRE. Vol. III: The Middle Ages. (Oxford University Press, 1935: 18/-.)

REVIEWS

sobriety and balance of judgment. Far from the popular fallacy, still prevalent in certain quarters, of regarding the Middle Ages as "the glacial age of the spirit," as constituting a kind of gap between the age of the classics and their rediscovery in the fifteenth century, Mr. Douglas's views are most sympathetic, yet free from that excessive and blind enthusiasm which either overestimates the advantages or fails to notice the defects, weaknesses and insufficiencies where they really existed. He sees the starting point of the Middle Ages in the clash and interpenetration of two social orders, the breakdown of the Roman government in the West, the influence of barbarian tribes into the Empire and the establishment of barbarian kingdoms on the imperial soil. The main direction and the formative influence in the history of Europe was the notion of the political and religious unity of Christendom, a unity derived from the Roman past and defended throughout these centuries from internal decay and external attack. The Church proved during this epoch to be the cohesive force in Europe, and it has conditioned the sanctions under which temporal authority was to be exercised. The culture of western Europe is Latin. Here, as in political and social history, we have to deal with the development of an inheritance bequeathed from the Roman past. The scholarship of these centuries is at its strongest in just those departments of knowledge where the Romans had themselves excelled. Where the Latin world had failed, there, too, the men of these centuries found themselves incompetent. It is gratifying to note how Mr. Douglas stresses, and quite rightly too, the historical continuity of mediæval culture from Roman antiquity. "Mediæval literature springs from the Latin past out of which it has its natural growth. It is the accurate reflection of a political development whose chief characteristic is the blend of Roman political ideas with the ethical teaching of Christianity." On the other hand, the beginnings of "the secularized and irresponsible state," far from the ideal of a Europe unified in politics and religion, and from a social order which strives to be identical with Christendom, indicate those forces which were afterwards to wreck the civilization of the Middle Ages.

Professor Guiraud studies the religious crisis in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, examining the Albigensian heresy, the preaching and the Crusade against it, and the establishment and activity of the Inquisition in the thirteenth century (pp. 355-409). Then he proceeds to give account of the history of the later Middle Ages from the time of St. Louis to the end. And here we are told, very clearly and objectively indeed, though here and there in somewhat journalistic style, of the zenith of the Church during that epoch; we assist at the formation of the modern

BLACKFRIARS

States, of the Renaissance in Italy and Humanism throughout Europe, and the survey is concluded by the presentation of the social development of Europe at the end of the Middle Ages (pp. 415-734). Good maps are of great help in following the history of these two sections.

The last hundred pages are devoted to the ancient and mediæval Philosophy and committed to Professor A. E. Taylor (pp. 739-845). What he has to say on Greek philosophy is, as was to be expected, eminently accurate; but the account of mediæval philosophy is far too brief—barely forty pages including even the Patristic period. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that it is too schematic and rather a mere catalogue of some features of Scholasticism. But we admire the skill and consummate art of Prof. Taylor in succeeding to condense many facts in such a small space. He acknowledges his special debt for parts of this section to the various works of Prof. E. Gilson. We understand however that Prof. Gilson has modified many of the views which he had expressed in his *Philosophie au Moyen Age*.

Repetition is almost inevitable in a work like this written by various contributors. Further, several slips have crept in here and there. We note one in particular, which we have already noticed in works otherwise quite accurate. On p. 244 Joachim of Flora is presented as the most prominent member produced by the party of Spiritual Franciscans who resisted the organization begun by Elias, whereas it is well known that Joachim had died in 1202.

D. A. CALLUS, O.P.

NOTICES

VIE INTERIEURE. By the Abbé Jacques Leclercq. (Editions de la Cité Chrétienne, Bruxelles; 27 B. frs.)

This is the third of a series of essays on Catholic morality in which the Abbé Leclercq is giving a readable exposition of the Christian conception of life, based on faith and reason and issuing in perfection. Apart from the introductory chapter, and chapters each on external activity and the Holy Eucharist, the present essay of 400 pages is entirely devoted to prayer in all its forms. The Abbé has an historical sense, and he writes with clearness and insight, giving a balanced survey of modern tendencies and movements. But he is inclined sometimes to over-emphasize dubious psychological effects of Catholic practices, and there are departures from the general high standard of his work. In the chapter on *Action* we are told that external activity, apostolic, charitable or professional, is a means of perfection for many, sometimes even the principal one; but the spiritual value