

NOTICES

POPE PIUS XII, by the Most Reverend Jan Olav Smit (adapted into English by James H. Vanderveldt, O.F.M.; Burns Oates; 16s.) is an excellent exposition of the work of the present Holy Father during twelve years fraught with the greatest dangers to the vast flock committed to his care. On page 223 Bishop Smit describes his courageous stand in the face of the veiled Nazi threat to deport him. 'Mr Ambassador', Pius XII wrote on February 5th, 1944, 'tell your commissioner that the Pope, whatever may happen, not only refuses to leave Rome but also protests in advance against any indescribable violence which may be designed against the Vicar of Christ.' One is reminded of the deportation to Germany of Pope Benedict V and his death at Hamburg in 965. Had Pope Pius this picture in mind at the time he expostulated with Hitler's messengers? The book is profusely illustrated.

ESSAY ON HUMAN LOVE (Rockcliff; 15s.). We would hesitate to agree with Lord Halifax, in his introduction to Jean Guitton's book, that it is 'one of the finest fruits of the war'. It has indeed great power as a work of speculation, but falls apart, because from the outset it holds that man's first sin was sexual (a view favoured by some contemporary exegetes) and because, too, the theme of human love cannot adequately be treated apart from that Divine Love which is cause and exemplar of all. The book is admirably translated.

THE HIERARCHY CENTENARY CONGRESS (1850-1950) is now handsomely commemorated in a volume containing the story and photographs of the events in London. (Burns Oates; 7s. 6d.)

CONTROL OF LIFE, Dr Halliday Sutherland's valuable study of the family and its contemporaries enemies, appears in a revised and enlarged edition (Burns Oates; 15s.), including two additional chapters by Dr Henry Newsholme. Dr Newsholme's study of the Population Report is particularly useful.

STIMULI is the aptly named title of Mgr Ronald Knox's reprinted sermons from the *Sunday Times* (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.). They are welcome on several counts, and not least as models of an economy in language which achieves its effect almost by stealth, but with the maximum of effect.

THE FORTIES is a record in photographs of a decade of war and uneasy peace. (Weidenfeld and Nicholson; 21s.) A running commentary by Alan Ross points the moral as the years pass, from blitz to U.N.O., from the mood of Dunkirk to that of the Festival of Britain, and is a proper partner for an original series of illustrations.

BEETHOVEN, SCHUBERT, MENDELSSOHN consists of the three long

articles written by Sir George Grove for his famous *Dictionary*. (Macmillan; 25s.) As Mr Eric Blom explains in a preface, they are disproportionate to the scope of the dictionary as a whole, and are to be omitted from the fifth edition (which Mr Blom is editing). But they remain valuable in their own right, despite the changes in musical taste since they were written seventy years ago, and well deserve a handsome and separate survival.

LONDON WEST OF THE BARS (Robert Hale; 15s.) is Douglas Newton's last work on his beloved metropolis. He takes us through the streets he knew so well and shows us men of long ago dwelling in it and loving it as he did; from the earliest times and through the dark sixteenth century when its greatest son, Saint Thomas More, bade it farewell from the headman's block on Tower Hill, and then on to the present day. The book is confined to 'London west of the Bars', but as the author says: 'it is the London that became greater than its sire, a settlement that expanded to a giant capital'. An equally vivid study of the capital south of the river is given by Miss Grace Golden in *OLD BANKSIDE* (Williams and Norgate; 15s.) and she has illustrated it with her own drawings. Where all is so good it is difficult to extol one part of the work more than another, but one may in particular stress the excellence of her chapters dealing with the growth and development of the Elizabethan stage.

THE MASTER FORGER, by John Godley (Home and Van Thal; 9s. 6d.), is the almost incredible story of a Dutch artist who struggled for many years to make a name for himself, and then came to the conclusion that critics were unable to distinguish between good and bad art. He resolved to expose them once and for all. Possessing an astounding knowledge of materials and technique, he painted a *Christ at Emmaus* which the greatest art experts in Europe declared to be an undiscovered Vermeer. The sense of power and the lust for money drove Han van Meegeren to turn out seven more 'Old Masters' which were sold for over £750,000. Had not Marshal Goering paid £165,000 for one of these pictures the forgeries might never have been discovered. But Van Meegeren was arrested on the charge of collaboration with the Germans. He proved his innocence in this respect, but revealed how he had made fools of the art experts and critics. He convinced them of his uncanny powers by painting another 'Vermeer' under their very eyes. This very much lapsed Catholic artist died in 1947 while awaiting imprisonment. He is best described as a perverted genius.

THE WORD OF TESTIMONY, by Francis Noel Davey (S.P.C.K.; 2s.), is the outspoken Charles Gore Memorial Lecture, delivered in Westminster Abbey by the Editorial Secretary to the S.P.C.K., and can hardly be recommended too highly. It opens with a brief examination

of the 'Strength and Weakness of Contemporary Christian Testimony': this envisages a non-Catholic audience, but many a Catholic preacher or teacher could profit from it. It is however the masterly summary of the method and content of 'Testimony in the New Testament' that particularly commands attention. The lecture concludes with some suggestions for the application of 'The New Testament Precedent in the Modern World'.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SINGING. By Franklyn Kelsey. (Williams and Norgate; 7s. 6d.) is a book about how to sing by a singer who is convinced (and who is not?) that the old singers 'knew something that we don't know any longer. Something has been lost.' Mr Kelsey goes back to Garcia and those before him, but he has pushed his investigations and explanations, accumulated from twenty years of singing and teaching, into much greater detail and clarity than anyone before, and has invented a terminology to explain them. He has written a book which, though as he admits 'is for the singing-teacher rather than for the student', is nevertheless of immense value for anyone who is going to sing seriously, or is interested in the art of singing. It will not be relished by the formulators of fancy modern theories of voice production.

CONSCIENCE OF THE KING by Alfred Duggan (Faber and Faber; 12s. 6d.) is not, as its title might suggest, a study of King Claudius nor yet is it a treatise on the responsibilities of kingship. It is, in fact, an ingenious novel in the style of an autobiography depicting eighty years, 450-530, in the evolution of England. The autobiographer, Cerdic Elesing, first King of Wesscx, has left, for the purposes of the novel, an account in Latin of his origins, adventures and climb to power, revealing himself as a rather nasty old gentleman without a shred of a conscience. His path to the kingship is marked by a double fratricide, sacrilege, the debauching of a king's sister, apostasy, the murder of his wife and virtual parricide. Those were stirring times, of course, even though the warriors involved had, to our minds, quaint names. Anglo-Saxon England is a somewhat nebulous period for the historian but Mr Duggan has made good use of his sources and his imagination.

THIS INSUBSTANTIONAL PAGEANT by Monk Gibbon (Phoenix House; 10s. 6d.) is the first collection in book form of all the more recent, and some of the earlier, works of a poet who has won esteem from those whose approval is worth having. There is nothing complicated or complex about his poetry and prose poems. Mr Gibbon is an individualist who has gone his own straight forward way, undisturbed by changing trends and fashions. His poems are direct, easy to grasp and delightful to read. Their engaging simplicity and lyric beauty are graciously restful and agreeable to the mind that seeks repose in poetry.