

ST FRANCIS IN ITALIAN PAINTING. By George Kaftal. (Allen and Unwin; 12s. 6d.)

THE SAINTS IN PICTURES: St Francis of Assisi, St Jerome, St Anthony of Egypt, St Catherine of Siena. By Maisie Ward. (Sheed and Ward; 3s. 6d. each).

Dr Kaftal, an acknowledged authority on all matters iconographical, has produced an interesting addition to the 'Ethical and Religious Classics of East and West'. Using the methods which he applied so successfully in his previous volumes on St Dominic and St Catherine of Siena (Blackfriars Publications), he provides a general introduction on St Francis and a discussion of his various 'lives' and legends. There follows a selection of thirty-nine half-tone plates illustrating texts taken from the biographies of Thomas of Celano or St Bonaventure. The paintings are drawn from a wide range of sources, from the altarpiece (1235) of Bonaventura Berlinghieri to a fresco of Ghirlandaio. The special quality of St Francis's life is matched by the mood of his biographers and of the artists who commemorated him, and Dr Kaftal's book, learned and authoritative as it is, is a delightful anthology in praise of a saint who has commanded the hearts of men more surely than any other.

The purpose of the new 'Saints in Pictures' series is to show, by word and illustration, the 'strength and beauty of sanctity'. The first four volumes are a brilliant realisation of this intention. In each case a biography of forty pages (by Maisie Ward) is accompanied by four plates in colour and eight in monochrome. Miss Ward succeeds in giving what is essential (and that includes in each case a perceptive interpretation of the importance of the saints as living persons, with meaning for men today), and her choice of illustrations is uniformly happy. It is a marvel of publishing to have produced this series at so low a price, and the reproductions (by Adprint) are astonishingly faithful and compare very well with those of far more expensive 'art' books. This latest enterprise of the house of Sheed and Ward is certainly their most courageous, and it is to be hoped that it will meet with the success it abundantly deserves.

O.P.

QUEEN OF PARADOX. By Katherine Brégy. (The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee; \$3.00).

Dr Katherine Brégy, who is a much-honoured Catholic writer in the United States, is clearly under the spell of the Queen of Scots. And yet this well-intentioned panegyric, which is touchingly dedicated to Mary herself, is disappointing. It is simply an ordinary American variation on the familiar theme. The style is, naturally, American: it vibrates with the drama that swirled around Mary; it is vehement, indignant