

## BLACKFRIARS

Reports from Berlin of the extensive Nazi 'purge' of contemporary German literature has aroused doubts whether any will survive. A subscription to Fr. Muckermann's 'monthly review of poetry and life,' *Der Gral* (Munich: Kösel und Pustet, RM. 1.50 monthly), should prove reassuring. Besides the more widely advertised work of the Zweigs, Kästners, Baums and Feuchtwangers, there is a vigorous literature which is at once more authentically German and genuinely Catholic. Fr. Muckermann is already known to our readers as the founder of the cinema information bureau which bears his name. He contributes a fine article to the current issue of his review on the Church Militant, which outlines the dogmatic principles on which all such enterprises of Catholic Action rest. Heinrich Gregor contributes a study of the *Physiognomik* of Piccard and Kassner, an attractive if bizarre philosophy born of photographic portraiture. There are studies of Hugo Ball and Heinrich Federer, and Daniel Rops' remarkable article on 'The Young Catholics of France' appears simultaneously in *Der Gral* and *The Dublin Review*. Fr. Muckermann writes with insight and discrimination on the burning topic of the 'New Nationalism,' and there is an abundance of information and criticism of contemporary German art and letters. It is a review emphatically to be recommended to all who wish to keep in touch with German culture and Catholicism. BLACKFRIARS will keep readers informed from time to time of outstanding contributions to this and other German Catholic periodicals. V.W.

THE RHYTHM OF STERILITY AND FERTILITY IN WOMEN. By Leo J. Latz, A.B., B.S., M.D. (Chicago: Latz Foundation, 1222 Republic Building; \$1.)

THE STERILE PERIOD IN FAMILY LIFE. By Valère J. Coucke and James J. Walsh, M.D., Pt.D. (New York: Wagner. London: Herder; 4/-.)

The conclusions of two distinguished specialists, Dr. K. Ogino of Niigata, and Dr. H. Knaus of Graz, regarding a recurring period of sterility in women, have aroused great interest among Catholics, particularly in America and Central Europe. They are based on statistics and direct observation, and explained by the *corpus luteum* theory. But although corroborated by other scientific workers in the same field, present medical opinion is not agreed on their force. Dr. Latz gives a simple account of the physiological, practical and ethical aspects of the question. His little book is published with ecclesiastical approbation. In collaboration with Dr. J. J. Walsh, Canon Coucke, Professor of Moral Theology, at the *Grand Séminaire*

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of Bruges, summarises the latest information on the subject, with a discussion of its moral bearings. This handy volume is published with the *imprimatur* of the Cardinal of New York. The latter book is more guarded than the former on the medical issue, but both are agreed on the moral issue.

T.G.

## ART

ΔΟΜΗΝΙΚΟΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ ΚΡΗΣ. By Achilleus Kyrou. (Athens, 1932).

Because of its linguistic inaccessibility, the work of Greek students of El Greco receives generally insufficient recognition. M. Kyrou, a Greek authority on the painter, has recently been conducting researches in Crete with the object of augmenting where possible our knowledge of his early life. He has not, it must be confessed, succeeded in unearthing any important biographical fact, but he has all the same provided us with sufficient data to make a plausible reconstruction of Greco's early life possible. I understand that he is on the point of publishing further documentary evidence in support of the more hypothetical of his contentions.

Assuming the old identification of Theotocopulos with Theotokis, M. Kyrou claims as Greco's birthplace the old house of the Theotokis family, which he has located in the Arconticò of the village of Fodele. He has further discovered a legend to the effect that 'un jeune Theotokis avait quitté, il y a bien longtemps, son pays et qu'il n'était jamais revenu, ayant trouvé au loin gloire et fortune. Vers la fin seulement de la vie, se rappelant de sa famille, il avait fait venir près de lui un vieux frère, qui vivait encore et avec lequel il partagea gloire et richesses.' That this is not a product of the Cretan Greco cult inaugurated by the researches immediately before the war of the Spanish consul in Candia, is proved by the somewhat similar version of the story retailed by Stamakis, the centenarian revolutionary, who had died some twelve years previously. There is therefore no inherent improbability in M. Kyrou's suggestion that the frescoes (at present covered with whitewash) in the church on the former site of the village, which was moved two hundred years or so ago owing to Turkish inroads, may contain further clues as to the Byzantine aspects of Greco's development and that the neighbouring monastery of St. Pandeimon was almost certainly the scene of his first lessons in painting. It would be interesting, too, to know the precise extent of the relationship between the *Agony in the Garden* and the icon of the same subject in the church of St. Catherine in Candia.