

blithesome and courageous martyr-poet, and those who think that Jesuits are all turned out of one mould like toy soldiers should compare this life with those of Gerard and Weston. Fr Devlin's own distinguished prose, that is often so near to poetry, is the perfect medium for such a study. Wide reading has made the background almost as familiar to him as it was to Southwell, and his scholarship safeguards him from any excessive use of imagination. Particularly attractive is the unexpected, but always felicitous, interjection of lines from the martyr's own poems. Most of these chapters may be read with ease even by those unacquainted with the historical setting, but there are times when the very complexity of the situation necessitates close concentration. The intrigues of Morgan and Paget in the Babington plot, and the chapter on 'W.S.' are examples of passages that require and will repay more than one reading. But generally speaking the narrative progresses with clarity and mounting interest, through the troubles of the Roman College, the stress and strain of the English Mission, through the years of imprisonment and harrowing tortures till it reaches its climax in an account of his trial and execution that is as fine as anything to be found in the literature of the English Martyrs.

GODFREY ANSTRUTHER, O.P.

**BORSTAL AND BETTER.** By Richard Maxwell. (Hollis and Carter; 16s.)

'Is Borstal a success?' asks Mr Maxwell. 'Yes, if in the beginning a boy starts off with the right idea and makes the best of his opportunities.' This splendid platitude strikes the keynote for the book as a whole. Throughout the 216 pages of this 'autobiography of a criminal' the reader is reminded that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. The full *Cursus Honorum* is described—Remand Home, Approved School, Borstal and Prison—and if on reading this rather flat account of kindly policemen, gentlemanly governors and dreary institutional routines some may be led to inquire whether our penal system is properly so called, others will certainly ponder on the apparent absence of any spiritual sustenance for our large prison population. Mr Maxwell left Borstal in 1937. In 1948 he was still in Wandsworth Prison and one may be permitted to wonder whether the title is not misleading and whether in this case at least the sociologists are not right when they claim that the criminal's activities begin to slacken 'round about the age of 30'.

And yet, in spite of itself, the book bears witness to the 'Classical' age of Borstal between the two wars. An Act of Parliament of 1908 first makes mention of a 'Borstal' Institution but there was at that time little to differentiate it from a Boys' Prison. During Mr Maxwell's stay at the Feltham Institution the 'sporting Housemaster', the Chaplain, the

school magazine and the football match against 'an Eton College eleven' exist comfortably side by side with stone-pounding and Number 2 Dietary Punishment. It was a strange mixture which remained strangely coherent. Today the Local Education Authority takes an ever increasing part in the life of Borstal; the Housemaster is now an administrator and more interested in case histories than his predecessor of twenty years ago. But if it were necessary to date this book from internal evidence it would be sufficient to say that Mr Maxwell makes no mention of the psychologist. Had they met it is unlikely that the latter would have found any deep-rooted disturbance in his subject.

WINSTON MARTIN

THE ENGLISH TEXT OF THE 'ANCRENE RIWLE': BRITISH MUSEUM MS. ROYAL 8 C.I. Edited by A. C. Baugh. (Early English Text Society Original Series No. 232: Oxford University Press. London: Cumberlege; 20s.)

This is part of the Society's ambitious project to publish in its complete original form every surviving version of the *Riwle*, that much read, much copied, much tampered with classic of later medieval England. The present text is an adaptation, at least two hundred years younger than the original, of its Books II and III, in the form of a 'Sermon on the Five Senses' addressed to a lay congregation, and in the manuscript ascribed, with much probability, the editor shows us, to William Lichfield, rector of All Hallows the Great in London, who died in 1447, leaving a reputation for piety and a collection of more than three thousand sermons, of which no others, it seems, have survived. We owe the identification of the source of this sermon to Professor G. R. Owst; and a comparison of it with the *Riwle* yields interesting results. All the references to the daily life and the special circumstances of the anchoresses for whom the work was first written have had to go, but, more than that, in places we find such references replaced by passages strongly critical of the solitary and enclosed way of life. Thus, on page 7, a mild allusion to the folly, in anyone, of keeping silence at one time, only to indulge in garrulity at another, becomes an allusion to 'people who are bound to silence, such as religious, anchorites and anchoresses' who talk too much and foolishly. In another addition on page 24 the preacher speaks of the 'many priests, many monks, canons, friars, anchorites and anchoresses, nuns and hermits [who] are more worldly, live more for pleasure, spend more time in chattering surmise about the world, pay more attention to worldly respect and honour than they ought to have done even before they were professed'; and on page 36 he sternly recalls religious (again with a special mention of enclosed men and women) to their duty of