

centre of his subject, he takes refuge in quotation, hiding from immediate reality in rhapsodic intuitions. The very objectivity of beauty has the effect, apparently, of removing us from reality: it 'stirs in us the whole of dreamland.' It is, perhaps, this conception of literature as the means of entering into dreamland which accounts for his preoccupation with the poetry of Keats and Shelley, and for his being able to call Mr. Charles Morgan's *The Fountain* a masterpiece, an *absolute* novel. There is a certain lack of balance in M. du Bos' criticism: he is rightly insistent upon the timeless qualities of literature, but has no mention of the equally important 'sense of his own age,' which T. S. Eliot has shown to be present in all the greatest poets; and his insistence upon beauty and joy as criteria of greatness in literature must surely exclude work whose value has been recognised.

This, however, does not prevent his having many valuable things to say. The book gives contact with a man of great learning and wide sympathies, for which it will be read with pleasure even by those who believe that literature is a passage to something nearer than dreamland.

LUKE TURNER, O.P.

MEN, WOMEN, AND PLACES. By Sigrid Undset. (Cassell; 7s. 6d.)

The majority of these essays by the great Norwegian novelist are to do with England—with English writers, characters or scenes. One of the most delightful is an account of Margery Kempe of Lynn, whose strange career of religious exploration led her in her old age to Norway and the Baltic towns of the fifteenth century. Another is based upon the records of the Blundell family, whose vicissitudes are an ample illustration of what was happening to English Catholics in the seventeenth century. Lucius Cary is another of the English figures of that period to whom the writer's sympathies have gone out: her essay on his sufferings in the Civil War forms a clear-cut post-script to Matthew Arnold's famous study. But one could wish that, like Arnold, she had quoted the long and lovely prose elegy which, in the *History of the Rebellion*, Clarendon dedicated to this the dearest of his friends.

But the full vigour of Sigrid Undset's thought appears even more strikingly in such a study as that of D. H. Lawrence, or of modern Scandinavian spiritualist writers. Her analysis of the nineteenth century upper-middle-class dilution of Christianity from which these aberrations derive is especially clear.

' Evolutionary optimism has been translated by the spiritualists to a world which is assumed to be awaiting us beyond death . . . the development of the spirits to the " higher spheres " is accomplished by the good old means in which the evolutionary believers used to have such touching confidence : education, ranging from kindergarten instruction for the little child spirits to specialised studies for the undergraduate spirits. The more learned and highly cultivated spirits . . . give lectures.' Spiritualism continues the development away from the terrors and intimacies of mystical vision which Protestantism began. ' The impatient yearning for God which naturally borrows its imagery from eroticism ' is not here. ' The conception of God is never that of a bridegroom, but of a good breadwinner.'

To record admiration for the proud independence of this mind is a privilege at this time, for its owner is both a Catholic and of Norway.

F.P.

REVIEW OF PERIODICALS

With its April number *The Catholic World* celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary. The number includes, as was to be expected, a multitude of warm and well-deserved tributes and congratulations, and some articles recording the magazine's notable part in the history of Catholic journalism. The Editorial is, naturally, more domestic than usual, but includes some characteristically pungent observations on the Catholic press, its ideal freedom and its actual conformism.

In the April *Thomist* Fr. Walter Farrell, O.P., applies rigorous scholastic method to the problems of democracy and representative government. E. F. Caldin contributes an important, pioneering article on Modern Physics and Thomist Philosophy, and Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange expounds the principle, ' bonum est diffusivum sui ' under the heading of ' The Fecundity of Goodness.' Professor Mortimer Adler continues his ' Problems for Thomists ' series. In *The Commonweal* (April 5) Professor Adler contributed an important paper on Docility and Authority and their func-