

## *Blackfriars*

and women living in the world and desiring, as a growing army of them does desire, to live the Christian life as fully and as intelligently as the circumstances of their state will permit, may therefore reasonably hope to find the most competent direction in the tried teachings and practice of the older religious orders. But where in the great library of spiritual literature, varying so much in merit and suitability, to look for the things most adapted to their needs is not an easy question. Dabbling without discrimination in such books as chance offers is likely to result in incoherent ideas, want of perspective and a hopelessly mistaken emphasis. In the spiritual life, as in all other intelligent undertakings, it is essential to begin by seeing things as a whole and at least in a general way the relation of part to part and part to whole. For the layman beginning to interest himself in the practice of the spiritual life under the direction of the old masters, Abbot Butler has done this important service. He has outlined the contributions of the older orders—Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican, Carmelite—to the spiritual life of the faithful, with added chapters on St. Francis of Sales, Contemplation, the Liturgical Revival. Throughout the book he gives an excellent bibliography of readily accessible books for further reading. The author is to be commended for this latest attack on the stubborn prejudice that an intelligently religious life belongs only to the cloister. The layman will find the learned Abbot strongly confident of his reader's capabilities, without ever feeling that too much is required of him or too little understanding shown of the difficulties and limitations of a busy life.

P.K.M.

AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY. By Rev. George Stebbing, C.S.S.R. (Sands & Co.; 2/6.)

Fr. Stebbing needs no introduction to Catholic readers. His latest work is written (not, as he tells us, at his own suggestion) to provide an historical setting for the problems of philosophy as they are treated in the Scholastic Manual. As a concise summary of the lectures of an experienced teacher the book is possibly admirable and may prove a useful *aide-mémoire* to those who already have a knowledge of the subject, but for the student who makes the book his sole source of study it will prove indigestible. One cannot do justice to a man and his system in a short paragraph, and to attempt to do so is that 'perfunctoriness' of treatment Fr. Stebbing so rightly deprecates.

R.M.