

The initial acceptance of the question as a mystery should not mean that we are not to try to use our reason to its utmost limits, and there is an interesting note at the end of the book giving a quotation from Fr Sharpe's work: 'Mysticism: its true nature and value'. He argues that if God had abstained from this creation on the grounds of his foresight of the sinful actions of his creatures, and had created another and better world, he would not have acted as God since he would have acted as dependent on the free actions of possible creatures. It is a pity that this most interesting reference contains the ambiguous sentence that the mystics are agreed that evil is the negation of good and no more, for it does not make clear the vital distinction between *negation* or limit which is common to all creation and *privation*, that absence of a perfection due to a thing, which is the foundation of our concept of evil.

DOM ODO BROOKE, O.S.B.

**SHE TAKES THE VEIL.** By Sister Mary Laurence, O.P. (Blackfriars; 2s. 6d.)

A dumpy, attractive little Dominican nun with a large red **BY** on her scapular invites the reader from the jacket to take the veil of the enclosed preachers. The first person to be enticed is Doreen, a young convert, business-girl of 25. She writes intelligent and undemonstrative letters to Sr Mary Laurence about becoming a nun and the latter gradually instructs her in matters that to an enclosed religious are straightforward enough but to the outsider are usually a complete conundrum. Nothing is shirked; 'Is there really pettiness or friction in the religious life?' Doreen asks. 'Of course there is', the good sister replies. No blinkers or rosy glasses here; and for that very reason the picture is attractive, as the life dedicated to the perfection of charity should be. Particularly attractive is the way the sacrifice of the vows is linked immediately with the sacrifice of the Mass. But every letter is wise and based on sound doctrine—'vocation itself is the acceptance by an Order for final profession'—nothing emotional or exalté here. The book will do a great deal to give people a true idea of the Dominican contemplative life, as well as of religious life in general. May it draw many another Doreen into the cloister to increase the work of the apostolate.

F.X.T.

**MEDIAEVAL LATIN LYRICS.** Edited and translated by Helen Waddell. (Penguin Books; 3s.)

This selection and translation appeared first in 1927; there followed three more editions before the war; and now Penguin Classics have given us its 350 pages for only 3s. The lyrics are all worth while, many of them full of the spirit of the tumblers. For the most part the translations

stand on their own as works of art. The religious lyrics in particular bring with them a taste of the Psalms and a smell of the country. One poem should be made the theme song of the liturgical revival, centred on the Easter Vigil:

Last night did Christ the Sun rise from the dark

The mystic harvest of the fields of God . . .

Miss Waddell's humble confession should not, however, be forgotten: 'The greatest things in mediaeval Latin, its "living and victorious splendours", are not here because I cannot translate them.' Yet she has recovered for us many very beautiful things.

**THE SMALL MISSAL.** (Burns and Oates; from 6s., the school edition, to 21s. de luxe binding.)

This Missal has already done more than any other to assist the ordinary Catholic or the neophyte of a convert to take his share in the regular Sunday Mass. It is presented again—inevitably more expensive than in its pre-war dress—entirely revised, with the Knox translation and with certain important additions. Its 398 pages, which make a compact pocket-sized book, contain all that is needed by the regular Catholic who assists at Mass on Sundays and on the important feasts. They include prayers for the sacraments and for Benediction as well as Compline for Sundays. Catholics will welcome its reappearance and look forward to the continuation of its good work of quietly leading people to enter more fully into the action of the Mass.

## NOTICES

**PRIESTLY BEATITUDES** is the title of a retreat for priests written by a great German missionary, the late Father Max Kassiepe, O.M.I. (Herders; 37s. 6d.) and translated by a fellow religious. While we must welcome any book that will help the men dedicated to the altar to deepen their own faith, there are sections of this retreat which are almost embarrassingly practical. Priests, apparently, were encouraged to 'tell smutty, risqué stories' in clerical company in the eighteenth century; but Fr Max is happy to say that times have changed. They are to be prudent alike in drinking and in speech and retreat. There is, however, much positive assistance in the way of prayer.

FR A. D. FRENAY, O.P., takes us step by step through the Mass commenting on every prayer in **THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE MASS IN THE LIGHT OF THOMISTIC THEOLOGY** (Herders; 30s.). The commentary is intended also for priests so as to deepen their appreciation of what they do and say every morning. There are some liturgical assumptions, as 'The prayers of the Canon are not, as they may seem, independent prayers, each one separated