

REVIEWS

German soul, but if he reads between the lines he will find much that will be helpful to all who are oppressed by some form or other of the problems imposed on the non-Latin in the Church which is at once Catholic and Roman.

There is much incidental wisdom, particularly regarding the relationship of Christianity to the Hellenic mysteries: the author has done well to lay the spectre of syncretism in this context. Excellent, too, is his review of the contribution which the Northern peoples have made to historic Catholicism. "The Germans constitute the element of perpetual unrest in the Church," yet for that very reason "the entrance of the Germanic peoples evokes as its first result a splendid flowering time of the Roman Church." The last chapter on *Fulfilment of the German Nation through Fulfilment in the Church* is as splendid as it is courageous. But, in the improbable event of a second edition being called for, the mushy theology in the earlier pages should be drastically revised.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

HAGIOGRAPHY

Attitudes towards saints' lives may be various and varying with a diversity which exemplifies the happy freedom of the Catholic mind. Thus there is an approach marked by a pre-occupation for unadorned, well-attested historical facts, by an impatience of legendary excrescence, a *Bollandist* approach; and in this *genre* is *LA GESTE DES MARTYRS* of Fr. P. Hanozin, S.J. (Desclée de Brouwer, 12 frs.)—translations of authentic *Acta* of the first three centuries, eloquent in simplicity. And the May volume of BUTLER'S LIVES OF THE SAINTS, published by Fr. H. Thurston, S.J., in collaboration with Miss Norah Leeson (Burns Oates; 7/6) is as scholarly as other volumes in this series; but with the re-writing of old and the insertion of new biographies Alban Butler is definitely relegated to an ancestral pedestal.

Written in quite a different strain is *PERE LAMY*, by Comte Paul Biver, with an introduction by Jacques Maritain (Burns Oates; 5/-)—notes of conversations with a saintly parish priest working in well-nigh Godless Parisian *banlieue*; numerous visions of Our Lady, converse with angels and saints—all set down with a sublime unconcern about the raised eyebrows of more "critical" hagiographers. Be that as it may, it is good to read that Père Lamy had at heart the conversion of England and the reconciliation of Anglicans. Full too "of the simplicity, piety, and devotion which is the spirit of the Ages of Faith" are the *LITTLE FLOWERS OF ST. ANTONY OF PADUA*, from a fifteenth century version of the *Liber Miraculorum*, edited by P. L. Guidaldi, O.M.Conv., and admirably translated by Canon George Smith (Burns Oates; 2/6).

BLACKFRIARS

Fr. G. J. MacGillivray in *SAINTS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW* (Burns Oates and Washbourne; 6/-) has thought of what the "critical" might say, but his own attitude is perhaps the most popular nowadays: "I shall probably be told by critics that I have followed untrustworthy legends, that the earliest account of such and such a saint was written a century or two after his death, and it is rather doubtful whether he ever existed at all. Such criticism will leave me cold. In any case, this scorn of tradition and rejection of all that is not vouched for by contemporary documents is not so much in fashion as it was. . . ." Fr. MacGillivray has provided a very readable compendium of better known lives, and a valuable introduction on friendship with the Saints: "we all have our friends on earth . . . why not make friends in heaven too?"

Still, *all* approaches to saints' lives can lead to reflection on the *principles* governing these heroic lives, and thought of the achievements of grace, fruitfully realized in a myriad ways. In this *genre* is *THE SPLENDOUR OF THE SAINTS* by Fr. Aloysius Roche (Burns Oates and Washbourne; 3/6). Perhaps less in harmony with the rest of this book is its advocacy of vegetarianism. We would agree with Fr. Roche that "a rational diet is a Catholic diet"; but might hesitate to assert that "Catholics ought to be in the very vanguard of the Food-Reform movement whose line of advance is after all in the direction of our Catholic tradition and the example of our Saints."

There are no limited, set, moulds for sanctity; holiness is "wholeness" in its most profound sense— notions admirably developed in *DIVERSITY IN HOLINESS* by Fr. R. H. J. Steuart, S.J. (Sheed & Ward; 6/-), a series of capital essays (some have previously appeared in *BLACKFRIARS*) wherein we are spared a mass of biographical details and treated to an admirable insight into the workings of the Spirit breathing where He wills both in Saints who have been and in those who are yet to be canonized. This is undoubtedly one of the best "spiritual reading" books of the year, eminently recommendable, combining theological depth with freshness of style, and giving much to think.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

THE DESERT FATHERS. Translation from the Latin with an Introduction by Helen Waddell. (Constable; 7/6.)

"There is perhaps no phase in the moral history of mankind of a deeper or more painful interest than this ascetic epidemic. A hideous, distorted and emaciated maniac, without knowledge, without patriotism, without natural affection, spending his life in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture, and quailing before the ghastly phantoms of his delirious brain, had become