

for us, so that we must needs talk of 'superstructures' if we are to be understood? Or can it be that these images do not square with our sociological prepossessions—and, if that be so, is it perhaps those prepossessions rather than the images that may need modification?

The comparison of our present lot with that of the Israelites in Egypt seems to me to betray a failure to grasp the far greater complications of our own 'dreadful problems.' Israel was an exclusivist, national and racial religion. We are a *Catholic* Church, responsible for the salvation of all mankind. The Israelites could legitimately, at the behest of a Moses showing signs and wonders, flee from the Egyptians. Our orders are not to spoil the Egyptians but to save them and *love* them—even though, in the process, we must be compelled, if needs be, to mass-produce bricks without straw.

To Father Witcutt I can offer little but a lame *non intelligo*. From some illuminating pages of *True Humanism* I have learned what Molinistic sociology is, and I cannot understand how that could be laid to my charge. But a sociological Molina! 'A certain type of society, basically agricultural, with commerce a very secondary factor,' etc., is an admirable formula, and certainly I have said nothing to gainsay it. But it does not get us very far; and is itself capable of an immense variety of applications, and has, as a matter of historic fact, found a large variety of realisations. The point of my article was that we should not bluff ourselves into thinking that when we have enunciated these very general *principles* we have reached practical and practicable *conclusions*. That is a fact of which the author of *Dying Lands* must be at least as conscious as I am.

Yours, etc.,

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

## REVIEWS

### LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

THE COLOURED LANDS. By G. K. Chesterton. (Sheed and Ward; 7s. 6d.)

Gilbert Chesterton in one of his essays said that lying in bed would be an altogether perfect and supreme experience if only one had a coloured pencil long enough to draw on the ceiling. He describes with obvious relish how from the same horizontal position one might work with paint in a really sweeping and masterly way with several pails and a broom, laying on the

colour in great washes till it dripped down again on one's face in floods of rich and mingled colour like some strange fairy rain. This reckless and riotous splashing about of colours, laid on thick, hot and strong, is surely a primary quality of G.K.C.'s poetry and prose. No one could ever call him colourless, though fortunately he has never deserved the unpleasant description 'colourful.' Scarcely a page he wrote but glows with colour. Speaking of the virtue of purity, he says that chastity does not mean mere negative abstention from sexual wrong: it means something flaming like Joan of Arc. Even whiteness is a rich, living reality; and God paints most gorgeously, even gaudily, when He paints in white. White is not a blank, colourless thing, negative and non-committal: it is a colour, affirmative and constructive.

It is not surprising then to find that G.K.C. has left behind among his papers a delightful fairy tale, *The Coloured Lands*. This and a glorious collection of other fragments, written for fun and not for publication, are included in this posthumous volume, edited by Maisie Ward. The only principle of unity in the book is *colour*, and the net result is something like a delightful and ingenious patchwork quilt. Stories, poems, essays—and above all, illustrations, in line and colour—make up an excellent lucky-bag with nothing but prizes wherever the reader dips. Different folk will have different favourites. The *Despair of Herod on finding Children convalescing from the Massacre* and *Job playing patience* especially tickled our fancy. The binder has ruined the particular copy sent to us for review by omitting sections of the book. We have thus been robbed of the complete joy of *The Taming of the Nightmare*; but for the more fortunate who can lay hands on the book—whole, entire and unimpaired—it will be a precious possession.

BERNARD DELANY, O.P.

BRAMSHILL: Being the Memoirs of Joan Penelope Cope. (Constable; 7s. 6d.)

This is an amazing book and 'may fairly be described as unique,' in the words of the publishers' blurb. The author was twelve years old when she began, a year ago, to pen her 'Memoirs' during her play-time, 'in order,' as she explains, 'to retain a vivid picture of my "young days"—spent in the glorious surroundings of Bramshill—our beautiful Hampshire home.' She has succeeded remarkably well not only in retaining that vivid picture for herself, but in painting it with uncanny skill for others; and this is all the more effectively done because,