

of the possibility of the material and the limits of expression produce sculpture in bad taste: bronze clouds, intricate groups, figures 'caught in the act,' and people in chairs and with baggy trousers on.

The argument in the sphere of Picture is similar, though the possibilities of material are more varied: painting, mosaic, enamel, glass, engraving, etching, drawing. Interesting are comparisons of the same subject etched and painted (*cf.* pp. 164, 200). Possibilities of expression are also more varied, with the elements of space and light. Expression in painting is derived from the relations of the things to the space, and so of the things to one another. Exact imitation of nature is no ideal at all, but may be a means of expressing the thing, or may not: hence strictly stylised painting, free from distraction, may sometimes be the right expression. The thing must not be sentimentalised—this transgresses the possibility of expression; nor barbarised—this fails to reach it. (The author has little patience with pseudo primitives 'supposed to be peasant-art, and made by townes').

And so on. Alluringly, possibilities are studied, with over one hundred groups of reproductions. I cannot give many references: for though the progress is orderly, the main threads run right through. The taste is classical, the thought is sane: the dignity of material and of man before God, and this human thing which is art, which it is human to appreciate.

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#### HISTORY

THE FERRAR PAPERS. By B. Blackstone. (Cambridge University Press; 21s.)

NICHOLAS FERRAR. By A. L. Maycock. (S.P.C.K.; 12s. 6d.)

The life of Nicholas Ferrar at Little Gidding has perhaps primarily a symbolic value. It is easy to over-estimate his significance for his contemporaries. He had lived impersonally, sheltered by a small group of intimates and protected by the rather distant patronage of the great; it is characteristic that the little that he published in his own life-time was anonymous. But to the non-jurors he came to represent a golden age, irrevocably vanished; the spiritual perceptions of Laudian Anglicanism and the serenity of the early Carolines. It was a rôle which *John Inglesant* emphasised for a wider public.

It is at last possible to compare the Legend with its source. For Mr. Maycock and Dr. Blackstone are the first scholars to

have utilized the great mass of Ferrar Papers rediscovered in the library at Magdalene. Mr. Maycock's biography is attractively written, careful in its scholarship and enthusiastic in its judgement. Of the two volumes it is probable that it will have the wider appeal. But in contrast the *Ferrar Papers* are a primary source, and Dr. Blackstone's editing has given them definitive value. They consist of a selection from the family letters, a life of Nicholas Ferrar, the *Winding Sheet*, an ascetic dialogue, and a compendium of short moral histories. Of these the family letters are the most attractive, and the *Winding Sheet* the most illuminating, and it is perhaps possible to determine from them the relationship of the Ferrars to the Caroline Anglicanism that they have been so long held to represent.

There seems little contact with the spirituality of the Laudian Divines, sacramental in outlook, theological in temper. The liturgical life at Little Gidding centred round the Bible, not the Eucharist, and theology seems replaced by a taste for practical moral aphorism in the older fashion. There is a great deal in these papers that suggests the strength of the Puritans; the suspicion of fleshly beauty, the careful rejection of many signs of family affection, the constant vision of mortality, the emphatic phrasings and the implacable moral standards. Much lies implicit in the praise of those well-favoured virgins who disfigured themselves lest they should be cause of scandal. Yet it is not that the Ferrars were consciously linked with Caroline Puritanism; it is rather that they represented in a new age the sober godly Anglicanism of the great city families at the beginning of the century, when Puritanism was still only a part of an Anglican tradition and had not yet developed into a separate movement.

Dr. Blackstone has suggested that 'the *Story Books* represent the continuation, into a metaphysical age, of a tradition purely Elizabethan.' Even the prose of the *Winding Sheet* seems characteristically early Jacobean. When Nicholas Ferrar lay dying he was to refer to the 'right good old way.' It seems possible that he stayed linked by an innate conservatism to the outlook and the usages of the religious-minded world of his youth; practical in its Christianity, eclectic in its choice of sources, spontaneous and unselfconscious in its charm.

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