

Blackfriars

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA. By Alice Curtayne. (Sheed & Ward; 7/6 net.)

This vivid and original book will be useful chiefly to readers who know such classic works on St. Catherine as the *Legend* (of which we badly need a good English version), and the very full biography by Mother Drane. In such books the wealth of material tends to obscure the main outlines; and Miss Curtayne has done good service by linking up the different works and happenings of the Saint's life, and showing it as a constructive whole. There is a skilful touch, too, here and there, in the recording of a circumstance, slight in itself, which yet gives new colour and unforgettable significance to some scene in the story. And there is real literature, as, for instance, the descriptions in the second chapter, especially the quite wonderful page 23, which seems to fill our ears with the bells of medieval Siena.

But as a first introduction to St. Catherine the book would give an incomplete impression of her. We hardly find her soul. Could any adequate idea of her inner life be given without, for instance, some account of her marvellous Eucharistic relations with Our Lord? And where we are told that she thought an embassy to Joanna of Naples on behalf of the Urbanist allegiance would be 'profoundly interesting,' is not the adjective singularly mischosen, when we know how for every soul Catherine shared the very thirst of Christ?

The portraits of the 'Fellowship' are excellently drawn, and the bibliography and references in the appendix show the author's exhaustive study of her subject. Here nearly thirty pages are given to Dr. Fawtier, and two counter-criticisms by Father I. Taurisano, O.P., are both left in their original Italian, unfortunately for many English readers.

M.B.

WHAT IS SACRIFICIAL IMMOLATION? By the Rev. J. Brodie Brosnan, M.A. (Sands & Co; pp. 171; 3/6 net.)

It is somewhat to the credit of the little Catholic body in these islands that the publishers have dared to publish a book intended to give the average reader some insight into one of the deepest problems of faith. The writer of the book has given this average reader, and even the expert, much food for thought. If we venture to make our criticism rest on some ambiguities of the book it is because these ambiguities are now almost the common heritage even for the expert.