

Everyone who reads this book will find himself picking out different chapters as particularly brilliant. The character sketch of Erasmus, for instance, is worth the attention even of Erasman specialists. The exciting pages on that power house of spirituality the Charterhouse at Cologne are in themselves an invitation to Catholic scholars in all countries to search more diligently than ever for that Catholic Reform before the Reformation which has long been neglected; an English reader is inevitably reminded of the skill with which the Mathew brothers handled a similar theme in *The Reformation and the Contemplative Life*. But for all these interludes the one personality who dominates these pages is Martin Luther; the picture of him which results from them can only be appreciated, as Lortz warns us, if the reader follows the argument throughout the whole of the book. As a reward for taking the author's advice the reader has the satisfaction of arriving at a thoroughly convincing conclusion.

Faced with the task of writing a few lines about these two volumes, the reviewer is perhaps justified in confessing his desire to give a précis of every single chapter; that being impossible, he can only add his voice to the chorus of praise which has greeted *Die Reformation in Deutschland* and suggest that Catholics throughout the country should have it placed in university and college libraries. B.D.

GOETHE AND WORLD LITERATURE. By Fritz Strich. (Routledge; 25s.)  
 GOETHE: WISDOM AND EXPERIENCE. Edited by H. Weigand. (Routledge; 16s.).  
 GOETHE. By Albert Schweitzer. (A. & C. Black; 6s.)

The bicentenary of Goethe's birth has seen the publication of so much literature concerning Germany's most illustrious son that there can no longer be any excuse for the average educated Englishman's ignorance about him.

Professor Strich is recognised as one of the foremost Goethe-scholars of today, and *Goethe und die Weltliteratur* first appeared in Switzerland in 1945. That it should now be translated into English (which Goethe knew and loved well) is eminently fitting, for, as the author makes clear, translations were for Goethe one of the chief agents of that universal, intellectual commerce which was what he meant by 'world literature'. When Goethe was born German literature was, if not non-existent, at least almost unknown outside Germany: when he died it was worthy to rank with the other great literatures of Europe. For this development Goethe was largely responsible. Always receptive to foreign influences, Goethe's own influence on foreign literatures was extensive (we have only to think of Byron, his 'spiritual son') even if as in the case of 'Wertherism' certain phases of it operated abroad long after he himself had abandoned them.

Professor Strich traces the development of the idea of 'world

literature' in Goethe's life and work and the action and interaction of European and even non-European elements which contributed to it. The range of Goethe's literary interests alone (to say nothing of his scientific and other activities), and the personal contacts he maintained with foreign men of letters, were enormous. The final section of the book is devoted to 'Goethe's Mission to Europe'. The poet foresaw for literature, in the age of rapid transport and easy communications that was dawning, an all-important rôle in fostering peace and understanding between the nations. He was, we now know, over-sanguine: 'The course of modern history has decided against Goethe. The turning aside of the mind of Europe from literature to politics has had the effect of heightening the tension between nations. It has thwarted the realisation of Goethe's dream of an international community of the spirit'. It was a noble dream of a great humanist whose Christianity was unfortunately too much a matter of sentiment. Catholic writers who have a just conception of what Europe means surely have a major part to play in creating such a community—if it is not too late.

*Goethe: Wisdom and Experience* is an anthology compiled from Goethe's prose writings and conversations by the Professor of German at Yale. Those seeking an introduction to Goethe's thought will here find quotations, long and short, conveniently arranged in chapters: 'Religion', 'Nature', 'Art', 'The Body Politic' and so on, each divided into sub-headings. The book contains the fruit of Goethe's rich experience and reflects at the same time his wide interests: he had something worth while to say on every conceivable subject. In an age of specialisation like ours it is refreshing to make or renew acquaintance with a genius of such universality and versatility as Goethe. The editor has perhaps wisely eschewed the translation of poetry, observing that English renderings of Goethe's verse generally make him seem like 'a third-rate Victorian'; although since so many of Goethe's religious and scientific views are expressed in his poems (e.g. in the series *Gott und Welt*) some readers will regret that English prose versions at least were not attempted. To appreciate Goethe as a poet there is, of course, no help but to learn German.

*Goethe*, by Aibert Schweitzer, is a slender volume in which are reprinted two addresses delivered at Frankfurt in 1928 and 1932 respectively, and an essay on 'Goethe, Thinker', written in the latter year for the review *Europe*. If the book tells us as much about its author as it does about its subject, that is no disadvantage, for Dr Schweitzer is one of the most remarkable men of our time. *My debt to Goethe*, as the first essay is entitled, shows the influence on Schweitzer as a young man of Goethe's nature-philosophy which was so unfashionable in the age of the great speculative philosophies of Kant, Fichte and Hegel, but which wears much better than theirs inasmuch as in varying forms it occurs throughout the ages. At every point in the author's astonishing career Goethe had com-

fort and encouragement for him: Goethe was 'the man who always understood'. It is clear that in many respects Dr Schweitzer is the same kind of man as his great compatriot. With both, practical work and intellectual work go side by side. That Faust and Wilhelm Meister end their careers by devoting themselves to the service of their fellowmen is a fact of profound significance to one who has devoted his life to conducting a hospital in the tropics. *Goethe's Message for our Time* Dr Schweitzer sees in his proclamation of 'real and noble individual humanity' to an age in which the independence of the individual is everywhere attacked. Most of us, unfortunately, will never enjoy the opportunities of self-development which Goethe had. Dr Schweitzer's little book concludes with the interesting suggestion that if Goethe had formulated a philosophical system he might have 'contributed to prevent European thought, after failure of speculative philosophy, from finding itself so helpless in face of the natural sciences'.

S. A. H. WEETMAN.

UNSERE SORGE DER MENSCH and DER UNSTERBLICHE MENSCH. Both by A. Döblin. (Verlag Karl Alber, Munich; n.p.)

While no one could doubt the sincerity and the fundamentally Christian inspiration of these books, they are very heavy going for the English reader. Something inside him revolts at a sentence which runs—if runs is the correct word: 'So bleiben wir schliesslich, was wir jetzt sind, geschrumpft, geschunden, geduckt, gedrückt, gerupft, lahm und krumm'. In the second of these books this unmitigated heaviness becomes even more oppressive, because it contains almost three hundred pages of what is supposed to be a dialogue between a wise old man and a youthful sceptic. The wisdom of age proves itself in the end for the simple reason that the old man is not asked the questions which the younger generation is, in fact, worried about. To one of that generation the conversation merely reveals the terrifying gulf which lies between us. Furthermore, the sustained seriousness of it all leads one to wonder whether Döblin might have done well to point out to this weary age that man's immortality is bound up with the truth that he is a 'playing animal'; whether theologians as a whole would be prepared to defend the opinion that cricket is played in heaven or not, the ring of clerical collars around so many cricket fields suggests that a considerable consensus of opinion is in favour of it.

DONALD NICHOLL.

PHILOSOPHISCHES WORTERBUCH. Edited by W. Brugger, S.J., in co-operation with the Professors at Berchman-Kolleg, Pullach, Munich. (Herder, Vienna, 1948; n.p.)

Only constant usage enables one to give an accurate estimate of the value of a Philosophical Dictionary, but the worth of this present one is almost guaranteed by the very names of its contributors. Frs Brugger, de Vries, von Nell-Brunning, the late Fr Lotz, are but four of the seventeen philosophers who have written