

## REVIEWS

In the book stands out the heroic devotion of Nel, who was married to her by special dispensation a day or two before her death when she was almost unconscious.

The story reads in places like a fantasy—of how the King and Queen of the Belgians made friends with her in a hospital in Switzerland, of how the Papal Nuncio came to the Devil's Corner to confirm her. But it is vouched for as true. And it is enlivened although by the Bruxellois words of Mieke, a stuffy, graphic language which could only be translated into Cockney. She called God "Henry" in her prayers by choice, that was the way of the Devil's Corner. She upset the piety of many conversations with "M'sieu l'Abbée" by her astonishing remarks about matters of religion. But it was language, not the faith, that was queer. The whole book is an heroic example of Faith and cheerfulness in a young worker who found new life in the Church and the J.O.C.

FINBAR SYNNOTT, O.P.

## EDUCATION

LE CARACTERE DU JEUNE HOMME. By Mgr. Tihamer Toth.  
(Editions Salvator, Mulhouse; 15 frs.)

The formation of character in the young entails a positive development of natural instincts, and is not confined to uprooting evil. It is before all else a creative activity. What has been implanted by nature must be fostered and allowed to grow along set lines. The type of educational propaganda and "spiritual" book which neglects this side of the question and treats exclusively of the negative elements of repression has of late grown into disrepute, and the reaction has given rise to many unbalanced and unco-ordinated theories of education and the formation of character. For this reason a book which sets out the various elements of the Christian life in their true perspective for young men is all the more welcome. Mgr. Toth is concerned to emphasise the positive actions which go to the formation of character; while recognising the presence of evil he does not allow the negative element, mortification and the rest, to be unnoticed. But it has its appointed place in the whole scheme. It is only applied in so far as it is necessary to bring about an end which is attained primarily by the development and control of the will and by the ordered use of natural powers in ordinary human work.

Throughout the book the development of the human will as a basis of character is emphasised; yet this insistence of sheer will-power does not impart an atmosphere of stark unreality—chiefly

## BLACKFRIARS

because of many practical applications and examples, and a strain of homely common sense which pervades the whole. In this way the author has discovered the secret of presenting to young people sound Christian principles in an attractive garb, yet without any watering down. The ideal offered to youth is not the sugar-and-spice good little boy of the holy picture variety—"Par 'jeune homme de caractère' nous n'entendons pas le lâche qui baisse la tête et ne sort pas de son coin,"—but a wholesome individual who has some definite object in life: what the world would call a self-possessed young man who knows what he is about. This indeed is Mgr. Toth's ideal—but with this difference—that while the young man of the world is humanly perfect and no more, the human perfection of the Christian ideal is but one facet of the total supernatural perfection of an *Alter Christus*.

The eminently practical nature of the advice given makes the book still more praiseworthy; the Christian is told how to work and how to play here and now in given instances. He is to achieve the ideal set before him not only by curbing his appetites, but by sublimating and sanctifying them in work regulated by a strong will. The author gives his readers something positive to do towards the formation of their character and does not send them away embittered by the thought that all they can do is repress what is most insistent in themselves. Such treatment displays a deep appreciation of human nature, and, though the individual may feel a distaste for the hortatory and personal style of the writing, this is a cipher for which allowances can be made, and which is negligible compared to the general effect upon the reader. He is roused to enthusiasm for the ideal set before him, given sound practical advice on the achievement thereof, and yet he is left under no illusions about the difficulties of his task.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

CHILD GUIDANCE. By M. D. N. Dickson. (Sands; 5s.)

Child Guidance is a subject about which prevail certain misconceptions and notions often as vague as they are critical. This useful and instructive guide to Child Guidance should do much to correct such impressions and to present what is a valuable social and Catholic undertaking in a truer light. Catholic Child Guidance Clinics have been established in Glasgow and Edinburgh and are achieving valuable results. The present study is based mainly on the work done by the Notre Dame Child Guidance Clinic, established in 1931 with the aid of a grant and with the encouragement of the London Child Guidance Council. Its director is Sister Mary Hilda, S.N.D., for many years lecturer in psychology at the Notre Dame Training College in Glasgow. What does Child