

Book Reviews

A visitor to a Montessori school will always be struck by the multiplicity of apparatus. The same thing will be noticed in a Catholic Church: there is a crucifix that someone is kissing, beads that are being fingered, candles that are being lighted, and round the different Stations of the Cross someone is making a little procession all on his own. This is like the Montessori school where everyone is busy with some contrivance. Liberty in a prepared environment is the Montessori aim—liberty, not licence, for no child may misuse his apparatus.

One of the most attractive passages of this book tells how in a school in Spain the children in their own garden sow wheat and plant vines. Then in due course they gather the grapes and crush them for wine. With their own sickles they cut the wheat and grind it. Then they make the hosts from the flour. Then on their First Communion day certain of them are chosen to carry to the altar at the Offertory of the Mass the bread and wine which they have themselves so reverently prepared for God.

DEATH OF MY AUNT. By C. H. B. Kitchin. (The Hogarth Press; 7/6.)

Such a title might lead you to expect the traditional detective story, but you would be misled. There is a murder and a police inspector endowed with the limited intelligence that fiction usually accords such a character, but you will not find the sleuth-minded individual who can arrive at the right solution by improbable methods. For the book is not a study of detective work but of the behaviour of the murdered woman's relatives, and in particular of that of the young man who is represented as telling the story. His psychological reactions to the situation in which he finds himself may or may not be true to life, but they are amusing and supply a humour which adds to the interest of a story in itself enthralling.

J.R.H.

THE MASTERFUL MONK. By Owen Francis Dudley. (Longmans, Green and Co., London; 5/-; paper covers 3/6.)

It is possible that certain recent and unfortunate *obiter dicta* of Fr. Dudley have tended to produce an atmosphere somewhat unfavourable to the launching of his latest book. Seeing that I, for one, was of the number of the disaffected, it is no small tribute, from my point of view, to the author's power of writing that this novel held my approving interest throughout.

Blackfriars

It is a sequel to *The Shadow on the Earth*, in the sense that the same characters appear again, with one very important addition in the person of Beauty Dethier. But the theme now, different from that in the earlier novel, deals with the contrast between the attitude of the materialist and the attitude of the Catholic on the vital question of human love. Yet it must not be concluded that the moral overlays the action of the story. On the contrary, the plot is vivid and full with incident. The characterisation is good, notably in the development of Beauty Dethier's view of love and religion down into the depths and up finally to heroic heights. Basil, again, is a very human and attractive boy. The Monk, the Major and above all Eric, will be welcomed by those who have already made their acquaintance and will speedily attract those who meet them for the first time.

As a novel it is good, but as a statement and justification of the Catholic position on the question of love and marriage it is a magnificent and yet entirely palatable piece of apologetic. The thesis and arguments of the materialist are put forward fairly and as convincingly as could be desired even by their protagonists, notably in the public speech by Julian Verrers. They are met and overthrown with admirable finality not merely in the answering speech of Bro. Anselm, the Masterful Monk, (which, by the way, did not seem to merit the ovation given to it) but again and again throughout the book.

It is, unfortunately, again produced in the same objectionably lurid jacket, with another startling illustration not less deplorable. This is doubtless a policy—but equally undoubtedly a mistaken policy.

H.C.

THE LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES. By the Rev. Harold Burton. Vol. II. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd.; 15/-.)

In this second volume of his *Life of St. Francis de Sales* Fr. Harold Burton maintains the excellence of the first volume, published four years ago. Fr. Burton has not rushed his work. He set himself a great task and he has accomplished it, or rather will accomplish it, for there is still a third volume to come. This volume deals with the last twelve years of the Saint's life. It begins with the foundation in 1610 of the Order of the Visitation. As we know, St. Francis was the co-founder with Mde. de Chantal, who, like him, is now a Saint of the Church. The close association of these two Saints is described in detail. They were friends and God made abundant use of