

To those who do not know the Usk valley, *River Diary* will certainly be an inducement to go there. Those who know it will find themselves turning the pages hither and yon to see what Mrs Eastwood says about this, that and the other, from Ffrwdgrech and the Eppynt to Usk town.

D.A.

MORALS SINCE 1900. By Gerald Heard. (The Twentieth Century Histories: Andrew Dakers; 12s. 6d.)

Mr Gerald Heard gives us an impressionistic picture of the changes in manners and behaviour of the past fifty years. He sees that rationalism and materialism are expressions of a *hubris* which has already produced frightful disasters and even raises the question of the survival of human life on this planet. Mr Heard has a synthesising mind, and he succeeds in combining a great deal of miscellaneous and often arbitrarily selected information in such a way that we are presented with an extraordinarily telling picture of a restless and technically versatile society lurching from crisis to crisis with little sense of direction. Some of his comments, in particular those on over rationalistic approaches to problems of sexual relations and to questions of eugenics and public hygiene, will please the Catholic reader, though his remedy for our ills—the development, through techniques elaborated by Indian mystics and American psychologists, of a ‘higher’ consciousness—will seem to them unnecessarily vague. Incidental remarks about Catholicism are not very perceptive. His greatest weakness is that he substitutes ‘absolute values’ for the living God and, in consequence, a cautious and conditional optimism for the virtue of hope. He resembles a little the physicist or chemist with a taste for amateur philosophising in that he is too eager to seize upon the latest hypotheses in the sciences and draw from them philosophical conclusions of startlingly wide scope. The grammatical blunders, misprints or misspellings, and horrid neologisms that abound throughout the book provide an unnecessary obstacle to its being readily understood.

J.M.C.

PASCAL'S PENSÉES. With an English Translation, Brief Notes and Introduction by H. F. Stewart, D.D. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 21s.)

Pascal crosses the serene sky of the *Grand Siècle* like a sudden cloud, charged with the thunder and lightnings of Sinai. He has a prophetic gift of profound insight into man's estate and redemption, and the power to epitomise doctrine in brief, unforgettable phrases. His apology is one immense ‘argumentum ad hominem’, emphasising the

consequences here and now of original sin and preparing the soul to accept its Redeemer, to see the inevitable paradox of the God of all light, who is yet 'Deus absconditus', by a constant reference to the obvious scandal of man as he is.

The late Dr Stewart and his publishers have given us an edition which is a delight to the eye after the murky pages of Brunschvicg. The order followed is that of Filleau de la Chaise, which, it is claimed, 'reflects more or less faithfully the movement of Pascal's mind as he pondered his absorbing theme'. It is impossible to say.

The *Pensées* all but defy translation. Dr Stewart's version is adequate and careful but rarely inspired. Inaccuracies are few, 'Si Dieu nous donnait des maîtres de sa main, oh! qu'il leur faudrait obéir de bon cœur! La nécessité et les événements en sont infailliblement'. Dr Stewart unaccountably misses the whole point of the second sentence and renders by 'Results follow on what must be infallible law'. There is one quaint provincialism. 'Les prières de l'Eglise' is translated as the 'Prayer-book'.

But these are minor faults in a work which is a worthy monument to a scholar who devoted so much thought to the study of Pascal.

R.F.T.

A SAINT IN HYDE PARK. By E. A. Siderman. (Bles; 7s. 6d.)

This is a considerable expansion of the author's original *With Father Vincent at Marble Arch* which went out of print soon after it was published and deserved this increase in substance as well as in readers. For the author who has steadfastly remained faithful to his Jewish religion in spite of twenty years attention to the powerful words of this great Dominican, his attention was indeed close that he has been able to reproduce a great deal not only of the wit and words of Father McNabb but also his very thought, his way of approaching the subjects he unfolded to the public of the park. The book follows no particular order either chronological or logical, and yet the long string of memoirs does bring to life the figure of the sparse, ascetic Dominican with the shining eyes which combined the brilliance of wit with that of charity. It shows only the public man, but the eternal aspect of such a genuine character cannot but reveal something of the inner fire.

Many of the additions in the present volume are from other witnesses; in particular the author has preserved a letter written for the Apostleship of the Sea purporting to be the sort of letter St Peter might have written to any apostle of the sea 'For myself I have found some of (Paul's) letters hard to be understood; and now and again I have twitted him about it'—Father Vincent always showed a predilection for St