

the salvation of twentieth-century Englishmen if Michael and his fellow-Catholics could remind them a little more violently of supernatural hope and of the manner in which Divine Gentleness Incarnate has already secured the victory.

EDWARD QUINN.

ALL HALLOWS' EVE. By Charles Williams. (Faber; 8s. 6d.).

Mr. Charles Williams was versed in theology as well as literature, and this novel is as interesting under the first heading as under the second. Simon the Clerk, an adept in black magic, finds himself, as he approaches the final step to world power, opposed by four people, one of whom is already dead. This giant conflict between good and evil is the stuff of the story, a story which is theologically informative and formative as well as dramatically exciting; and it involves a description of the growth to perfection and to the utter disintegration of evil, respectively, of the two girls Hester and Evelyn, both of them killed in a plane crash just before the story begins. It is here that one finds one of the particularly interesting suggestions so skilfully and persuasively conveyed by Mr. Williams: the idea that, like the 'pain of loss,' the 'pain of sense' is no arbitrary punishment but the logical consequence of the sinner's sins, those idols to which he has given allegiance in this life, and which thereafter more and more completely dominate and determine him, while at the same time the material on which the appetites were formerly fed is no longer available. So Evelyn, whose passion was mean and cruel gossip, endlessly streaming from her lips, can now find no-one to listen to her, while the torrent itself becomes more and more rapid, degraded, and compulsive, so that the pain in her 'lungs' becomes for her indeed a fire of hell. Hester, on the other hand, finds through purgatorial experience the fullness of love and therefore its power—the power that can even harrow hell.

Mr. Williams wrote not only with deep insight and rightness of imaginative detail, but also with a power of suggesting and sustaining atmosphere which must make his story plausible even to readers who do not share his theological premisses. Occasionally the involution of the style makes the meaning of a sentence obscure at a first reading.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

POETRY LONDON, Number 10. Edited by Tambimuttu. (Nicholson and Watson; 15s.).

There appear to be at least 150 poems in this solid volume, which is intended to give 'a cross-section of new poets'—that is, poets whose work has not appeared in print at all, or has not yet appeared in *Poetry London*. The editor says that he has had the idea of such a collection in mind since 1939, and one can agree with him that it was bound to be valuable—as a document. No other value could