

Written in an easy style, with chapters on very practical and important subjects such as habits and tepidity, on what 'trying' really means, on what constitutes 'sliding back', it should be on the bookshelf of everyone who wishes to be exclusively a servant of God and our Lady. 'Spiritual consumption' is ably offset by a description of the good health of the soul and of the reward, exceeding great, not only for those who finally reach heaven but to those to whom heaven in daily life is the swing of the pendulum that makes God present in all things.

K.J.B.

**SAINT PHILOMENA.** By Sister M. H. Mohr, s.c., together with a study of the *Curé d'Ars* by Paul Doncoeur. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 9s. 6d.)

The story of St Philomena is the story of her miracles. The rest is conjecture and private revelation which may or may not convince. There is a saint in heaven whom we have agreed to call Philemona, who seems to have died very young as a martyr, in the time of the early persecutions of the Church, and who works today so many miracles that she is as well-known as almost any of the modern saints. Around the scanty historical evidence, using the abundant modern evidence, Sr M. H. Mohr has written a successful presentation of the little saint which makes her yet more unreal to the imagination but more real to the soul. Fanciful, cleverly stylized in modern journalese, prettily sentimental (incongruously so in parts), it is nevertheless readable and arresting. The 'revelations' are persuasively, but I thought inadequately, presented. How poor an instrument is this brisk journalese for the presentation of historical evidence!

The last fifteen pages are a most attractive sketch of the great saint with whose name St Philomena is always associated, the *Curé of Ars*, by Paul Doncoeur. This is a really convincing vignette. I was struck by the similarity between the spirit of the *Curé* and that of St Thérèse of Lisieux and by the wonderful linking, over the centuries, of the two elements of all saints' lives: the marvellous and the unspectacular heroic. The unknown girl-martyr of ancient Rome, the miracle-loving Neapolitan crowds who surged round her body sixteen hundred years later, Pauline Jaricot (whose cure is dramatically described in this book), the *Curé of Ars*, consistently attributing his miracles to St Philomena, hiding behind her, and St Thérèse, shunning marvels yet set in the centre of marvels by innumerable miracles. One reader at least thanks Sr Mohr most sincerely for this brave attempt to streamline some essential features of sanctity.

G.M.C.