

REVIEWS

other; Lord Clonmore is concerned to paint a picture in broad outline, in which peace is the dominant motif, Mr. Fülöp-Miller selects his material for his primary purpose, the alternative to Communism. So from the three books a portrait emerges which is complete, rich, and inspiring.

GERALD VANN, O.P.

SAINT BENEDICT. By Dom Justin McCann, O.S.B., Master of St. Benet's Hall, Oxford. (Sheed & Ward; 7s. 6d.)

Hagiography is an art and he who would write the story of a Saint, his life and work, must be an artist. And by an artist we mean not the dilettante, the man who takes up a subject and, so to speak, works it up, but the man who is steeped in his subject and who—in the case of a hagiographer—has lived with his Saint and absorbed his spirit. In writing the life of any comparatively modern Saint the biographer may perhaps be hampered by the abundance of material. But for St. Benedict the material is—at first sight at least—scanty in the extreme: the *Rule* and the second book of St. Gregory's *Dialogues*. It is no exaggeration to say that none but a member of the Benedictine Family could have written these pages.

With Benedict the boy, the young man, the hermit, at Subiaco and Monte Cassino, we are all, thanks to St. Gregory, more or less familiar; of Monte Cassino, by the bye there is an interesting account, though all too brief, in a footnote on pp. 92-93. With Ch. viii begins a scholarly study of the *Rule* and its history. Though dependent on many sources: Cassian, the earlier *Rules* of SS. Basil, Pachomius, Macarius and others, and though evidently indebted to the writings of SS. Augustine, Cyprian, Jerome and Leo, St. Benedict's *Rule* is not an "unoriginal patch-work. It is a complete whole, a structure with a genuine unity." This explains the hold it speedily obtained throughout Christendom. Ch. v provides a study of the second vow taken by the Benedictines: "Conversio morum meorum," the meaning of which expression has been productive of much controversy, for probably we should read "conversatio" instead of "conversio"; the somewhat technical discussion involved will be of interest to others than the children of the Saint.

This portion of the book closes with a chapter entitled *The Life of the Rule*, and here we think Dom Justin is at his best, for this is something which he has known, lived and studied all his Benedictine life. There follows an historical section, *Under Justinian*, whose long reign did much for the consolidation of St. Benedict's work and that of one who must assuredly have been his friend, the Senator Cassiodorus, who himself became a monk though apparently not precisely a Benedictine, and who died in 575 at the advanced age of ninety-six. After an account of St.

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Benedict's last years and death and of the tradition of his relics ch. xv deals with *Benedictinism* and the wonderful romance of the spread of the Order and of its revival in England after the Reformation. Perhaps "revival" is hardly the word, "survival" would be more apt. For it was the privilege of Dom Siebert Buckley, the sole survivor of the Benedictine restoration under Mary Tudor, to receive on November 21st, 1607, the vows of two priests who became Benedictines and who thus perpetuated the ancient line.

Appendices on the *Dialogues* of St. Gregory, on Mark the Poet and Paul and Deacon, on SS. Maurus and Placid complete a fascinating story beautifully told.

HUGH POPE, O.P.

AUX ORIGINES D'UNE TRAGÉDIE: La Politique Espagnole de 1923 à 1936. Par Alfred Mendizabal. Préface de Jacques Maritain. (*Courrier des Iles*, 9.) (Desclée de Brouwer; 20 frs.)

"It was for studies such as this," writes M. Maritain in his preface, "that the *Courrier des Iles* was founded . . . It needs a great deal of lucidity of mind to pass an objective judgment on a series of events so confused externally and so heavily charged inwardly with passion. Those who know M. Alfred Mendizabal, his clarity of mind, his loyalty, his vigorous good sense, sharpened further by the finesse of his Aragonese wit, will know that, if the ideal of strict objectivity is no doubt unattainable in matters of history and especially contemporary history, nevertheless no one more than he could give the impression, and with every justice, of approaching that ideal; they will know moreover that he has a perfect grasp of the things of which he speaks, and that his competence as a jurist, and his profound and enlightened religious faith, enable him to speak of these things with freedom and elevation of thought." Señor Mendizabal is Professor of the Philosophy of Law at the University of Oviedo, a member of the International Institute of Philosophy of Law, secretary of the Spanish group of the Union Catholique d'Etudes Internationales. He has written, among other works, a Treatise on Natural Law (in collaboration with his father, Professor at the University of Madrid), and a study on the Doctrine of Justice in the *Summa Theologica*. If these details should seem to suggest the impersonal, academic intellectual, one has only to read the moving fourth part of this book, in which the author's own experiences, and his reactions to them, are mentioned.

The book begins with the Spanish dictatorship of 1923; shows the influence of this in bringing about the fall of the monarchy; and goes on to describe the fortunes of the republic, the conflict of opinions, and of motives. The third part deals with the Religious