

commonly binding on all Canons Regular, as had happened by the early twelfth century, the life of the Canons was essentially a monastic life; their apostolate primarily of prayer, penance and good example. But their ideal was moderate: they are a compromise between the austerity of Benedictine or Cistercian monasticism and the life of ordinary secular priests with cure of souls.

AUBREY GWYNN, S.J.

MYSTERY MAN, OR THE CATHOLIC PRIEST EXPLAINED. By Aloysius Roche. (Burns, Oates; 10s. 6d.)

SHEPHERDS IN THE MIST. By E. Boyd Barrett. (Burns, Oates; 7s. 6d.)

These two books deal with 'the salt of the earth', and both break new ground in doing so, though from very different angles. Fr Roche's book aims at giving the laity some idea of what it takes to become and to be a priest; that of Fr Boyd Barrett is an appeal to priests and the laity alike for a more sympathetic approach to priests who lapse from the high vocation to which God has called them.

The introduction to *Mystery Man* disclaims any special competence of the author to deal with his subject adequately. Yet he has not done too badly. He gives us a brief picture of the beginnings and development of the priesthood; a more detailed one of the various qualities that the aspirant to the priesthood must have and of the rigorous discipline under which these qualities are tested and brought to greater perfection; and finally, and on a somewhat 'meandering' canvas, he shows us aspects of the life—and trials—of the priest when 'after ordination. . . he turns his back upon the up-to-the-minute conveniences of the seminary in which he has lived for years. . . (and) is posted off to some rough and tumble locality where things may be anything but up-to-the-minute.' The quotation may enable readers who are not already familiar with Fr Roche's style to see with what verve and candour he writes; and that they may be enabled to agree or disagree with the criticism that the book lapses into flippancy occasionally, as though the author suddenly remembered that he was supposed to be catering for popular taste. One other criticism: the concluding chapter takes the form of a plea to the laity to make more allowance for the frailties and shortcomings of priests: the priest, after all, is a human being, and though placed in a state of perfection, must not be expected to behave as if he were a disembodied spirit. But is not this to miss the point of many lay 'bitternesses'? Very few people are so foolish as to look for or require disembodiment. But what does cause them to marvel once in a while is the mysterious disappearance from many priests of the rudimentary and commonplace courtesy which the normal human being usually possesses; they do not find it easy to account for that part of, or rather that lack in, their 'mystery

man's' make-up. But, then, treatment of that really belongs, I suppose, to a book meant for priests alone.

Fr Boyd Barrett's book is the 'little masterpiece' that the blurb claims it to be. The writing is beautiful, the question of lapsed priests handled with much delicacy, and the whole tenor is very inspiring. The author uses his own story and experiences skilfully in making this moving appeal for the Stray Shepherd who is desperately in need of something that we can give him and who yearns for, and badly needs, our friendly affection, or at least our trust.

LEONARD BOYLE, O.P.

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF POLAND—from the origins to Sobieski.

Edited by W. F. Reddaway, J. H. Penson, O. Halecki and R. Dyboski. (Cambridge University Press; 42s.)

BORDER OF EUROPE. By Adam Zoltowski. With a Foreword by Sir Ernest Barker, F.B.A., D.LITT. (Hollis and Carter; 20s.)

A *Cambridge History* of a particular country or European period is intended to be a reliable reference book on general facts which the political thinker, the historian, or the interpreter of cultural phenomena, may need to illustrate his thesis or clinch his argument. As the forcible separation of Eastern Europe from the rest of the Continent is at the origin of most of our preoccupations of today, and the re-integration of this lost part of Christendom may be the motive of many future actions, it is timely that an authoritative reference book should be made available to the English student.

This *Cambridge History of Poland*, which closes with the reign of John Sobieski—that is, with the last phase of Poland's greatness and her influence in Europe, which was followed in the succeeding XVIIIth century by a process of disintegration, thus making her a passive quantity in European affairs instead of an active factor—fulfils all the requirements of academic historiography. It is uncontroversial and contains all the facts that the reader, even the specialist reader, could safely forget or leave on the reference shelves. Yet, as Professor Halecki, the author of a recent and original meditation on the scope and the limits of European history, is one of the editors, it is somewhat disappointing to see that the English and Polish historians who compiled this volume did not take the trouble to reduce the facts of eight long centuries of Polish history to a few common principles which would have been familiar to a cultured European. From 963 to 1696 Kings follow Kings, battles follow battles and treaty follows treaty without any division into such periods as the non-Polish reader could identify. There are a few very learned disquisitions on artistic and cultural monuments, and here and there the relation of Poland to the general European context is competently established (at the time of the