

REVIEWS

Enough has been said of Montenero's personal history and his work for the Church in the essay *Dominicans at Florence* which appears in this present issue of *BLACKFRIARS*. A word or two only need be said of his treatise. It is based on the writings of all the approved canonists and theologians, Gratian, Humbert de Romans, John Andreas, St. Thomas Aquinas, Ostiensis, Peter de la Palude, St. Albert the Great, Bl. Innocent V (Peter of Tarentaise) and a multitude of others. He takes the six articles alleged against the privileges of the mendicants and shows that each article, although gathered from canon law, has been so twisted and exaggerated by the adversaries of the friars, that it is patently false. For example, he shows how absurd is the teaching that the faithful are bound to confess yearly to their *parish priest*, because the fourth General Council of the Lateran used the word *proprius sacerdos*. Quoting St. Thomas and Andreas, he tells the Basilian Fathers that "whosoever confesses to his bishop, or to one appointed by him, confesses *proprio sacerdoti*." Also the Pope is the *proprius sacerdos* of every Christian, and if he grants faculties to mendicant friars then they, too, are *propriii sacerdotes*. The great historians of the writers of the Dominican Order, Fathers Quétif and Echard, knew of this work of Montenero, but only vaguely and indirectly. Other historians, even the great conciliar compilers, Labbe and Mansi, are silent about it, as also is Raynaldus, and the modern Hefele. Yet the episode was an important one in the history of the Church in the fifteenth century, so that we are doubly in Father Meersseman's debt, namely for his history of the dispute and the actual treatise.

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PRINCE OF PASTORS—THE LIFE OF ST. CHARLES BORROMEO. By Margaret Yeo. (Longmans; 7s. 6d.)

It is long since we had in English a good account of St. Charles Borromeo, hence the present compilation will be welcome and useful. For it gives us all the salient features and facts of the career of the great model-Bishop and statesman of the Counter-Reformation, and sets forth fully the surpassing holiness of his personality. All the same we cannot regard it as an ideal biography, and the figure of St. Charles which it portrays will not win every one's sympathy. That perhaps is because he is not in these pages made sufficiently *human*. The man has never yet lived who is wholly without flaw in his character, or without some un wisdom in his public and social action. And here there is only incessant panegyric, which after a while grows wearisome. It is all light and no shade—yet in St. Charles there are some things which for modern readers require to be treated apologeti-

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cally, with allowance for the period in which he lived and for the manner of his upbringing. Borromeo had in him a decided streak of Renaissance hardness derived from his ancestors, a certain ruthlessness and ruggedness, a tendency to go to extreme lengths. And in his contentions with the civil power, he was sometimes on very debatable ground. He strove to revive episcopal privileges and powers over laymen that had become almost obsolete, and were based on mediæval ideas by his time worn very thin. A writer like Lingard would have treated all this impartially and dispassionately, and have admitted from the outset that there are always two sides to a question, and that just possibly St. Charles was sometimes lacking in political wisdom. But that is not the method adopted in the present volume, and its appeal to the ordinary reader is thereby weakened.

The writer's style is uneven. There are some fine purple patches of description, but there are also paragraphs savouring of bathos, and phrases akin to present-day slang. And the excessive use of unnecessary adjectives of a Protestant flavour is irritating; why need Canons be of necessity "fat," Prelates "pompous," and Abbots "sleek"? While as to punctuation, there is such an economy in the use of the humble comma, that the often involved sentences have to be read and re-read before their meaning becomes apparent.

There are in the course of the book some incidental statements to which exception may be taken. For instance, Mary Queen of Scots was, we are calmly told, "the rightful Queen of England," and it is somehow implied that such was the opinion of English Catholics as a whole. But that was assuredly not the case. Many of our martyrs, with their dying breath, protested their loyalty to Elizabeth. Moreover, there were other claimants to the throne beside the Scottish one, and all had their Catholic adherents. A manuscript lately published by the Camden Society (R.Hist.S. series, vol. 52) enumerates no less than twelve "competitors that gape for the death of that good old princess the now Queen."

Again, we cannot imagine why Dr. Giffard who later on astonishingly became Archbishop and Duke of Rheims and First Peer of France, should be described as "another Welshman." His father was a Midland squire, his mother a Throckmorton, and English Catholics have always reckoned him as one of their glories. Possibly he may have had, through a sister (C.R.Soc., vol. 10, 255) a marriage connection with one of the families of the Welsh Marches, but that would not have affected his own nationality.

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