

THE ENGLISH CARMELITES. By Lancelot C. Sheppard. (Burns Oates; 6s.)

Wherever the name Whitefriars survives (as, for example, at London, Norwich, or Hull) there is a reminder of the many Carmelite foundations in this country. The first Carmelite General Chapter in Europe was held in England, and the most famous of their Priors General was an Englishman. Yet there is probably far less general knowledge of the Order than of the Franciscans or Dominicans. Mr. Sheppard's bibliography reveals one reason for this, a reason which no longer holds good now that his own book is obtainable. For here, in English, is an outline history of both the friars and the nuns, with some account of the liturgy and spirit of the Order. It is a short book for so large a subject, but the interest is well maintained and it is safe to say that a great deal of it will be unfamiliar to most readers. How many will see without surprise the two prints of the Carmelite habit in the thirteenth century, and learn that they were first known as Pied Friars? But it is not merely a matter of a picturesque past; one of the most remarkable things in the book belongs to the present. It is the list on pp. 92-3 of the foundations from St. Charles's Square during the last thirty years.

A.E.H.S.

THE HISTORY OF THE PARSON'S WIFE. By Margaret Watt. (Faber; 8s. 6d.)

A study of a subject on which hitherto no light has yet been thrown will always carry with it something of the attraction of the unknown. But the appeal of Miss Margaret Watt's book lies not only in its character as a work of research, but also in the interest and importance of the subject she has chosen. Her concentration on the human interest to be found in the study of individual lives and characters, though it reveals sympathy and understanding of her subject, has led her at times to under-estimate the historical importance of such lives as a whole. Attention is rightly drawn to the large number of distinguished men and women both in church and state who have in the past come from clerical homes, but more insistence might have been placed on the distinctive character given to the Anglican Church by the rectory system, the basis of which is 'a happy and harmonious marriage.'

The reader is presented with a series of attractive and vivid accounts of clerical households, from the first diffident entry of the parson's wife into history in the person of the second Mrs. Cranmer—a shadowy figure now remembered for her enforced journeys in a wooden box with ventilation holes in the lid—down to the childhood of the wife of Archbishop Davidson.

It is almost inevitable that the nineteenth century, being the richest in the materials Miss Watt has used, should have received the most detailed treatment; and in comparison the three preceding centuries

appear to have been dealt with sketchily. But the book is a pleasing and informative introduction to a subject which would well repay a more detailed and critical analysis.

N.G.

RUSSIA THROUGH THE CENTURIES. By M. Philips Price, M.A., F.R.G.S., M.P. (Allen & Unwin; 5s.)

Mr. Price was *Manchester Guardian* correspondent in Russia during the years 1914-18, and he is convinced that 'the outlook of the Russian and Anglo-Saxon world are not hostile but complementary to each other, and both are rooted in the past.' Since a closer understanding between the two peoples is imperative, he has endeavoured to contribute towards that achievement by writing this outline account of the historical background of the U.S.S.R.

The result is a not very successful attempt to compress a thousand years of history into 130 pages; it is disconcerting to find the story of Vladimir's choosing between the different religions presented as a certain fact, Rasputin once again referred to as a 'dissolute monk' (dissolute, very; but neither monk nor priest), such phrases as 'elemental uprising of the Slav soul,' and the murder of the last Romanov tsar called a 'singularly unromantic martyrdom.' More serious is the impression we get that the bolshevik regime is not so bad after all, partly because the Russians were used to that sort of thing, that its methods were no worse than that 'they would be regarded by the Anglo-Saxon world as unduly threatening to civil liberties' (would Mr. Price write of the *Gestapo* in that cool way?), and such implications as that the famines of 1931-32 were entirely due to peasant sabotage. However, Mr. Price frankly admits that 'the new constitution exists on paper only.'

D.A.

THE FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH. By Serge Bolshakoff. (S.P.C.K.; 3s. 6d.)

Mr. Bolshakoff adequately refutes the oft-repeated accusation that the Russian Church is lacking in missionary activity and zeal for souls. He tells of the conversion of Vladimir, and shows how the Russian State and the Russian Church, hand in hand, overcame the Mongol hordes, and stretched out across the wastes of Siberia. Not content with that, Russian missionaries crossed over into Alaska, from 1821 to 1867 a Russian dependency, to preach to the Indians under the direction of the saintly Innocent Veniaminov. Even outside the Empire missions were founded in China and Japan. It is in the latter country that Russian missionaries achieved their greatest success owing to the work of Archbishop Nikolai, and even to-day the Russian Orthodox community is a living force in the Christian life of Japan.