

Blackfriars

Providence have accounted for not a little of the happy change which has come over our country in the past hundred years.

N.O.H.

A HUNDRED YEARS OF CATHOLIC PROGRESS. By G. Elliot Anstruther. Pp. 156. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 3/6 net.)

Thanks to the labours of the late Bishop Ward, we have easy access to the history of English Catholicism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; for the remaining period recourse must be had to many works, especially to biographies of Cardinals and Bishops, of which the life of Archbishop Ullathorne, by Abbot Butler, is undoubtedly the best. It was, therefore, a happy and useful thought on the part of Mr. Anstruther to give us in 'Emancipation Year' a little book embodying the story of English Catholicism since the date of Catholic freedom, 1829. The author has every advantage for his task, having been for many years the Organising Secretary of the Catholic Truth Society, in which capacity he learned more of Catholic life and work through the length and breadth of England than the ordinary Catholic priest or layman living and working in one district could have done.

In a survey, such as he has set himself to make, accuracy of detail is essential, and in this he has been most careful and painstaking; hence his book is far freer from inaccuracy than many more pretentious works. We say freer, for we have not noticed any slips. The book abounds in statistics showing the rapid increase of the faith since Emancipation days, and some of these are illuminating, particularly one which shows the increase in churches. In 1829 there were 450 places where Mass was said; to-day there are upwards of 2,600 churches and public chapels, not counting the chapels in convents, institutions, or private houses. Referring to the leakage, the writer says 'facts are stubborn things, and the fact that we do lose many from the Catholic ranks is not to be gainsaid; but in envisaging the whole position in Great Britain in terms of loss and gain, we can point equally to that which these pages have been at pains to demonstrate—the steady increase of the Church of God throughout the land, in numbers, resources, and power.'

W.G.