

appearing for the cities of which they are patrons. St John of Nepomuk appears under *Bridge* and is said to put his finger to his lips, but is not found under the latter heading as a symbol.

SILVESTER HUMPHRIES, O.P.

LISTEN, SISTER. By John E. Moffatt, S.J. (Mercier Press; 10s. 6d.)

Fifty little monologues full of insight here preserve, for nuns and all whom it may concern, spontaneous practical advice on how to be holy in a convent. It will be greatly enjoyed by those who appreciate that quiet world of feminine heroism which exists apart from the rest of us, in the souls of nuns, and is only seen by the world as in a glass darkly: the Sisters' outward life mirrors it, inevitably but faintly. Father Moffatt is at home in it. He must be outstandingly successful in giving conferences to nuns, especially about the 'little virtues'. Each of these fifty two-minute meditations throws a light on one or other of the little maxims of holiness which must govern and sustain daily life in the cloister. This is a book to give to any nun as a feast-day present. Its rare traces of half-childish femininity should be no deterrent even to the most mature and intelligent.

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.

MYSTERY AND MYSTICISM. A Symposium. (Blackfriars; 9s. 6d.)

This book which consists of six chapters of very different lengths was first published in French as a special issue of *La Vie Spirituelle*. One must first pay tribute to the unnamed translator or translators; the work is always smooth and readable without losing the flavour and idiom of the original French (except of course for Father Hislop's short chapter which has every appearance of being dressed in native costume). The purpose of the book is to clear up the confusion that exists about the popular notions of mysticism and mystery. Each has an authentic and a misapplied meaning: mysticism, for instance, is commonly taken to refer exclusively to peculiar religious phenomena such as ecstasies, and its more important meaning is overlooked, namely the discipline of mind and body which the Christian must employ in communicating with God. In his first sub-title to the first chapter Père Plé expresses it neatly, 'Of how access to the inaccessible is given to us'. It is hardly necessary to point out how important this matter is today. It has for some time been obvious that the slightly 'queer' notions attached to the word 'mysticism' have shut off from many of us a whole world of prayer and contemplation which we should never have lost. That sort of thing, we have supposed, is all out of the ordinary and has nothing to do with most Catholics. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yet because of this many Catholics have been left ignorant of many fundamental truths of their religion. For mysticism, in its true sense,

should lead us to understand more deeply the mysteries of God and his works. But there again, the word 'mystery' has presented another obstacle: we have made it mean, as P. Bouyer points out, 'something that we must believe without trying to understand it'. So this book is given over to examining the full deep meaning of these two words. P. Plé in the first chapter outlines very clearly the ways and means by which man can have experience of God, and in Chapter II P. Bouyer explains at some length the meaning of *mysterion* or sacrament as it is understood at least up to the middle ages, namely a reality which veils but at the same time directs our minds to a more profound and sacred reality, God the maker. St Thomas spoke of the footprints of God in creation. Father Ian Hislop writes a very brief but very valuable chapter on myth which is a way of seeing all reality, man and society, bound together as a whole and all alive. Father Hislop is rightly chary of exaggerating the importance of this, for it is certainly true that the language of myth becomes dangerous when it claims to be total and an exhaustive expression of truth. Nevertheless it might have been a good thing if the planners of this symposium had allowed more space for the discussion of this very valuable subject, for it is a medium that is most easily and widely understood. However, with the two additional chapters on St Paul's mysticism and on mystical phenomena this book is to be welcomed for the clarity and firmness of its exposition.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THE ESTRANGED FACE. By Catherine Eastwood. (Hollis and Carter; 16s.)

This book will set Novice Mistresses talking and the more experienced ones will agree, no doubt, that in spite of its defects it does throw some light on the meaning of vocation. A girl enters a convent with a mixture of motives difficult to assess, experiences great difficulties due to normal, natural repugnance to so mortified a life, perseveres in spite of everything for twenty-five years and rises to posts of great responsibility in the Congregation, and then finds it impossible to go on. She obtains a dispensation from vows, finds that she is so completely out of her element 'in the world' that life is hardly supportable any longer (in fact she decides at one point to put an end to it), and finally comes to spiritual rest through an illumination which suggests powerfully that God was with her, and very near her, all the time.

Catherine Eastwood, with a wealth of detail presented to her by the person in question (Mary Cleaves), and acting, it seems, with her sanction for the large introspective passages of the narrative, undertakes to tell us not only the whole story from the inside but what every step of such a strange journey signified from the point of view of vocation. This was of course an impossible task. The result is no more than a very plausible interpretation. God's ways are inscrutable and he writes