

BOOK REVIEWS

A CATECHISM OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, as approved by the Archbishops and Bishops of England and Wales, and directed by them to be used in all their Dioceses. (Printed and published at St. Dominic's Press, Ditchling, Sussex; 15/- net.)

To be told you can now buy the Penny Catechism for fifteen shillings may sound at the first blush a very dubious benefit. Yet we venture to express the belief that the happy thought that suggested so beautiful an edition of the Catechism will be fully justified. Surely there must be at least five hundred people (five hundred is the limit of this edition) who will want to have a copy of this spiritual classic such as can stand the test of time. Of all the millions of copies of the Catechism which have been, and will be, printed, which are daily thumbed and torn and in general consumed in their use, how many will survive? As a concise compendium of Theology and Philosophy and a brief sum total of Christian wisdom there is no other book in English to compare with the Catechism. Something more than genius has gone to its making and, occasionally at least, it would seem to deserve a better setting than the vile print and cheap paper which are its usual accompaniments. This is the first attempt to provide a library edition of the Catechism. I wonder with what success one could apply at Bodley's (for all its embarrassing wealth in wisdom) for a copy of the Catholic Catechism! St. Dominic's Press has now left such libraries without an excuse for such an inability in future. Printed by hand on hand-made paper, adorned with wood-cuts by Philip Hagen, and strongly bound, the book is one that will keep and that people will want to keep.

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS. By Alban Butler. A new edition. Corrected, amplified and edited by Herbert Thurston, S.J., and Norah Leeson. Vol. III, March. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1931; 7/6 net.)

Alban Butler never can be superseded. His scholarship and encyclopaedic learning (of which even Gibbon spoke with respect), his accuracy and power of research, and his thoroughly orthodox yet sober and moderate Catholicism, place him in the front rank of English hagiologists. But, in view of present-day growth in historical knowledge, he requires to be supple-

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mented and corrected. And for this he could have desired no better editor than Father Thurston. This third volume maintains the high level of its predecessors. Some of Butler's Lives have been completely re-written, all have been revised, and notices of Saints (like St. Clement Hofbauer) canonized since his time, have been added. Blessed Henry Suso (whom Butler dismissed in a mere footnote) receives adequate treatment, and the Elizabethan martyrs and those of North America do not go unnoticed. The Acts of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas, one of the greatest hagiological treasures that has come down to us, are very fully set forth in the light of the latest modern scholarship. It is only to be regretted that considerations of space have necessitated the sacrifice of some of Butler's excellent little homilies, long the favourite spiritual reading of our forefathers. As it is, this March instalment contains nearly five hundred closely-printed pages. Each notice is without exception eminently readable, though perhaps one misses with some sadness the flavour of Alban Butler's own old-fashioned style. Historical slips are very few, yet we may note that the Emperor Francis was the successor not of Joseph II but of Leopold II (p. 258), and the title borne as Anti-Pope by Amadeus of Savoy was Felix V not Felix IV (p. 448).

F. R. B.

ROBERT AND CLIVE: THE STORY OF A SURGEON. By Clair Cope. (John Bale & Sons and Danielsson; 6/- net.)

Dr. Axel Munthe has shown in his book, *San Michele*, what a gifted and vivid pen can make of a doctor's memoirs. Clair Cope's *Story of a Surgeon* is not exactly biography, though in its twenty-eight little sketches it lets us into many of the secrets of the doctor's life. We are planted into the midst of the characters without any very formal introduction, and each incident and new chapter somewhat abruptly whirled us off to fresh scenes—all exciting and stimulating; and once we get into the stride of the book we see that the impressionist style creates precisely the right atmosphere of the busy doctor's day (and night) which must be prepared to meet every conceivable emergency and see all the tragedy and comedy of life in the raw. The medical profession is one that has maintained a high standard and lived up to its ancient nobility when other professions have not refused to fall in with (and down to) the prevailing commercialism and stunt advertising. This is not to say that the doctor is never assailed by that soul-destroyer, avarice, nor to deny that he ever succumbs to greed; but the