

Blackfriars

instincts of decent behaviour, the accumulated tradition of centuries.' (Mr. Wilkinson takes rather a high line when he turns from the notable episode of the League and reflects on modern politics: 'Those who have a stake in the country may fairly safely be reckoned as constitutionalists. Those who had everything to gain and nothing to lose were Leaguers, much in the same way as in our days they would be radicals and socialists.') But these remarks, which may please, or irritate—and the author is probably quite indifferent to the reader's feelings—do not take away from the real value of the book. This history of twenty critical years, with its just estimates of the characters of the leading persons in the drama, its clear exposition of the aims of Leaguers, Huguenots and Royalists, and its vivid descriptions of the changing fortunes of the groups concerned, does make plain much that was obscure. Many documents are appended, also a bibliography of appalling length. ('It is hardly necessary to say that I have only looked at the merest fraction of these works,' the author explains—for our comfort). The book is well printed, and this is to the credit of the Glasgow University Press.

J.C.

THE HEROINE OF PE-TANG. HELEN DE JAURIAS, SISTER OF CHARITY (1824-1900). By Henry Mazeau. Crowned by the French Academy. Translated from the French by an Ursuline Grandniece of Hélène de Jaurias. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd. ; 6/- net.)

To the outsider, the life of any Sister of Charity appears heroic, but some of them, like Hélène de Jaurias, have to face difficulties and dangers beyond the ordinary routine of their wonderful vocation. This account of the life, work and tragic death of Sister de Jaurias must be good reading in the original French, told with humour, and giving much interesting information about a Sister of Charity's life in China. The translation is unfortunately not good. About ten years after she became a Sister of Charity, Hélène de Jaurias was sent as a Superior to China where she set her hand to every good work, but especially to the task of raising the Chinese woman from her state of servitude and degradation. So well did she succeed, that at the outbreak of the Boxer rising she had actually started retreats for Chinese ladies which were well attended. The great International Hospital at Shang-Hai was begun and organized entirely by her.

The terrible accounts of the sufferings undergone during the Siege of Peking make us realize what a missionary in China has

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to be prepared to face. History repeats itself, and from the diary of a Franciscan Missionary of Mary which appears this year in their 'Annals' we see that a quarter of a century has not altered China or the Chinese very much. It is to be regretted that European Government officials do not heed the warnings of Missionaries when trouble is pending. This is brought out very clearly in the account of the Boxer rising in 1900.

M.F.

TALES FROM THE BIBLE. By Walter De la Mare. (Faber and Gwyer; 7/6 net.)

This work instantly challenges comparison with 'Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare' but there is no odium in the comparison. To the average layman, oppressed and circumscribed by the *il faut vivre* spirit of the age, De la Mare has rendered a signal service. In the bleak desert of modern literature unique work is a welcome oasis to the parched seeker after truth and beauty. The tales open in the Garden of Eden where God walked and talked with Adam at evenfall. The grace and beauty of Eve is limned from a poet's palette. Her temptation and her fall are fraught with dramatic intensity and upon her folly, the source of a world of misery, one speculates in vain. Besides, who would judge his mother?

The perfect story of virtue triumphing over evil is surely contained in the story of Joseph and his Brethren. Could there be a happier ending than the re-union of Jacob to his loved son in the full splendour of his sovereignty over Egypt under Pharaoh?

The cosmic catastrophe of the Flood begins in an atmosphere of cruelty, lawlessness and rebellion and inevitably and relentlessly works up to a thunderous fortissimo in the description of a world stormed to destruction in the anger of God.

The other tales of Moses, of Samson, and of David and Goliath are on the same high level and to those of us whose memories of these heroes have been dimmed by neglect or dulled by compulsory acquaintance, De la Mare has made them live vividly and humanly against a background of riotous colours, of gorgeous raiment, of throbbing and purposeful movement and of that magnificent achievement that makes the Old Testament the most thrilling book in the world—so thrilling because so true. This modern Virgil will unfold and interpret for us the mysteries and meanings of the Old Testament and we shall be the richer for his poet's vision.

M.A.C.