

BLACKFRIARS

to her unhappy home life, that he has 'no little experience of similar wretchedness'; in another he tells of an epic poem 'hundreds and hundreds of lines' long, a 'chronicle in verse of the doings of knights'; in yet another we learn for the first time of horrifying ballads heard at Bath at the age of five.

After many lovers' meetings at Kelso, 'Jessie' came to Edinburgh to nurse an invalid aunt, and during clandestine visits 'Wattie' allowed himself to be locked up in a cupboard full of crockery and food, where he whiled away the time writing verses after this kind:

Here's haddocks dry and barley meal,
And marmalade and jam,
And high, suspended by a hook,
Above me hangs a ham.
Come hither, you my closet are,
Where all my sweets are stored;
Oh, save me from your aunt's good things,
And some of yours afford.

This little volume is an amusing and surprisingly valuable addition to Scottiana, and makes some of the solemn theories as to Scott's literary development appear rather ridiculous.

U.P.-H.

THE PARADISO OF DANTE ALIGHIERI. With a translation into English triple rhyme and a brief Introduction. By Geoffrey L. Bickersteth. (Cambridge University Press; 10/6.)

Mr. Bickersteth, through his translation, has raised in this country another worthy monument to the memory of Dante. He will rank among the distinguished scholars, who have studied and interpreted the Divine Comedy.

His introduction is interesting; his translation careful and fluent. He is aware of the difficulties of rendering the 'terza rima' into English—the translator may well despair of reproducing even the echo of the echo of such loveliness.' Yet, in the great lyrical passages Mr. Bickersteth is at his best.

When Dante wrote, his medium was still plastic, and often a single word is charged with a chapter of meaning. The context and our measure of discerning alone can give a value to his words. Yet it is difficult at times to find the literal meaning, more difficult still to appreciate the spirit, which inspired the verse. If Mr. Bickersteth sometimes falls short, it is that he does not always adequately express the feeling of tension, which quickened the sensitive mind of the poet and stretched it taut, like the chord of some delicate instrument, so that it vibrated to so high a melody.

H.H.