

A FLORENTINE PORTRAIT. By D. B. Wyndham Lewis. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

It was high time that a new life of St Philip Benizi, the most glorious of the Servite saints, should appear. In all its 726 years the Order of Our Lady's Sorrows has produced no greater figure than the doctor-turned-friar who became successively a lay-brother, a priest, the fifth General of the Order and almost an eighth Founder. He has always outshone the rest in the Order's list of saints. More has been written about him than about all the rest together. His picture has been painted by at least eight masters (including Perugino, Andrea del Sarto and Carlo Dolci), his memory has been kept alive both by an intense devotion within the Order and by hagiographers in an uninterrupted series. But the last serious life to appear in English was that of Father Soulier, O.S.M., published in 1885 and long out of print. Mr Wyndham Lewis had a task worthy of his skill, a challenge to his artistry in words and his knowledge of thirteenth-century Italy. He has succeeded admirably.

Historically he has based the work on Soulier, Pazzaglia and Rossi, the best authorities. His method, of course, is his own, as individual as Del Sarto's. He sees the plain and pious narratives of his sources in a background supplied by his own literary and historic insights, with a knowledge, in this line of perception, wider than theirs. He has, for instance, an insistent consciousness of Dante which runs through the book like a *leit motif* and gives a tone to the whole theme which previous biographers (even Pazzaglia) have missed.

The test of a biographer of St Philip is whether he has caught the blend of dynamic energy and personal sanctity which made him at one and the same time a true spiritual son of the self-effacing Founders and (obviously) their hero. Mr Wyndham Lewis passes this test with honours. His portrait catches the likeness and preserves the proportion. In composition and grouping, rarer virtues, he excels. Fascinating characters fill the background and surround the saint, but there is never any doubt that they are mere accessories. The great figure of a great Servant of Mary stands out, clear and inspiring. This is a permanent book.

V.M.N.

FROM APE TO ANGEL. By H. R. Hays. (Methuen; 36s.)

This book by an American author is indeed, as its publisher claims, the first popular introduction to social anthropology and if objections are raised to it by members of the British 'school' I hope that one of them will be inspired to write a better one.

It has become conventional in the last twenty years to distinguish between cultural (American) and social (English) anthropology. The