

Blackfriars

his indifference to wealth, his almost other-worldly attitude towards 'success,' his appreciation of what is good and beautiful, his hatred of shams and imitations; and in general the application of something higher than a merely material standard to every branch of life.

The book abounds in good stories about all sorts of people. 'T' has always had the gift of making friends and, being aware of his gift, he gives to his *Adventures* the truly personal touch which has more than a dash of not unpleasing vanity. It is written in a rambling style in keeping with the wandering life of its rolling-stone of an author. There are one or two touches of unkindness which could have been easily left out—*e.g.*, the Turkish bath incident on page 45; but, for the most part, this is a friendly record of a man who is disposed always to put the best construction on everything, though he is sometimes hampered by the very human inability to conciliate charity with justice. We recommend the book as the very interesting and unusual story of an interesting and rare character. B.

AN APOSTLE OF THE LEPERS. THE VEN. PETER DONDEERS, C.SS.R. (1809-1887). By John Baptist Kronenburg, C.SS.R. Translated from the French Version of Léon Roelandts, C.SS.R., by John Carr, C.SS.R. With Map and Illustrations. (Sands & Co.; 7/6 net.)

This biography should encourage the ordinary and even the stupid. The son of a poor Dutch weaver, without resources and without even an average share of brains, Peter Donders had a conviction as strong as his desire that he would one day be a priest. Admitted to a preparatory seminary, first merely as a servant-boy and afterwards as a student, he became a butt for the boys' merciless ridicule, though in the end his almost unimaginable patience won him the day and a reputation for sanctity. In 1842, a year after his ordination, he went out as a missionary to Dutch Guiana, where he worked till his death in 1887, spending thirty years in tending the lepers of Batavia in soul and body with heroic charity. He also evangelised both negroes and Indians, journeying as many as two hundred miles by river and forest to the Indian camps. These expeditions imperilled his life by dangers of many kinds and he was several times within an ace of martyrdom. When the Vicariate of Surinam was handed over to the Redemptorists in 1866, he joined the Congregation and was from the first a model religious, obeying his superiors even when much younger and less experienced than himself, with childlike simplicity.

Book Reviews

Father Donders had the prestige and the loveliness of sanctity. He was endowed with neither intellect nor eloquence. 'His external gifts are almost nil,' his bishop said of him. His letters are commonplace. His prayer was usually dry, and mostly vocal. His only originality was that of being a saint. Those who lived with him emphasise his avoidance of singularity and the fact that he seemed to live like everybody else, but this must not be taken too literally and was largely due to his ingenuity in hiding his austerities. As an old man he still disciplined himself to blood night and morning, fasted three times a week and even when not fasting usually ate but a slice of bread with tea or coffee for breakfast and supper. The cause for his beatification is well advanced.

The book has no literary pretensions, and such colloquialisms as 'he was never done--' followed by a present participle, are frequent. But it must be added that, in spite of being twice translated, the book has the merit of being seldom obviously a translation. The photographs are excellent and Father Donders' saintly and beautiful face on the paper wrapper should be his fortune, or his biographer's.

M. B.

TWENTY-FOUR VAGABOND TALES. By John Gibbons. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd.; 5/-.)

A pleasant little book of stories on a wide variety of subjects. They are for the most part quite charmingly written, but with an air of simplicity and of assumed ingenuousness which is apt to be tiring when delivered in large doses. The stories themselves are generally lacking in any form of connected narrative, but are always interesting and entertaining. Those from abroad are particularly good, being experiences of a tramp through parts of Italy, Portugal and the Balkans, a feat undertaken with no knowledge of the languages in question. Especially enlightening in view of recent events in Spain is the story of the little village in Southern Portugal where Mass was not to be had on a Sunday morning, because after the Revolution 'God was dead.' But the donkey-man that acted as the author's guide wore a medal round his neck: 'They say that God is Dead. But how is one to be sure? For He might come again.' It was this same simple spirit that moved the Portuguese after the Peninsular War to make St. Anthony an honorary officer of the British Army (he had already been a captain-general in the Portuguese Army) and as the author relates, most of his statues in the churches are adorned with a red sash as a sign of this honour.

A.A.P.