

NOTICES

This book has all the good points of the first. The pieces—fourteen in number—are so arranged that they can be shortened or lengthened as the organist wishes. Six of these fourteen are based on particular antiphons or hymns of the chant. They are printed on two staves so that they can be played either with or without pedals; and the notation is large and clear—an important point when even on a moderately-sized organ the music is usually some distance from the player. Finally in *Interlude XXVIII* Dom Gregory has given us a piece in hymn form with words and music: an *Ave Maria* in four verses, to be sung in unison. This is a pleasing addition to the voluntaries and good use could be made of many suchlike pieces as Benediction motets and the like. We may well hope to see more compositions of this kind to take the place of some of the more tempestuous attempts at Polyphony in five parts with a Soprano and a Bass!

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

INTERVAL BEFORE BIRTH. By N. S. Leitch. (Heinemann; 7/6.)

Interval Before Birth has its setting on a headland beyond a small fishing town somewhere beneath Les Maures. Mlle. de Tellousac dies there sometime in the 1920's, and her country house is purchased and restored by Iseult Thomas, whose husband has grown rich from electric light bulbs. The framework of the story is formed by the reactions of a neighbouring peasant family to the contrasted influence of the successive owners of the château. An integrally Catholic novel, it shares three characteristics with the author's earlier work; a sensitive prose, a quick perception of the implicit in human relationship, a clear pale light. It was fortunate that these are just the traits to throw into relief the poised, nerve-driven eroticism of Madame Thomas, vividly, unforgettably alive. It is this union of realism with the expression of the undertones of feeling which renders *Interval Before Birth* so remote from the older convention of Catholic fiction with its wooden puppet play and the corrugated iron of its ethic and the loud blare of its didactic moral. Yet it too has its traditions, and through its recognition of the significance of the confessional for ordinary Catholic life it is linked, quite unexpectedly, with the greatest of Catholic novels, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

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DE FIDE—Praellectiones scholasticae in Secundam Partem D. Thomae. By P. Lumbreras, O.P. (Angelicum, Rome; 12 lire.)

The fruit of many years' teaching, this short but clear and scholarly exposition of the doctrine contained in the first sixteen