

BLACKFRIARS

(With which is incorporated *The Catholic Review*.)

Literary Communications should be addressed to THE EDITOR OF BLACKFRIARS, OXFORD. Telephone 3607. The Editor cannot be responsible for the loss of MSS. submitted. No MSS. will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

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NOTES ON THE MONTH

SLUM CLEARANCE. Catholics stress the importance of the home, and therefore, considering the great displacement of population and improvement of conditions involved, will require little persuasion as to the need of busying themselves with the workings of the recent Housing Act. This may take the form of concerted action to promote Catholic Housing Associations, through groups specially formed for the purpose or through already existing societies. To an outsider, the capacity and resources of the Knights of St. Columba seem to fit them admirably for such a work. Mr. Thomas Foster, in last month's BLACKFRIARS, outlined the necessity and practicability of such schemes. But there is a place for individual Catholic action as well, and in this connection we print the following letter to the Editor.

SIR,—Many readers of BLACKFRIARS must be glad some space has been given to a social scheme other than the 'Back to the Land Movement,' on which the Order has laid so much stress.

The re-housing of slum dwellers who must live near their work is surely of equal importance.

May I beg a small space in which to point out that there is already a housing scheme which affects St. Dominic's parish (London, N.W.) and in which Catholics are taking a small part?

Students of this kind of work will be aware of the existence of the St. Pancras House Improvement Association which, under the inspiration of the Anglo-Catholic clergy of St. Mary's, Somers Town, is transforming many of the streets in the neigh-

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bourhood of Euston. An offshoot of this Society, called the North St. Pancras Branch, is working on entirely undenominational lines. The committee includes a Dominican and two members of St. Dominic's congregation, but, owing to the debt on the schools, they are unable to give much financial support.

The area to be rebuilt contains a large proportion of Catholic families. If anybody is interested and desires to have further details, I shall be happy to furnish them. The building is done with subscriptions on which a small interest is paid.

It seems to me that in the South of England, at any rate, there are no areas sufficiently Catholic to make the formation of a Catholic Housing Society a good working proposition, and that Catholics would do better to take part in such local housing schemes as already exist. At present, some seem to be deterred by the fear that there may be unfair discrimination against Catholics in the allotment of houses or flats, but there will be no fear of that in North St. Pancras.

In any case, surely the best way to prevent that from happening is for Catholics to show themselves generous and keen in working for social justice. It is not by always grinding our Catholic axe that we shall make the English people willing to consider the claims of the Church to be the true Church of Christ. There can be nothing against Catholics working with Protestants in work like this, which aims at the preservation of a decent standard of family life.

I am, etc.,

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Hampstead, N.W.3.

THE GERMAN CENTRE. The new political form which has displaced the old in Germany has also put on one side the powerful instrument through which Catholic social action worked. But the power behind the Centre Party is so strong and deep, possesses such capacity for organization, and is so essentially uncommitted to parliamentarianism, that it is not likely to remain out of action for long. Besides, the new Germany seeks to embrace Austria, and, although the obstacles to the *Anschluss* are still considerable, this will serve to shift the centre of gravity, geographical and spiritual. For Austria has too strong a Catholicism and too high a civilization to be merged in the sham paganism of the latest Prussians.

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PAX ROMANA. Significance has been read into the simultaneous visits to Rome of the German Vice-Chancellor, Herr von Papen, and the Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Dollfuss, both of whom are strong Catholics. The purpose of the Holy Year is primarily religious, but where human lives are concerned, where is the distinction between the sacred and profane? It is difficult to overestimate the political value of the fact that Catholics from all countries are thronging to Rome and mixing together in the very year that promises to be the most critical for the peace of Europe.

CATHOLIC POLITICS. The political force of the Church is growing. But it is not that clericalism supported by conservatives and attacked by radicals. It is not concerned to uphold privilege, but to safeguard the menaced integrity of human nature. For no Catholic can be content with a state of affairs of which it can only be said that in them you can still manage to save your soul.

THE BOOK OF THE MONTH. In the history of Catholicism the same problems recur and the same solutions. Fr. David Mathew's brilliant study of the conflicting cultures in sixteenth century Britain, *The Celtic Peoples and Renaissance Europe*, emphasises the present need for Catholic Action. His subtle analysis of the religious transition during the early years of Elizabeth illustrates the danger of irresolution. The shifting policies of so many Catholics, proud of the happy expedients they had devised for a dangerous time and eager to placate their opponents even at the cost of compromise, led to a placid acceptance of the New Order. The survival of English Catholicism is still due to the stubborn self-reliance of a minority. New and vivid detail on the slow fading of Catholicism among the Welsh hillmen and the Highland clans enforces the same lesson.

JACOBIN.