

Book Reviews

When picking up a novel on this subject one is prepared either for a terrific onslaught on it, as on an evil to be driven from the world, or for a defence of it as of (at least) scientific experiments, appealing to a few. But the author, instead of taking these strong lines, simply lays bare these experiments and enables all his characters (except one) to see through them; that one being the slightly-described heroine who gropes blindly in the darkness of the unknown in search of her dead lover. The medium (Emery Iago), whose work is ostensibly that of a photographer in a mean street in Brixton, has our sympathy, because the story is told first from his point of view, and however unattractive we cannot but judge his personality to be, he is an interesting and convincing psychological study.

In contrast to this detailed picture of a partially unconscious impostor appear a successful K.C. and a beautiful society actress who have both come under his influence.

Exciting our interest at the very beginning in this obscure subject we are drawn on by the development of the plot, wondering what will be the dénouement. With surprising force and power a solution is suddenly hurled at the reader on the final page. In this last chapter the author speeds up the movement and gives an answer to the slowly gathering question as to whether at the back of the claims of spiritualism lies any valuable truth: for the boy, Billy Neal, the one character who has never been even mildly interested in the subject, does, in fact, see a spirit, not excitedly, as in the case of the mediumistic or emotional influences, but somehow, beautifully, as in a vision.

G.V.Z.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THE RIGHT OF WAR. By LUIGI STURZO. Translated by Barbara Barclay Carter. With a Foreword by G. P. Gooch, D.Litt. (Allen and Unwin; 10/- net.)

This is a remarkable book by a distinguished Italian priest; the work, Dr. Gooch reminds us, 'not merely of an exiled leader of a great party, but also of a scholar and a thinker'; the work of 'the idealist who is nothing of a doctrinaire, the man of learning who is also a man of affairs, the literary craftsman whose materials are skilfully marshalled, and whose arguments are forcibly expressed. Don Sturzo founded the *Partito Popolare*, with its motto 'Libertas,' and its programme of Christian democracy, in 1919. The rule of Mussolini left no room for political parties in Italy whatever their programmes, and Don Sturzo—following the example of earlier

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exiles—came to England. His theme in the present book is the elimination of war amongst civilised nations, and the discussion covers the wide field of history, sociology, law and ethics. The treatment throughout is strictly objective. Theology is not invoked—'Morality is nothing more than rationality applied to human actions'—and the perfectibility of mankind is not expected. The International Community which will supersede the present international hostility has already its beginnings in the League of Nations. War, Don Sturzo concludes, is willed socially, individually, politically, and morally, and 'in the present organisation of the State there can be no necessary war.' War, if we are 'to brand it as a crime, to limit armaments, to attenuate its effects, can only be achieved in and by an interstatal organisation.' The career of arms is to become in time 'one of interstatal police work rather than a technical preparation for war.' The abolition of conscription is to be a step towards the abolition of war (on conscription, Don Sturzo holds with the late Lord Acton that it is not to be tolerated by a freedom-loving people.) 'The arts of persuasion and moral constraint' are to take the place of 'methods of violence.' Not that nation will not still strive against nation. 'Nevertheless, armed oppression which destroys goods and lives is one thing, and legal or political oppression, which little by little and with time may create a remedy by its very excesses, is another.' We are bidden to seek 'both a Permanent International Organisation of States and the complete Abolition of the Right of War.'

Don Sturzo's book is not always easy reading—so great a subject and so close an argument are not meant to be—but it deserves a very wide and careful study. The translator, otherwise to be congratulated on the successful accomplishment of a difficult task, gives us the unfamiliar words —'eliminability,' 'individuate,' 'demographic.' We don't like the look of them.

Quite recently a German Dominican published a book against war, and now we have this volume from an Italian priest in the cause of international peace. But our non-Catholic critics will still go on blaming 'the Church' for its warlike propensities.

J.C.

THE CHURCH AND BODILY HEALING. By R. Ll. Langford-James, D.D., B.Mus. (The C. W. Daniel Co.; pp. 160.)

The writer of this book has given us a readable summary of what the Church has done to serve the ailing body. No