

## **Blackfriars**

walls of Balliol, one wonders who these 'undergraduate students' may be.

The fundamental objection to such a work as this is that it is not only a 'manual' but a 'complete manual,' and such are to the destruction of learning. The subject-matter is admirably arranged, divided and sub-divided with a commendable brevity and clarity reminiscent of St. Thomas himself. The author has adopted an excellent combination of the chronological and topical methods. At first sight it is an attractive work. But the student is not permitted to think for himself. In the introduction there are laid down seven cogent reasons to establish the importance of Philosophy for all men, but the author does not leave one loop-hole through which the caged student may escape to think, and so perchance become a philosopher. It is not merely that the facts are potted: that is not without excuse and even merit. But everything is potted and served ready for consumption, notably summaries and condemnations of most of the systems, in the cut and dried criticisms from the author, labelled 'Remark' or 'Remarks.' Canned meat is always terribly dull, and often not even good food.

This history is compiled explicitly from a Scholastic (*i.e.*, Thomist) point of view. One judges *a priori*, therefore, that it is likely to be bad history, for history should not be written from 'a point of view.' *A posteriori* the judgment is upheld. Witness how Plato is dismissed with short shrift (p. 79). Aristotle is praised superlatively, but the praise is nowise justified by the exposition of his system. The author is determined at all costs to make him Thomist. St. Augustine is excused! 'Most of St. Augustine's errors are traceable to his Platonic training; had he known Aristotle well, we should have had an Aquinas before the thirteenth century' (p. 167). Finally, not to multiply examples unduly, one wonders whether the 'defects and absurdities' of Kantianism are really so obvious, even to a learned Scholastic, as the author would have us believe.

But, after all, the work is meant to help students to pass examinations in the History of Philosophy; it is not meant to educate them in the history of philosophy. It will no doubt be found to subserve the purpose for which it was intended.

H.C.

THE ENGLISH MARTYRS. Edited by Dom Bede Camm. (Heffer & Sons, Cambridge).

The price of this book is 7/6, and not 5/-, as was stated in a review of the book in these columns.