

SPADE AMONG THE RUSHES. By Margaret Leigh. (Phoenix House; 12s.6d.)

In the middle of the war at the age of forty-eight Miss Leigh took over a derelict croft in the Western Highlands near the sea. Many who have seen those roofless crofters cottages must have indulged in romantic dreams saturated with peat smoke, but comfortable and warm, with work or leisure to please oneself and pleasant neighbours. But Miss Leigh is no romantic and so she triumphed over innumerable difficulties and succeeded where others will merely dream. She tells the story of the reclamation of her croft in simple, direct style which carries no airs nor fancies. It contains sufficient information on technical points to be useful to anyone attempting to run a small-holding, but it reads with that quiet enticement redolent of calm autumn days on the West Coast and on the Outer Isles. She never pretends to be anything but a Sassenach and yet she has mastered the Gaelic and the neighbours will come to *coelidh* in her cottage as with a native. The tragedy is that there are so many abandoned crofts and that the neighbours are mostly ageing. But should this book receive the universal popularity it deserves, few crofts would remain roofless and untenanted. C.P.

THE CHINESE THEATRE. By Jack Chen. (Dobson; 7s.6d.)

This book is more valuable than its size might suggest; out of 61 pages five are given to 'The Yangko Theatre', 'the development of a modern theatrical form out of a primitive folk art within the space of the last few years', and spreading in the wake of the revolutionary People's Armies; eight to 'The Western Style' which seems more Shavian than Shakespearean; and the remaining very worth-while forty-six pages to 'The Classical Theatre'. Anyone interested in drama, especially religious drama, should secure a copy; the text and illustrations show how many centuries it may take for a formal art to become stagnant and how foolish it would be to presume death! Here is a valuable textbook which should be in every school and university library where play-acting is encouraged both for instruction and amusement; and *The House of Exile* (Penguin) should be on the same shelf.

H. D. C. PEPLER.

AN ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK. By Sister Mary of the Compassion, O.P. (Sower Press, U.S.A.; \$1.50.)

It is rare nowadays to find a religious writing with the authority of a professional artist, and rarer still to find a professional artist who is able to describe in writing the functions of a painter. Sister Mary of the Compassion's Notebook, then, is doubly welcome. Her emphasis on the value of tradition, and her plea for the importance of the intellectual side of the craft, mark her out as one who understands the language of painting.

She understands it, at any rate, in the dialect of 'medieval and

early Renaissance art'. Unfortunately, the merits of the Baroque school have escaped her; and the sanctions which she brings to bear upon this type of painting are, I think, beside the point. In fact, there is a confusion in the book between moral and metaphysical values. The demand that a picture should clearly show itself to have 'issued from a mind formed by the dogmas of Holy Church' is both misplaced and misleading. Who can detect such a formation in a Rubens landscape, a Chardin still-life? It would be a pleasure to delete the recurring terms 'Christian art', 'Catholic art', 'art that is truly Catholic'. For, properly speaking, Catholic painting does not exist, any more than Catholic history, Catholic singing, or Catholic carpentry. If Catholic artists understood this only half as well as Fra Angelico did, they would do the Church great service.

J. DOWLING.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Bell. H. Butterfield*: George III, Lord North and The People, 30s.
Black. K. L. Schmidt: The Church, 6s.; G. Quell and E. Stauffer: Love, 6s.
Blackfriars. Gerald Vann, O.P.: The Pain of Christ, 5s
John S. Burns and Sons. H. W. Henderson: The Truth about the Communist Confession Trials, 1s.
Jonathan Cape. Karl Brandt: The Emperor Charles V, 25s.
Cassell. Percy H. Muir: Book Collecting, 7s.6d.
Clonmore and Reynolds. Thomas Hurley, S.J.: Father Michael Browne, S.J., 12s.6d.
Notre Dame (Indiana) Medieval Studies. Guido Kitsch: Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum, n.p.
Toronto University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege). F. V. Winnett: The Mosaic Tradition, 28s.

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