

them excessively brief and not many concerned with books one feels a compulsive urge to read, let alone buy.

Despite its slightly incoherent sense of resentment about the State of Letters, *Aquarius* doesn't communicate much sense of having anything as formulated as a 'case'. No doubt the editor would consider that all to the good, preferring to publish work of quality from no matter what stable it emerges. But it seems to me that the proliferation of little magazines is

now such that any relatively new venture like this one needs to stake out a position, in the way that, say, Jon Silkin's *Stand* has done effectively for some years. This issue of *Aquarius* contains some first-rate literary material, juxtaposed with some pretty mediocre stuff; and that seems at once the gain and the loss of the eclecticism to which its editorial policy seems wedded.

TERRY EAGLETON

G.K. CHESTERTON: THE CRITICAL JUDGMENTS Part 1. Edited by D.J. Conlon. *Antwerp Studies in English Literature*, (Rodestrast 12, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium) 1976. £9.00.

A man who probably can't spell 'exhilarated' (p 290, *three* times) and who thinks (p 510) Etienne Gilson is a Benedictine monk has composed a great thick book by copying down all the reviews of the writings of G K Chesterton that appeared between 1900 and 1937. For this he is charging us £9 and we are threatened with another volume that will take us, rather surprisingly, from 1946 to 1974. Maybe not all the reviews are here, but far too many of them are. It will be a useful book, of course, for anyone writing a PhD thesis on Chesterton in the future—and after all let there be many such for he was a great and funny and original man and people should be told to read him. It is hard to see what use the book is to anyone else. There cannot be a whole lot of people who need to know that in 1908 the *Aberdeen Free Press* thought that *The Man Who Was Thursday* was a royally fantastic nightmare, or what *The Daily Telegraph* said about *Tremendous Trifles*. If anyone except one of these patient research students does read the book he will

be reduced to sputtering rage as I was by the fact that quotations from Chesterton within reviews are frequently simply omitted and replaced by a reference—'(Quotes Stanzas I - VI)' for example. If we are going to be as mean and pawky as this, why copy out the review at all? Why not just give the reference to it? None of Professor Conlon's reviews come from obscure unobtainable journals and for the purposes of Chestertonian scholarship he would have done a much greater service if he had simply published as a little pamphlet, say, at 50p, (or as an article in a learned journal like *New Blackfriars*) a bibliography of the reviews. For everyone except scholars, as the man said, the book fills a much needed gap. Speaking, though, of this journal, one thing that does emerge from the book is the startling fact that *Blackfriars* in 1933 carried no review of Chesterton's excellent study *St Thomas Aquinas* ('without comparison the best book ever written on St Thomas'—Gilson). Let us hope that if *St Thomas Aquinas* is reissued, as it should be, the defect will be supplied.

NICHOLAS HATCHJAW-BASSETT