

'a serious work of natural history'. The delightful section on the swallow with its passing remark on the migratory habits of the bird, so many centuries before accurate observation, is there among many passages to bear him out. Yet it may be questioned whether even here the right note is struck. Mr White has perhaps never aspired to wear his medieval garments as one to the manner born. He is rather, in the older sense of the word, 'curious', and sees his twelfth century through the eyes of those later antiquarians who so often figure in his pages. His alert and critical faculty, which always insists on the objective, cannot quite permit him to enter a complete world the separate elements of which so fascinate him. Hence it is that he achieves less an attitude of genuine detachment than of a certain benign aloofness. We cannot altogether quieten a sneaking suspicion that there are moments when he is chucking his author under the chin. Certainly some such underlying division of sympathies makes itself felt. This is perhaps because the commentary does not find a way of coming to terms with what in the text is as conspicuous as the natural lore, namely the sense that the beasts are somehow symbols of moral forces, patterns, one might almost say, of the behaviour of spontaneous feeling. And here Mr White overlooked another seventeenth-century writer who is a true descendant from the authors of bestiaries as any careful naturalist. We meet the remora (p. 208) again in St Francis of Sales; he knows that the elephant only has one calf (p. 25) and makes it the basis of one of the most memorable examples in the *Treatise on the Love of God*. More recently, too, since dreams have come to be charted, the beasts have appeared again, for nothing makes them feel so much like breaking out as being exclusively confined to the hygienic conditions of a zoo. However, these reflections need spoil no one's pleasure at learning with Mr White's assistance just which bird to buy in order to discover if he is likely to rise again after a nasty attack of the 'flu.

AELRED SQUIRE, O.P.

CHINESE THOUGHT FROM CONFUCIUS TO MAO TSE-TUNG. By H. G. Creel. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 21s.)

It would be difficult to find a better introduction to Chinese thought than the present volume. Professor Creel made his name with his work on *Confucius: The Man and the Myth*, in which he succeeded in disentangling the true character of Confucius from the mass of tradition which has grown up round his name, and he can be relied on for exact scholarship. In the present work he has undertaken the very difficult task of giving a history of Chinese thought, based throughout on original sources and yet intended for the general reader. The effort of compression and the desire to be just to every school of thought has

resulted in a certain lack of liveliness, but one could not ask for a more balanced survey. Professor Creel himself is firmly positivist and rationalist in his outlook, which makes him naturally much more in sympathy with Confucius than with the mystical doctrine of Taoism and Buddhism, and his interpretation of Taoist doctrine sometimes leaves a good deal to be desired. But he is particularly good in showing how the principles of authoritarianism and totalitarianism are present in Chinese thought from a very early date. In this way the Marxist doctrine of Mao Tse-tung is seen to have some affinity with early Chinese thought. The Chinese have always been strongly practical and political in their outlook, but they have tended to veer between a profoundly mystical and a cruelly realist philosophy. At present they are going through a phase of materialism, but one may hope that their native genius will reassert itself and recover those elements of deep piety and mysticism which underlie their finest thought.

BEDE GRIFFITHS, O.S.B.

CHRIST AND THE SAILOR. By Peter F. Anson. (Burns Oates; 13s. 6d.)

This new book of Mr Anson's about the sea is written to serve as an introduction to an earlier book, *The Church and the Sailor*. There he gave 'a rough sketch of how Christ has been revealed to seafarers in the past nineteen hundred years'. But since 'the three years of the active ministry of Christ were bound up with fishermen, fishing and fishing boats', much of the revelation of Christ remains mysterious without some understanding of this setting. And this is what the author sets out to give. Mr Anson is not, and does not pretend to be, a biblical scholar. But assisted by his thorough acquaintance with the things of the sea, he is able to bring to light many aspects of the Gospels and the Acts hitherto hurriedly passed by. The 'last call of the fishermen-apostles' described in Luke 5: 1-11 is worth noting in this regard. The author accepts the opinion of those exegetes who regard this incident as distinct from that recorded by the other Synoptics, and does not attempt to justify his view. He is concerned rather to explain the incident in itself, succeeding in giving a penetrating analysis. Again, the many 'journeys' on which he takes the reader (such as to the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, and the missionary journeys of St Paul) often make a passage come to life. Many 'landlubbers' may be inclined to feel, however, that the importance of the sea, and those who make their living from it, is rather overrated in the book. Although Mr Anson seldom allows his enthusiasm to carry him so far as to misinterpret any of the 'maritime incidents' he deals with, one rather suspects that the fisher-community has outgrown its due proportions. The excellent photographs of the sea, boats, fishermen and tackle make a pleasant accompaniment to the book.

V.G.