

BOOK REVIEWS

HISTORY OF THE POPES. By Ludwig von Pastor. Edited by R. F. Kerr. Vol. XVIII. (London: Kegan Paul, 1929; 15/- net.)

The latest volume of Pastor is, like its predecessor, devoted to the Pontificate of St. Pius the Fifth. It is packed with fact and incident, for that great Pope crowded into his brief reign of six years the work and the energy of at least a full century. The sections devoted to Philip II of Spain, to France and its religious wars, to the Empire and Switzerland, and to the foreign missions make good reading and exhibit the Pope in a more attractive light than when dealing with the Inquisition or occupied with the temporal affairs of his own States. But the main interest of the work centres in the crusade against the Turks, culminating in the great naval battle at Lepanto, which is admirably described; and in the Pontiff's Bull of Excommunication and Deposition of Queen Elizabeth, with its sad aftermath for the poor hunted Catholics of England. As to this last, the historian clearly shows with what hesitation the Pontiff made use of a purely mediaeval weapon in an age which even he recognised as one of obvious transition; and claims that he only proceeded to extremities because he was led to believe that the great body of English Catholics desired him so to act. His one wish was to encourage, rescue and help them; it was not his fault that most of his English advisers were Italianised exiles, for years past out of touch with English feeling, and ignorant of the attitude of loyalty to Elizabeth many of their co-religionists at home had now adopted. Perhaps under the circumstances the Pope could not have done otherwise than he did, certainly he had the best and purest intentions. That he was unwittingly inaugurating for his beloved English children a new and long era of fresh tyranny and terrible religious persecution was mercifully hidden from him.

R. B.

THE LIFE OF MARGARET AYLWARD, Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Faith. By Margaret Gibbons. (Sands & Co.; 16/- net.)

The publishers' advertisement states that the story of Margaret Aylward 'sums up in some sort the history of Catholic Emancipation.' As such it is certainly one of the biographies which should have been given to the public in this centenary year, but it is a pity a more discriminating writer has not been

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chosen to do justice to an heroic woman and her undoubtedly great work. However, Miss Gibbons must be thanked for the trouble she has taken in collecting valuable statistics and documents for the compilation of this volume: they will be of the greatest worth when the true biography of Margaret Aylward comes to be written.

W.F.

BLESSED BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS. By the Abbé J. Blazy. Translated by the Right Rev. Mgr. Charles Payne, Vicar-General of Nottingham. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, Ltd.; pp. 148; 1/6 net.)

The publishers are to be commended for producing a cheap edition of Mgr. Payne's translation of the life of Blessed Bernadette Soubirous by the Abbé Blazy. This work is one of the most charming of the many books dealing with the Beata. Written rather in a spirit of love of the saint than from a desire to edify, it edifies the more effectively; and it is refreshingly free from that 'busy-body' attitude which has marred a more pretentious work. For example, the Abbé does not hesitate to take his stand for François Soubirous' innocence in the matter of the accusation of theft—an expression of confidence for which the Beata herself must have been grateful. Mgr. Payne's translation is beautifully done. It reads like an original life, and has unusual grace of style. The illustrations, in default of better, might have been omitted.

A.M.H.

THE OLD TESTAMENT CALLING! By Lady Lindsey Smith. (Sheed and Ward; pp. 203; 5/- net.)

How the title repels one! Visions of 2L.O.! Read the book and you feel the title was the only adequate one. This is not a book for the reviewer, but for the reader to browse in. No one could review it, any more than you could review *Pickwick*. What is it all about? Hard to say. Perhaps 'The Old Testament and my soul' would express it. But there is nothing mawkish in it, no appeal to emotions, no pictures of the Patriarchs with halos, no belabouring of the obvious. No, you just seem to walk through the Old Testament hand in hand, now with Moses, then with David, then with Tobias—even with that hoary-headed but surely repentant sinner, Achab—and you learn. 'What do you learn? Read and you will discover for yourself. For to everyone the message will be different. 'It matters infinitesimally little *who* tells the story—it is *what the story tells.*'

H.P.