

## REVIEWS

within the grasp of any public an English publisher would care to cater for.

Now this is a pity, for the appeal is really much wider: to anyone who can delight in suggestions that illuminate without always convincing, whose heart is not set at rest by slick intellectual syntheses, anyone who has found this life not entirely satisfactory, who is not hardened with the veneer of self-sufficiency. Yet at first sight the book might seem to be written only for those with some background of technical philosophizing. To illustrate the impossibility of attempting any detailed summary, it may suffice to say that he uses his conception of Existence as the sobering thought that must hold man back from blasphemous and diabolical idealisms, and give him the right attitude towards God: but that this existence is a dark nothingness, a *doppelt Nichtshafte*, twice nothing sticking out from a past just gone but gone, waiting in suspense for a future that is only perhaps to come.

The Germans, he maintains, have always been conscious of this darkness, the soil on which our feet are set; they have soared, but only to crash against the bars of the cage; they have striven for the universality implied in the concrete nothingness ever present to them, for an ideal which is not the sterile abstract universal of Latin *Zivilisation* but the all-comprehensive whole towards which, consciously or unconsciously, vigorous *Kultur* must tend. He points to the Church as corresponding to the all-comprehensive *Reich* of German striving, and to the Kenosis as the explanation of this fleeting existence, God descending to our nothingness that we may be filled with the fulness of Christ.

QUENTIN JOHNSTON, O.P.

PETER AND VERONICA GROWING UP. By Margaret Beech. (Herbert Jenkins; 2/6.)

"Margaret Beech" is the pen name of one who deserves well of children and of their parents for her successful essays in attractive education. But she has never before, perhaps, attempted anything quite so difficult as her present task of discussing, in quasi-story form, the psychological problems of life from the point of view of the adolescent. Her courageous effort, nevertheless, proves remarkably successful. The many parents and others who made the acquaintance of *Peter and Veronica* in their earlier days, will be well advised to renew that acquaintance now that these two delightful and typical children have reached the age of (usually) unasked questions about life and its meaning. A knowledgeable and understanding uncle provides a natural approach to these questions and his answers provide both delightful and thoughtful reading. The material is very cleverly interwoven

## BLACKFRIARS

with the account of a holiday visit of Dr. Burne to the nephew and niece whom he had not seen for six years, when they were nine and eight respectively. The added years have brought them to the threshold of youth, and he finds them keenly interested in their latest hobby, a recently acquired microscope. A slide of the lower mandible of an ant leads to a most fascinating description of ant life. Children and grown-ups alike will revel in this. But besides being a joy in itself it has a very definite purpose; it leads naturally to a fine exposition of the significance of instinct and its relation to and difference from reason. Particularly illuminating is the introduction of a third notion. "Between the blind instinct of the worm and the reasoned conduct of man, there is a third kind of conduct called *intelligent behaviour*." The difference between the latter and reason is excellently explained by the difference between a *perception* and a *concept*. It is rightly pointed out that we find "intelligent behaviour" much more often than "reason" in many people who are called "intelligent." The terms may not be used in the Scholastic sense, but their meaning is quite clear in the context. From this point, the passage through animal to human psychology is easily made, still appearing as the natural outcome of the homely events of the story. In the discussion of the human soul, speculative and experimental psychology are effectively united. It may seem to some that the going is a little hard here; that is true, but it is difficult to see how it could have been made less so. The succeeding chapter on *Man and Woman* is a particularly valuable one and may perhaps be regarded as the purpose of the whole book, as the publishers seem to suggest in their blurb; in that case we should combine with it the succeeding one, in which *Noggs raises some problems* pertinent to the adolescent boy. Both these chapters are excellently done; frankness, delicacy and sound ethics combine to make them the best of their kind we have seen. Whether such topics should, absolutely speaking, be discussed in print is debatable; but if the existence of much unpleasant literature on the same subject seems to call for judicious intervention by sane Catholic writers (as many will think), then this book offers splendid service to a splendid cause.

HILARY J. CARPENTER, O.P.

SCIENCE AND THE SUPERNATURAL. A correspondence between Arnold Lunn and Professor J. B. S. Haldane (Eyre & Spottiswoode; 10/6.)

Controversy by correspondence has its own defects; a certain repetition is inevitable, evasion is easy, and too often the disputants pursue each other stubbornly round and round the familiar mulberry bushes of debate. Yet it has great advantages: it leads