

ing Greek authors—save in the case of Holy Scripture where the very order of the words is a sacrament (*mysterium*), I do not translate word for word, but sense of sense' (*Ep.* lvii, 5, cf. his words on *Ezech.* i 13, v 12, and on *Mich.* i 16). A translator, he reminds Rufinus, ii 25, is not inspired, 'for he is not a prophet'. Verse after verse in the Vulgate New Testament contains precisely the same number of words as in the Greek.

Would it be an impertinence to say that every would-be literary man should at least peruse this really remarkable volume?

HUGH POPE, O.P., D.S.S.

**BENEDICTINES OF TODAY.** By Dom Romanus Rios, O.S.B., Monk of St Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate. (Stanbrook Abbey Press; n.p.)

Very few people know much about the history of the Benedictine order in modern times. We know that it is an order with a venerable past and that it came to an abrupt end in this country at the Reformation, and that in spite of this it is still flourishing, but the history of the intervening period is, it may be guessed, for most people almost a blank. Dom Romanus Rios helps us to fill in this gap. He shows how the French Revolution and its aftermath brought disaster to the order on the continent almost as great as that of the Reformation in England. From about one thousand monasteries in Europe in 1780, the number had dwindled to fifty in 1880, and of all the once famous Congregations only five, including the English, survived to the present time. But the last century has witnessed a no less remarkable revival. Beginning with the restoration of the French Congregation by Dom Guéranger in 1830, the movement spread to Germany with the foundation of the Beuronese congregation and from there to Belgium. In Italy the Old Cassinese congregation was reformed in 1857 and spread not only over Europe but to America and Australia, and now the order has spread over the whole world and numbers, including all houses following the Benedictine Rule, over a thousand.

Such is the achievement of the past century in mere numbers. Dom Romanus then goes on to show something of the character of the men who have built up the order in modern times. They include a Pope (Pius VII), a Cardinal (Dusmet), several bishops, some heroic men and saintly women, and a notable number of martyrs, including the martyrs of the Spanish Civil War of 1936-7, among whom the whole of Dom Romanus's own community of El Pueyo finds a place. One cannot but admire the record and achievement of these men, and the diversity of character and the variety of the work achieved by them show the breadth of the Benedictine spirit. But yet one must admit that it does not make very inspiring reading, and, in spite of the fact that Dom Romanus is careful to show how all these different characters were formed

by the Rule, one does not feel that it gives anything like a true picture of the Benedictine spirit. The chief reason for this, we think, is that the concentration on the lives of individual monks and nuns tends to make one lose sight of the greatness of the whole movement. We get instances of individual piety and holiness but little sense of the corporate whole. This is a particular weakness in dealing with the Benedictine order, because it is of the very essence of the Benedictine spirit that the individual monk is a member of a body and belongs to a whole which is greater than himself. It is for this reason that the liturgy is the typical prayer of the monk because it marks the subordination of the prayer of the individual to the prayer of the Church, which is the prayer of Christ himself. In the same way the holiness which is typical of a monk is surely that which comes from his incorporation in Christ. It is the lack of this distinctive character in so many of the lives which Dom Romanus studies which makes one feel that it is not truly representative of the Benedictine life. As a result, though his book tells us much about certain individual Benedictine monks and nuns, we do not feel that it gives any adequate idea of the spirit and meaning of the Benedictine life today. ·

D. B. G.

*HIS WILL IS OUR PEACE.* By Gerald Vann, O.P. (Sheed and Ward; 3s.)

The advertisements in our newspapers and magazines have been urging us, as the year comes to its end, to prepare for the second Christmas of peace time. The very phrase that is used reflects the attitude of so many. After the horrors of a long war we are now at peace. Everything now takes place in a 'peace-time' mood. Our young people have left the Services or the factories to return to their 'peace-time' work, their 'peace-time' way of life. 'Post-war' and 'peace-time', they have the same meaning. That is the tragedy. The day of peace is but a negation, it is not war: it is the cessation of the noise of war, the silence that comes when the guns have ceased fire. It is the time for doing what we have not had time to do for so long when our liberties were restricted, when we were at the beck and call of those who were leading us in the common cause. Restrictions are going; we are now free, free to do what we like when we like and how we like. And yet man is not happy. This day of peace has become for him a day of disillusionment. Somehow it has not come out in the way he had planned. He fought a war for peace; now he has no war, but he also has no peace. Wherever he looks he sees misery and trouble or the threat of trouble; everywhere there is distress, hunger, suffering. It is understandable that even good people should be disturbed and disappointed. The fruits of victory have not been peace. But then peace is not the fruit of war. It is something which is real and positive and lying deep in the heart of man, not in the material world about him. Is it possible, then, to