

human limitations (of limitations, that is, which do not altogether overwhelm, for then tragedy is near).

This may seem a solemn account of a book that is meant for laughter. But there is scarcely a page of it that does not suggest the question 'Why is this comic?'; and the only common denominator for the whole is just that quality of a man caught out. Mr. Roberts's selection has, naturally enough, a literary bias where this quality will be more obvious. Thus there is much excellent parody, such as *Chard Whitlow* in the manner of the later Eliot ('As we get older we do not get any younger') or Ezra Pound's *Winter is icumen in*; there are Occasional Lapses, such as Alfred Austin's

'Winter is gone, and spring is over,
The cuckoo-flowers grow mauver and mauver,'

and there are donnish exercises in Latin-English and similar products of (one supposes) academic boredom.

I hate scarce smiles; I love laughing,' said Blake, and much of the wittier material in the anthology belongs to the no-man's land of occasional verse, with its delayed-action of effect, where 'scarce smiles' are all that will be expected. But there is much more that is just funny, humanly funny, from *Bring us in good ale* to William Plomer's *Headline History*, and the conclusion must be that if good comic verse is indeed a criticism of life, then the English are blessed in their laughter.

I.E.

THE BOOK OF MENCIOUS (abridged). Translated from the Chinese by Lionel Giles. (Murray; 3s. 6d.)

The best of the Chinese sages is that they can really be depended on to be sage, and these hundred pages from Mencius abound in aphorisms of the authentic kind.

'When a kingdom of ten thousand chariots smites another of equal size and the inhabitants welcome your army with food and refreshment, it can only be because they are anxious to escape from the fire and flood of their own government.'

'The men of to-day cultivate the nobility of Heaven only with an eye to the nobility of man, and when that has been won they cast away the other.'

Yao and Shun were naturally good. T'ang and Wu assimilated goodness. The Five Dictators put on a semblance of goodness; and after they had worn it long enough, who should know that it was not their own?'

'To feed a person without loving him is to treat him like a pig. To love without respecting him is to treat him like a domestic pet. Honour and respect come before the presentation of gifts.'

Rival states cannot wage punitive wars against each other.'

'A sad failing in man is that he neglects his own field to we his neighbour's; that his demands on others are heavy while burden he lays on himself is light.'

How admirable it all is, and how serviceable a piece of work D Giles has done!

WALTER SHEWRING.

IN SOFT GARMENTS. By Mgr. Ronald Knox. (Burns Oates; 6s.)

These twenty-four conferences will be no news to the many who heard them at the Old Palace. They can read them now, however with more mental comfort than they settled down to hear them. For then was there not always the chance, not a long chance either that the Chaplain would be treating of uncomfortably immediate domestic matters, the relation of your income to expenditure, or the use of time at the University? But this selection is largely free from such embarrassments (perhaps another set of conferences could be usefully circulated in private). It is a fine refresher course in the fundamentals of the Faith.

I.T.

THE ROSARY IN DAILY LIFE. By the Rev. Bruno Walkley, O.P. (Burns Oates; 2s. 6d.)

The great Dominican devotion of the Holy Rosary has an immense attraction, which is almost instinctive, for every type of intelligence. Many, however, who use it require some help to their meditations when using their Rosaries. This help Fr. Bruno Walkley has most admirably supplied in a small book on the mysteries of the Rosary, taking each of them in turn and giving first an exposition of the whole scriptural background of the mystery, and then, in another section, showing its application to the conditions of our daily spiritual life. They are profoundly practical meditations, without losing sight of the fact that it is a *mystery* that each one deals with, and the readers of this book will have cause to be grateful to Fr. Walkley for his devotion to the Rosary which has given him such an insight into the great events of the cycle of our Redemption and into the souls of to-day who seek for knowledge of it.

P.U.F.