

air. His own writing occupies a prominent and distinguished place in the literature of the new age of flight, and has communicated to people living in the lonely agglomerations of large cities a sense of the possibilities both of solitude and community in the older and more religious meaning of those terms.

The authors of this biography have let the story move at the exhilarating pace which Saint-Exupéry himself set, and with great tact have avoided a chapter either on the significance of Saint-Exupéry or his philosophy. They manage to make what comment seems called for briefly and pertinently as the narrative proceeds. Saint-Exupéry kept to the last that gift of insight which is characteristic of sensitive and intelligent children, but his inability to carry it over into a genuine spiritual maturity was clearly imposing its strain during his last years when, for purely physical reasons, the escape of astounding feats was gradually denied him, and he was forced to live more with himself and with his fellow men, not just at their best, but also at their worst. He had idealized those moments of communion between men in common hardship or difficulty which come like a purification to the spirit and, with T. E. Lawrence whom he so frequently recalls, had declared that he had chosen his barrack-room existence as the nearest modern alternative to entering a monastery. Yet he could write too: 'A camp. Three to a room (this gregarious life is the heaviest sacrifice in the world for me).' The element of egotism in *The Little Prince* (for it was undoubtedly a self-portrait) could never quite be persuaded to yield to the concrete situation. 'All his writings are shot through with a spirit of worship and veneration particularly for man and the divinity within him; on the other hand they turn a blind eye to the problem of evil and the doctrine of the Fall. It may be that he could never accept original sin. . . .' This is the crucial observation. Christianity would scarcely have altered the condition of sacrifice in his human relations but would have given it a point of which Saint-Exupéry was well aware, but could never quite find. As the authors of this book suggest, this failure to find the point gave both to his life and to his last writing 'a sense of pathos rather than tragedy, of discomfort and anti-climax rather than heroism'. Yet let it not be thought that this is a patronizing study. It is simply that it combines a warm and complete sympathy with level-headed disinterestedness of a kind whose rarity explains why a true friend is said to be one in a thousand.

ÆLRED SQUIRE, O.P.

WHAT LAW AND LETTER KILL. *The Spiritual Teaching of Fr Francis Devas, s.j.* Edited by Fr Philip Caraman, s.j. (Burns Oates; 10s. 6d.)  
It must be a matter for gratitude that in our time the Society of

Jesus has given to English Catholic life priests of such immense sympathy and discernment as Fr Robert Steuart and Fr Francis Devas. We must be equally grateful that their memory has been perpetuated by the editing of their spiritual conferences; those of Fr Steuart in Fr Martindale's *Two Voices*, and now those of Fr Devas in Fr Caraman's admirably arranged book. Fr Devas was well-known for his editing of Fr Considine's *Words of Encouragement*, and this could well be the title of his own spiritual teaching, for he had an extraordinary awareness of the real problems of men and women. He was never content with the formal reiteration of 'spirituality': rather did he penetrate to the individual's need, and with shrewdness and absolute confidence show how exactly that need could only be ultimately met by the love of God. One feels with Fr Devas that he understands in advance: he is never surprised, for he has long ago learned how infinitely various is the human situation—and no part of it without its providential meaning.

Fr Caraman has prefaced his selections with a too brief memoir of Fr Devas, but it tells us enough to illuminate his teaching. Plainly the doctrine was the man, and every page reflects his generosity of mind, his humour and his single confidence in God's mercy. His wisdom should be of special help to those who feel themselves to be outside the ordinary fidelities of Catholic life. 'If God never despairs, we must never despair of even the worst sinners. They are not finished, and done with until our Lord's patience is exhausted, and, though that patience *does* come to an end, it is inexhaustible as long as they live.' Again, 'Our Lord does not in the least shrink from helping poor people and sinners at the expense of the good'. But there is scarcely a sentence that is not quotable for its charitable wisdom. It is a book that can be recommended without reserve, and not least for its elegant appearance: its very looks declare that the spiritual life is not meant to be depressing.

I.E.

THE HAND PRESS. By H. D. C. Pepler. (Ditchling Press; 9s. 6d.)

There could be no better memorial to Hilary Pepler than the reprinting of his book on the Hand Press, originally itself set and printed by hand at St Dominic's Press. The new edition is enriched by a frontispiece of Sir Frank Brangwyn's portrait of Hilary Pepler and it includes facsimile reproductions of the original illustrations (including such joys as David Jones' engraving of 'The Printer's Devil at work' and Desmond Chute's engraving of St Dominic). The essay was first written for the Chicago Society of Typographic Arts in 1934, and, quite apart from its interest as an apologia for a craft which St Dominic's Press did so much to adorn, it is a delightful piece of incidental autobiography. Perhaps some of the hopes of the earlier Ditchling days