

REVIEWS

complicated process of our national apostasy must read this notable and fascinating book.

F.T.

THE LAST STRUGGLE WITH THE MAFIA. By Cesare Mori, translated by Orlo Williams. (Putnam; pp. 240; 10/6.)

This book is a serious study of the social history of Sicily in the last decade. It is perfectly authoritative, reasonably informative and the translation reads well. It is only praise to the discretion of Senatore Mori, the distinguished and insistently virile Prefect of Palermo, to say that this able and accurate presentation raises more questions than it solves. The curbing and suppression of the notorious organisation of the Mafia is described with the lucidity of an able state paper, lightened by such confidential asides to the reader as would come well from a politician of standing, still in office. A firm impression is conveyed at every chapter that, although the Senatore is in retirement, his party leader is transcendentally in power. Compare with this book a delightful volume recently published by King Alfonso's last Chief of Police. 'The night is dark and smells of cheese': an aphorism such as this comes pleasantly from the lips of a very permanently retired official, but Senatore Mori can permit himself no such liberties. The sun of Fascism admits no darkness.

Two subjects are so persistently not brought into play that their presence comes in time to overshadow the well-poised narration. What became of the *latitanti* after they had passed into the keeping of the new regime? Could anything have been done to mitigate the evils of absentee landlordism? The Senatore patiently explains that the landowners had to employ overseers known as *campieri* to guard their great estates. It was inevitable, according to the author, that each *campiere* who acted efficiently should be a *mafioso*. Does not the circle seem a trifle vicious? On the other hand it must be said that the Sicilian characteristic of *omertà* is described in a masterly fashion, with tact yet without undue reserve. The inevitable difficulties of translation make some of the personal detail read strangely. Thus the stories which hinge on the fear that the author's reputation inspired, a fear indicated by the expressive phrase, *Iddu è*, suggest a convention of personal modesty in narrative which accords better with an Italian than an English setting. This setting with the constant use of the term 'Prefect' Mori is at times almost transatlantic. The photographs add keenly to the pleasure of the book, but among their captions *Piana dei Greci's* is a surprise, while the frequent references to *Roccapalumba* suggest a more cool and sophisticated study.

BLACKFRIARS

The attitude to religion expressed throughout the volume is definitely post-Lateran. The idea of God is spoken of with respect and organised Catholicism with benevolence.

D.M.

A HISTORY OF EUROPE. By Bede Jarrett, O.P. (Sheed & Ward; pp. 549; 5/-)

HOW THE REFORMATION HAPPENED. By Hilaire Belloc. (Cape; pp. 293; 4/6.)

Fr. Jarrett's history of Europe was characterised by concise prose, an objective standpoint and a talent for selection. It remains among the best anthologies of historic fact. The assurance with which Mr. Belloc judges human motive has made his analysis of the Reformation the most provocative of his lesser studies; but the European perspective of his surveys gives his work a permanent value. Fortunately it was inevitable that both books should be reprinted.—(G.M.)

RECENT ART EXHIBITIONS

AS during April I have been unable to visit any modern exhibitions, I propose to discuss generally two important loan exhibitions, both of which closed last month—the Elizabethan Exhibition, held in Grosvenor Place, and the Three French Reigns Exhibition organised by Sir Philip Sassoon. Now that the former is over, there can be no harm in saying that it was not really very good of its kind. The majority of the exhibits had little interest over and above their historical associations, and impressed on one for the most part the peculiar contrast between the refinement of the English literary renaissance and the vulgarity of its decorative counterpart, while the paintings, imitative all of them and good only when approximating most closely to their Holbein-Clouet-Moro prototypes, showed that in its failure to inspire a distinctively national school Holbein's influence was as sterile as Van Dyck's. Frescoes apart, there is no English painting before Hogarth and artistically therefore little is to be gained by localising an English historical period in this way. The exhibition had no such *raison d'être* as Sir Philip Sassoon's, which formed an essential complement to the French Exhibition held in 1931 at Burlington House.

'Sans naïveté,' writes Diderot in the *Penseés Detachées sur les Arts*, 'pas de vraie beauté,' and explaining what he means, he goes on to say: 'Pour dire ce que je sais, il faut que je fasse un mot ou du moins que j'étende l'acception d'un mot déjà fait, c'est naïf. Outre la simplicité qu'il exprimait, il faut y joindre l'innocence, la vérité et l'originalité d'une enfance