

and exacting, but finally he emerged as God's troubadour, the 'Minnesinger'. Extracts from his works, clearly set forth in different type, are given in Latin and English, and amply repay study. Perhaps they will tempt someone to re-edit (a work overdue) his classical volumes on *Eternal Wisdom*. In setting forth the years of apostolic preaching, when he played no small part in rightly orientating the movement of mysticism that developed in the Rhineland during the 14th century, we are helped to appreciate Bl. Henry's contribution by a number of short historical sketches. In her contribution to this series of Dominican saints, S. M. C. gives us a thoughtful and prayerful study of a Dominican who has long been neglected.

TERENCE NETHERWAY, O.P.

HUGH EDMUND FORD (First Abbot of Downside). By Dom Bruno Hicks (Fifth Abbot of Downside). (Sands; 7s. 6d.)

This little book on Abbot Ford by one who knew him well and was later one of his successors is a welcome tribute to a remarkable man. Hugh Edmund Ford was in the school at Downside and was clothed for that House in the Common Noviciate at Belmont in 1868. From the outset his career was out of the ordinary. The régime at Belmont was Spartan and it soon became clear that his health would not stand it, and indeed that he would never be equal to the full monastic observance. It showed remarkable foresight in his superiors that he was nevertheless allowed to make his Profession on January 25th, 1870. Already by 1871 his health was such that he was recalled to Downside. He continued his studies there and also worked in the school, and was allowed to make his Solemn Profession in 1873 in spite of still indifferent health. A long sea voyage was recommended by the doctors, and in October 1873 he set off for Australia with Archbishop Vaughan, the new Coadjutor of Sydney. In a largely open-air life lived for the most part under pioneer conditions he never lost his ideals of the monastic life, and in 1876 he returned to Downside with much improved health. Two years later, already a priest, the new Prior, Dom Aidan Gasquet, afterwards Cardinal, appointed him Prefect of Studies, a post which in the organisation of the catholic schools of those days carried with it most of the responsibilities of Headmaster. He at once reorganised the studies, introducing lay-masters to help with the teaching, with markedly successful results.

It was about this time, 1880, that a controversy began over the constitution of the English Benedictine Congregation which was to last twenty years and in which Father Edmund Ford played a leading part. Looking back from this distance it is easy to see that the Congregation had to develop along the lines which it eventually took, but in order to understand the opposition which was aroused it is necessary to realise the historical development which had led to the existing state of affairs. During the 17th and 18th centuries the

monasteries were in France and the principal work of the Congregation was on the English Mission. In the circumstances it was impossible for the Priors in France to control the missions, and when a man left his monastery to go on the mission it was no doubt necessary for him to come under the President who ruled the missions with two Provincials. But in fact the President with General Chapter meeting every four years virtually ruled the monasteries as well, for, except in the event of death or resignation, all superiors were elected at the Chapter, and the President had the power to move a monk from the monastery to the mission at will, and moreover could transfer a monk from one monastery to another. With the monasteries in England the reasons for this state of affairs had largely ceased to exist, and in the last years of the 19th century a strong feeling grew up among some of the younger men at Downside that a return should be made to the more traditional Benedictine system of strictly autonomous houses electing their own superiors, who should have authority over their subjects whether they were in the monastery or on the mission. Of this movement Father Edmund Ford quickly became the leader.

In 1885 Prior Gasquet resigned his Priorship at Downside and in these circumstances the community elected a Prior to rule till the next General Chapter. They elected Father Edmund Ford, who held office until 1888. But in that year General Chapter refused to appoint him again and he went on the mission at Beccles in Suffolk. He did noteworthy work here in building up a parish from almost nothing. In 1894 under special legislation pending changes in the constitutions he was again elected Prior of Downside and remained in that position till 1900, when he was elected first Abbot of Downside. Ill health, which had pursued him all his life, compelled him to resign from the Abbacy in 1906, though for ten years after that he was Superior at Ealing.

Such were the main facts of Abbot Ford's career, and they are related clearly and succinctly in this book, the extremely delicate matter of the constitutional controversy being dealt with together in a single chapter. In this matter Abbot Ford, or Father Ford as he was then, was in the very difficult position of a religious leading opposition to his superiors. The real proof of his qualities as a man and a religious was in the way in which he did this. He never used other than constitutional means and he always accepted the decisions of his superiors with humility and obedience, but he never gave up the fight. In his old age to an intimate friend he gave away perhaps the secret of his success in carrying through the task he had undertaken. From his early monastic life he had cultivated the habit of seeing Christ in all men, and so it was that in the height of the controversy he could write to a friend that their differences of opinion never affected his dealings with his brethren outside the Chapter-room. Owing to his poor health he expressly stated that he did not want to be considered for the Abbacy and it is proof of what the

community thought of him that they elected him in spite of this.

The difficulty about all such controversies is that there are good men on both sides. Abbot Ford always recognised that those who were anxious to maintain the *status quo* were good priests working hard for souls, and it should be stated that when Rome eventually promulgated the new constitutions they accepted them loyally to a man. At the same time under the old system the Congregation was practically conceived as a body of parish clergy who were regulars and who received a special training in the monastery before going out on the mission, which is not the traditional view of the Benedictine life. The present work sets out the controversy with great fairness and moderation, but the pity is really that the book as a whole is not on a larger scale. The subject, especially in view of the period in which he lived and the part he played in events, was worthy of a full-length biography, though unfortunately much of the material that should have gone to it has not been preserved. A short life necessarily always becomes rather a catalogue of virtues and achievements which, however true to facts, tends to become a bit unconvincing after a time to a reader who never knew the man concerned. Similarly a more or less summary treatment in separate chapters at the end of writings, religious teaching, and characteristics, is much less satisfactory than allowing all these elements of the character to emerge gradually in a full-length treatment. However, within its limits the book is excellent, and it does appear to justify the description given of Abbot Ford by Bishop Burton in a public speech as 'the founder of modern Downside'.
F.G.S.

THE SONG OF THE CHURCH. By Marie Pierik. (Burns Oates; 21s.)

The arts of the classical but pagan ages presuppose the perfection of human nature. The arts of the Christians, proceeding from the minds of artists illumined by Faith, are the fruit of Faith and presuppose that human nature is not by any means perfect, but wounded. Even, therefore, in the Art of the Christian, will the mortification of the Cross be visible.

It is curious to notice that whenever Christians—as for example at the time of the Renaissance—have fixed their gaze excessively and courteously on the arts of the non-Christian world, they have lost the sense of the Cross, and with it the taste for specifically Christian arts.

One becomes amazingly conscious of this when reading the well-written chapter on Latin Hymnody in Marie Pierik's recent book, 'The Song of the Church'. One of the greatest of Christian arts is the Gregorian Chant. And this book on the Chant is well worth reading, and from the point of view of absorbing interest is probably one of the best popular books yet written in English. In it, however, there seem to be things which are somewhat puzzling.

Would it be possible perhaps that the author is saying that because the melody of the Chant has grown out of the Latin words (even out