

far in advance in this respect of her entourage and advisers that her initiatives were lost, disastrously, in the insensitive decades that followed her death. We have abundant evidence of the shock that death was to so many who

identified the Queen with the country but it was a measure of what her integrity had achieved that her land survived Victoria.

Paul Foster, O.P.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS, by Maisie Ward; *Sheed and Ward, 40s.*

Perhaps only an egotist, or one with a strong streak of egotism, can produce a perfect self-portrait: only Narcissus looking into the pool can find himself entrancing and reproduce his reflection with delight. Maisie Ward's autobiography, like G. K. Chesterton's, gives no very vivid picture of the central figure, except perhaps during childhood and youth in a leisured and intelligent Catholic family with leisured and intelligent Catholic cousins all over England. As she matured the first satisfaction in the mere process of living evaporated, leisure began to turn brown at the edges, and a feeling of aimlessness developed. This was ended by World War I, which brought to her, as to many young Englishwomen hitherto netted like peaches ripening against a sunny wall, the glorious necessity of action. Her pent-up energy was never again unused. She nursed the wounded. Presently she was speaking for the Catholic Evidence Guild (which began in Hyde Park and spread to Birmingham, Liverpool, Sydney, New York), working with teachers, charwomen, typists, nurses and scientists, and learning much both from them and from her audiences. The necessity to be absolutely clear and precise was emphasized by such curious comments as 'You'll never convince *me* that your Pope is God'.

In this work she met her husband. Their

marriage led to the foundation of Sheed and Ward, happy co-operation with such brilliant writers as Christopher Dawson, Ronald Knox, C. C. Martindale and E. I. Watkin, a voyage to extend the firm's activities to America, and friendship with Dorothy Day of the House of Hospitality. Family life with two children continued triumphantly through years of incessant work, farming on distributist principles, travelling, writing books in hotels and waiting-rooms, and lecturing here, there and everywhere, which she found stimulating rather than exhausting. There is an interesting chapter on the priest-worker tragedy – the rise of the movement in sacrificial hope and its disintegration in a sharp conflict of loyalties between the kingdom of God and the triumph of the proletariat. There is also, in complete contrast, a melancholy picture of Hilaire Belloc, chiefly in his old age, the fullness and fire of his middle years faded away. There was more to him than appears here: a spirit clear and true as his voice, an immediate goodness, a genius.

Unfinished Business, it will be plain leaves a sense of innumerable meetings and friendships, immense well-spent energy, ceaseless achievements still fermenting in the world.

Renée Haynes

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