

urgency the message of the gospel—penance and the following of her Son. Do penance; and say the Rosary, which is the simplest, most universal method of meditating on and living with the mysteries and enabling example of the Son she bore. She confirmed her appearance, and drove home the lesson of the reality of the supernatural by a solar prodigy witnessed by tens of thousands, of whom there are survivors to this day.

Fatima has become a centre of penitential prayer. Portugal has undergone an astonishing change, and is a country now of renescent supernatural values. Abroad our Lady of Fatima has begun to rally the forces of peace and Christian order. It is not without significance that her statue has been allowed, by popular acclaim, to cross the closed Franco-Spanish frontier. Perhaps, faced with so simple a solution to our problems, we are inclined to behave like Naaman the leper. Let us at least find out what, it is claimed, happened.

Mr O'Connell has given in most readable form an account of the thing. According to the blurb his is a novel, like Werfel's about St Bernadette. But it is really not quite that. Mr O'Connell's account is entirely factual; his only imaginative contribution is in reconstructing the characters, and in this he does not engage in any of Werfel's somewhat speculative psychological analysis; he sticks close to the external evidence—his only error being to over-estimate the mother Olimpia's belief in her children's visions (she did not really believe until 15 years later when she saw her daughter's body incorrupt). It is a pity some note is not attached to the book to this effect; its contents are so startling that the uninformed reader might be pardoned for supposing it was partly fantasy. Actually it is the best and most readable account that has yet appeared in English; and readers would be well advised not to be put off by slightly over-written passages that occur at the beginning and end of a book otherwise admirably done.

Sister Mary Joseph provides script and practical directions for a pageant play about the apparitions. It seems well done in its kind, and would be an admirable way of spreading knowledge of this vital intervention by our Lady in our affairs. Non-Catholics as well as Catholics could be reached in this way, by convent-school and parish productions.

COLUMBA RYAN, O.P.

PRIEST-WORKMAN IN GERMANY. By Henri PERRIN, translated by Rosemary Sheed (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

Of all the trials that France underwent under the German occupation, the forced mobilisation of hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen for work in German factories was perhaps the hardest to bear. But even that indignity had its providentially good aspect. One meets young priests in France today who will at once say that their years of slavery (for seminarians were conscripted in large numbers) brought them for the first time face to face with the essential prob-

lem of the Christian apostolate in a de-Christianised world. And Père Perrin's account of his year in Germany (of which seven months were spent in prison) is likely to remain a classic of that new, or rather that old-but-rediscovered, spirituality which is transforming the Catholic life of France. Henri Perrin, a young Jesuit, volunteered to go as an ordinary mechanic to Germany, for the Germans had refused to allow priests to go with their people into servitude. The work of such priest-workmen had to be clandestine, without any of the sanctions and supports of a normal ministry. And it was these very circumstances that made that ministry a marvel of grace. Thrown among a mass of workers, of whom the great majority were wholly indifferent to the impact of Christian faith, the priest *was* the Church, and he soon realised that his work lay quite simply in his charity, in his being Christ to his brethren. The Mass, the sacraments, the familiar features of Catholic life, even the name of God: all this was far away from the world of these unhappy men, the men of a post-Christian age. Nothing is more moving in Père Perrin's book than his account of the community that grew up in a prison cell—Frenchmen, Poles, Russians, Germans—gropingly turning to prayer, dimly seeing in the shared life of a common disaster the reflection of the mystical union of Christ and his members. 'We were Christ's, we were Christ, we were living close to one another in Christ, intensely united by Christ's own life.' A food parcel took on a sacramental meaning when shared for the love of the brethren.

*Priest-Workman in Germany* is a glowing vindication of the teaching of recent Popes, and of the practice of contemporary movements such as J.O.C., faced with the fundamental needs of the apostolate today. Certainly Père Perrin is no usual priest: the fire of his zeal for Christ burns most strongly when all seems lost. And the secret? It is a confident trust in the resources of the mystical Body, a loving regard for the dignity of the human person even at its most abandoned. Père Perrin hopes that the lessons he learned in the slavery of Germany may have their value in the post-war world. Fundamentally the problem remains the same: to bring Christ back to his brethren who, most often through no fault of their own, have lost him. In this book the Gospel lives again, and no other words of praise are necessary.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

TWELVE AND AFTER. By Rev. F. H. Drinkwater. (Samuel Walker: 5s.)

Now that the school-leaving age has been raised to fifteen, head teachers are faced with the task of planning a syllabus for these older children. The importance of the extra year from a religious point of view is tremendous, and teachers will want to know how best to use it. Let us say at once that they cannot do better than take *Twelve and After*, now at last reprinted, and make it the basis of this last year's instruction. Here they will find no barren apolo-