

faith from heights of theology which are crowned with untrodden snows. I shall not forget her 'Dog's Epitaph,' nor the sonnets where passion is not spoiled with small sensualities.  
T.O.S.F.

THE NEW CATHOLIC DICTIONARY. London: The Universal Knowledge Foundation, 1930, price two guineas.

This substantial volume of more than a thousand large, double-columned pages, yet well-bound and handy to use, is described in its sub-title as a 'complete work of reference on every subject in the life, belief, tradition, rites, symbolism, devotions, history, biography, laws, dioceses, missions, centers, institutions, organizations, statistics of the Church and her part in promoting science, art, education, social welfare, morals and civilization.' It will be granted that that is a comprehensive programme, and a mere reviewer might well be excused if he quailed before the task of examining the finished product.

The Dictionary has been produced under the auspices of the editors of the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* and 'is largely the work of the American clergy who have contributed most of the articles in it gratis.' Let us give all praise to such generosity, and yet not forget the chief contributor whose initials appear in every column: C.E. i.e. the *Catholic Encyclopædia*. Evidently, therefore, the work of other contributors has been mainly a work of condensation, and the book may be described, for far the greater part of its substance, as a digest of the larger work. There are new items and there is some modernisation of the old; but for the most part the Dictionary is the *Encyclopædia* reduced to about one-twentieth of its size.

After this preliminary description of the book we shall be expected to give some criticism of its quality. But we shall not be expected—in this case at any rate—to have read the whole of that which we criticize. The best we can do is to nibble here and there—like a mouse at a mountain—and to give the reader the benefit of our discoveries.

Well, the first thing we would report, after some examination, is that American interests have received predominant attention. We do not quarrel with that; indeed, we regard it as only natural, for there is an English-speaking Catholic public in America which far outnumbers ours; but it seems to us to have led to some neglect of English interests. Thus we have not found any treatment of Anglican Orders. To give an example of another kind, there are very many entries of which 'Mercyhurst College, Erie, Pa.' may serve as a type; but there is no

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mention, so far as we could discover, of the English Benedictine Douai School.

Moreover, in the space allotted to English Catholic items, it seems to us that due proportion has not always been observed. In the notice of Oxford, for instance, there are palpable errors of commission and omission. We may be permitted to note one of the omissions, the absence of any reference to the Dominican Priory. But the whole account seems to us topsy-turvy and calculated to mislead the uninitiated.

Another impression is this, that the articles on theological topics are so brief as to be of little use save for the most casual reference. The average length for such subjects as Indulgences, Infallibility, Predestination, Redemption, is half a column. The work is in fact rigidly concise and condensed, and granted the editors' determination to cover so vast a field in so small a compass, the articles could not be longer. But we believe that room might be found for development in the substantive articles by discarding unnecessary ones, of which we have noted many. The editors wish to include everything of Catholic interest; but we think they cast their net too wide when they include a list of English place-names of a Catholic character. So also the article on 'Penny' described as 'a coin mentioned in the New Testament.' It might be possible, by jettisoning such cargo, to make more room for really important matters.

We have been critical, but we think not censorious. We are far from any desire to depreciate the Dictionary. We hope in fact that it will go to many editions and in each become more satisfactory. We believe it to be eminently fitted to be a work of ready reference for the lay Catholic who does not want to go far into theological questions, and for the busy priest in search of quick information. That description may not tally with the claims made on the title-page, yet it indicates a very useful and valuable compilation. If the reader wishes to have by him a concise dictionary of ready-reference for Catholic subjects, let him buy this book.

J.M.

RETREAT: A STORY OF 1918. By Charles R. Benstead.  
(Methuen; 7/6).

This is a war story chiefly about a Church of England chaplain who is posted to an artillery unit and arrives in the war area just in time to be caught in the big retreat of March 1918, which has been described as the biggest massed onslaught in the history of the world. The present reviewer, who served as