

Blackfriars

incredibly crude attempts to popularise Catholic doctrine. They repel the educated and do nothing to aid the simple. F.B.

PLAYS FOR PUPPETS. PILATE, A PASSION PLAY. (St. Dominic's Press, Ditchling).

Here are two kinds of play neglected by the ordinary English writer, one untouched by him, the other lapsed and out of date. Both kinds are good and deserve more attention. First the courage of the author must be praised. He has succeeded in both in using the technique peculiar to the character of each.

The charm about puppets is that they can do things which ordinary human beings cannot do, and the humour of their antics arises largely from the feats and contortions they are able to perform—the Burglar and his accomplice in one of these jump from the ground to the roof of a house with complete ease; inanimate things come to life, brooms and pails dance round the room in another, all in the best style of the Italian Burattini. Is it being captious to ask for the removal of such affectations as 'Crockodile'?

Puppet plays are alive in certain countries, but Passion plays, with a notable exception, are dead. There have been attempts of late years to revive them. The only way to make them really live again, is to write new ones. This one, *Pilate*, has the right liturgical feeling, dignity, mixture of humour and religion. The only question is, do anachronisms, occurring unconsciously in the style of the mediaeval writers, succeed when consciously introduced now? Some few words jar; speaking of the Last Supper

Bidding them *Do this*
As He had done.

Claudia.

But this is *bliss*.
A pledge

And what does this sentence mean

'Craft jealousy is hard to hide.'?

Both books are well printed by hand. The first is adorned with some charming woodcuts. F.M.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF A DOMINICAN FRIAR. By F. William Perin. Edited by C. Kirchberger. (Sheed & Ward, 1929; 2/6 net.)

This is an abridged edition of a spiritual work which was well known to English Catholics of the seventeenth century. Among

the devout books which Dom Augustine Baker recommends to his disciples is 'Doctor Perin.' And when he was compiling his manuals of affective prayer he drew upon 'Dr. Perin's booke.' But, truth to tell, Father Baker might not have been entirely content with this edition, for the editor has seen fit to discard just those parts which Father Baker esteemed especially, *i.e.*, the direct prayers. And since these prayers are Dr. Perin's own, while the rest of the book is a translation, we must confess that we, too, are somewhat disappointed and have a feeling that the title has misled us. For the rest this edition is capably edited and very neatly produced.

LITURGISCHE VOLKSBÜCHLEIN: *Die heilige Taufe, Die heilige Firmung, Die Chormesse, etc.* (Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 1922-9. Prices from 30 pfennigs to one mark sixty.)

A series of liturgical manuals for the people edited by the monks of Maria Laach and in the interest of that liturgical apostolate to which their abbey is devoted. Some are German versions of the sacramental ritual with explanatory notes. Another gives the office of Compline in Latin and German. Another the Ordinary of the Mass. And so on. We were especially interested in the booklet entitled '*Die Chormesse*,' which gives careful instructions for what we might call the 'Community Mass.' We are not sure that its suggestions are really practical—outside of religious communities—but we welcome its effort to teach us that the Mass is essentially a community service. This series of manuals seems to us wholly admirable.

LITTLE PLAYS OF ST. BENEDICT. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1929; 5/- net.)

The night of this world encompasses us and its dreams are vain; but we may, if we wish, catch glimpses of an outer day. That is the spirit of this little book, which strives to give us such glimpses by means of an imaginative presentment of saintly monastic personages. The scenes are very brief, hardly more than tableaux. The language is very carefully chosen and the whole work suggests devout scholarship. Some readers may possibly find that the scenes are so far suffused with 'poetico-monastic' feeling as to be untrue to any reality that ever was in this drab world of ours. Others—and we among them—will welcome these graceful moments in an ideal past. It is a book for those who like to

look sunward, and with faces golden
Speak to each other softly of a hope.