

posturings of the past twenty years look like the shadow of some tiny diseased insect.

The first part of the book is concerned with an examination of the origins of the Italian people, and the growth of the true 'Italianità.' The second part examines the relations of Italy with her neighbours the French, Germans, Slavs, and English. Two concluding chapters deal with Fascism and the place of Italy in the New Europe. There is a useful appendix of books on Italian problems, to which Megaro's *Mussolini in the Making* might possibly have been added.

JOHN VERNON.

DANTE AND THE PRESENT WAR. By Lucy Redpath.

RELIGION AND LOVE IN DANTE. By Charles Williams. (Dacre Papers, Nos. 5 and 6; Dacre Press; 6d. each.)

Of these two pamphlets, that by Mr. Williams is certainly the better written and the more intrinsically valuable. It is also the harder one to review. One cannot overlook Miss Redpath's energy and enthusiasm; and, for all the flaws in her style and her attitude (as I understand it), one must admit with gratitude that she does send one back to the text of the 'Comedy.' But Mr. Williams reaches a deeper level and is correspondingly, tantalisingly, more elusive.

Miss Redpath has written a Tract for the Times, with 'The Comedy' for a text-book. She is concerned to point out likenesses between Dante's experience and our own, to find a common level, to ignore difficulties. And no doubt there is a likeness. All purgatorial sufferings are more or less similar, all sin is horrible and can suitably be pictured horribly. So the present war can, in a sense, appropriate the Dantesque representation of Purgatory and Inferno. But I find two objections to Miss Redpath's method. The first, and in this context the less important, is that her judgment of moral facts is naive and even rather crude. For example, it follows from what she says on p. 14 that she is sure that Dante would have put Franco in Hell along with Pope Celestine. Perhaps he would; but by what right does Miss Redpath see in all neutral rulers to-day the type of those whom Dante damned for making 'il gran rifiuto'? For, whatever Dante's allocation of Franco or de Valera might have been there is no doubt about Miss Redpath's. One would not mind her thinking simply that we were right and the Axis wrong. But the praise and blame she deals out are personal; and in clear blacks and whites according to the side taken by this or that person. The difference between action and motive, *finis operis* and *finis operantis* is thus obscured.

Again, she glorifies Dante at the expense of common-sense. Because he was a genius he was incapable of common faults. She actually says (am I right in supposing this typical of a certain class,

creed and nation?): 'One need hardly say that Dante can never have been guilty of anything approaching avarice himself.' Why on earth not?

My second objection is not so easy to state clearly, and it may seem rather fine-drawn. It concerns the kind of comparison that can properly be drawn between a work of art and a situation in real life. Dante condemned, says (in effect) Miss Redpath, what Churchill condemns; and he went through what we are going through; and from this experience and this indignation he drew his poem; so that it remains a vision and example for us. That is true in a sense, of course; but it is not the whole truth or the essential truth about Dante. For he was a great and unique poet, and to appreciate this fact, and therefore to give him his due, one must be able to read him, sometimes at least, with a mind detached from everything but that vision and sense of life that he conveys in these *particular* symbols—and in no others. But to read him thus, I should maintain, it is necessary to drop all thought of comparisons and applications. But to discuss this would take us too far. Anyhow suffice it to say that I doubt whether Miss Redpath has read Dante in this way; and, so doubting I do not think, for all her enthusiasm, that she really gives him his due.

Mr. Williams is magnificent. I wish I had space to comment on his profound and beautiful paper. It should be read widely and quoted and discussed, and not only by Dante scholars. The opening paragraphs I thought a little confused, but the last twenty pages are splendid, each a pearl of great price.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

ITALIAN FOREIGN POLICY. By Barbara Ward.

HOLLAND AND THE WAR. By G. N. Clark.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PAMPHLETS ON WORLD AFFAIRS, Nos. 48 and 49.
(4d. each.)

These two pamphlets, the one on an enemy, the other on an Allied nation, are useful additions to an excellent series. Miss Ward is concerned to show that the opportunism of modern Italian policy is no new thing, but has been a constant feature since the, still recent, foundation of a united Italy. Professor Clark, reviewing the main features of the now ancient polity of Holland, is most interesting when, in his concluding pages, he adumbrates those changes in Holland's future relations with England which the present war has shown to be inevitable.

P.U.F.

THE SOUL OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA. By the Very Rev. Arthur Stuart Duncan-Jones, D.D. (Herbert Barker; 6d.)

The Dean of Chichester has performed a valuable service by giving English readers a brief summary of the cultural and religious