

Reviews

THE SEMINARY PRIESTS: a Dictionary of the Secular Clergy of England and Wales 1558-1850. Volume 2: Early Stuarts 1603-1659, by Godfrey Anstruther, OP. Mayhew-McCrimmon, Great Wakering, 1975. 448 pp. £6.95.

These were the forgotten men. The priest-hole has done something to keep their memory alive (was there not a priest-hole at Brandon Abbas?) but even then the association is rather with the Jesuits. Indeed, one of the most famous of the Elizabethan seminary priests, the scholar and political activist Nicholas Sander, is commonly described as a Jesuit in the most respectable academic works. Even Catholics have sinned in this way: Belloc could write, admittedly in a late and uneven work, that 'no one except the Jesuits' defended the Faith in England after 1570. There has, in short, long been a need for something to place on the shelves alongside the fat volumes of Foley.

Fr Anstruther's first volume (now also available from Mayhew-McCrimmon at £4.95) covered the heroic years of the Elizabethan mission with the biographies of some 800 priests of whom, as Cardinal Heenan reminded us in his foreword, 123 were martyred. It was a major priority of the state to hunt down these public enemies (the modern-sounding expression 'A1 public enemy unto the State of England' was actually used, though of a Jesuit and in the 17th century) and the public archives are accordingly full of reports, examinations, prison lists and the like: this was a period in which, according to Sir Robert Cotton, 'the bountifull hand of Sir Francis Walsingham made his Intelligencers soe active, that a Seminary could scarcely stirr out of the gates of Rome without his privitie'. Moreover, once a martyr was beyond the reach of further persecution, it was safe for Catholics to give a full account of his missionary career.

There are fewer martyrs and less dramatic stories in the present volume but there is no slackening of interest and although rather more priests have to remain shrouded in anonymity or obscur-

ity—there are six pages at the end listing over 100 names which 'occur in contexts that imply they are secular priests', some of whom may have been written up under other names—there is still almost an embarrassment of rich and informative detail. Private Puritan enterprise supplements the decreased government activity: it is William Prynne who tells of a visitor to the New Prison in 1633 finding 'a priest there saying mass and the jailor himself with a censor perfuming the room and censuring the same (as they use in popish masses) and so many people, men and women, kneeling down in the hall that he could hardly pass by' (p. 88 sub William Drury). The saying of mass in prison was a long-established practice and not in itself a sign of more peaceful times for the hunted priests. Priests even began to make wills, perhaps as early as 1623, certainly by 1636, which were submitted for probate in the normal manner, although they are not always easy to identify as the testators still could not admit their priesthood or even, as lay Catholics could and sometimes did, safely confess their faith. Many of their spiritual wills, containing donations for masses and to Catholic charities, have also survived in Catholic archives. These, particularly the archives preserved at Westminster Cathedral and the records of the Old Brotherhood, deposited at Westminster but less easy of access, are of primary importance.

The nature of the work (hundreds of biographies, the subjects thereof ranging from men socially or otherwise as prominent as Thomas Somerset, second son of the 1st Marquess of Worcester, or Thomas White, the controversial theologian, to those so obscure that a single line, less informative than the entry in a telephone directory, completes their history) and the nature of the sources—including

police reports and gossip (which bestowed ordination on George Talbot, 9th Earl of Shrewsbury)—preclude the production of a definitive work. Slips are inevitable such as, in volume 1, the confusion of the Hampshire with the Oxfordshire Mapledurham (see the very useful index of places: each volume has an excellent introduction and a generous supply of appendices and indices), or the misreading of 'Curryer' as 'courier' for the trade of John Filby's father. Fr Anstruther should be congratulated, however, not only for his painstaking research and his generally high standards of accuracy and judgement but also for

his vigorous attempts to enlist the aid of other scholars. The notes for volume 1 were issued in facsimile and worklists for the second were available. The response, however, seems to have been disappointing and it is to be hoped that of the reading public will be better. The four volumes (and the publication of the remaining two depends on the success of the present one) will form in themselves a sufficient library of post-Reformation Catholic history, one that should be with a sense of the past, be he Catholic or Protestant.

ALAN DAVIDSON

ROME AND CANTERBURY THROUGH FOUR CENTURIES, by Bernard and Margaret Pawley. *Mowbrays*, London, 1974. 395 pp. £7.50.

The ecumenical revolution of recent years doubtless demands a fresh look at the less cordial and more tentative contacts between churches in previous centuries, as well as some re-writing of our church histories. This book by Bernard and Margaret Pawley meets the former need and maintains an admirable balance as the authors wend their way through the troubles of the Restoration, the Anglican-Gallican contacts of the 18th century, the reunion societies of the Victorians and the Malines Conversations (on this last, their account is as useful as other ecumenical histories in book form and has more details). The concern to be fair is evident, though Catholic readers may feel that change is seen in too one-sided a manner, as Rome coming over to Canterbury; e.g., "What the Second Vatican Council set out to do in the twentieth century some of the provinces of the Church took it into their heads to do locally in the sixteenth" (p. 3); contemporary Catholic pluriformity is presented as 'the emergence in the Roman Church itself of the same polarities' as those of High and Low Church parties within the Church of England (p. 137).

I must confess to being puzzled as to why this urbane and readable history finishes with such an inadequate (and on small details sometimes inaccurate) account of Vatican II. Is it simply, my first suspicion, that the authors are not at ease with some post-conciliar developments (and so

there is an element of selectivity: 'The achievements of the Council, from an Anglican point of view, can be summarised as follows . . .', p. 343)? Or is it, a later thought, that this book represents an Anglican concern to stress the special relationship between our two communions, an attitude that does not easily escape an air of ecumenical aristocracy (apart from a brief reference to John Wesley, it is nowhere suggested that other British churches exercise an influence on Anglican-Catholic relations)?

The Pawleys are at their surest in the world of ecclesiastical diplomacy (in the best sense of this phrase) and are at home with the theological points in dispute since the Reformation. But as soon as ecumenical relationships become more than occasional meetings of an élite, the authors somehow lose their grip. This failure exposes the neglect of the so-called "non-theological factors" (e.g. of the class structures of church membership in Britain) and the white, educated and predominantly European presuppositions of our theological encounter with its tendency to envisage ecumenical progress almost solely in terms of the diffusion from academic centres of a renewed theology.

This is not a bad book. Within the commonly-accepted view of the ecumenical task, it is a good and helpful book. But I suspect it does reveal, *malgré lui*, the limitations of these assumptions.

PETER HOCKEN