

to a purely human love, and in making a success of a career for which she had no sense of vocation. To cite her pathetic letters to Abelard with shocked disapproval is, moreover, irrelevant to the main theme of the book, and here Father Luddy's discussion of Abelard's heresies is lamentably superficial by any historical or theological standard. The list of heresies contained in William of St Thierry's letter asking for St Bernard's intervention is given as a justification of St Bernard's attack. There are no detailed references to the passages in Abelard's works which would enable the reader to discover what he actually said, so that he has to accept Fr Luddy's statement of their heretical character. No serious historian today denies that many of Abelard's views, whatever the purity of his intentions, were dangerous, if not heretical, and that the famous 'sic et non' method as used by him would create doubt in minds less penetrating and subtle than his own. A more thorough and sympathetic presentation of the case would have been far more convincing. All that can be said of the book is that it is well written and that the author's description of the famous scene in which Abelard tried to forestall certain condemnation by appealing to Rome is vivid enough to make his readers wish to study the real facts for themselves. As a stimulus to further reading the book has a certain value. Otherwise it is difficult to see why it was written as it has added nothing to our knowledge of a subject already dealt with by more competent writers.

D. I. DOUIE

THE PROSPECTS OF MEDIEVAL STUDIES. By David Knowles. (Cambridge University Press; 1s. 6d.)

THE DAWN OF HUMANISM IN ITALY. By Roberto Weiss. (London: H. K. Lewis; n.p.)

The usual Inaugural Lecture is either a survey or a specimen; a survey of the new professor's total domain, or a specimen of the particular research that has brought him to his Chair. The survey normally makes the better lecture; also it is, or should be, the more useful; and is, happily, the more usual. Others can use the microscope; we rather expect the professor to use field-glasses, at least on this occasion.

These two types are vividly represented by the inaugural lectures of Dr Knowles in the Chair of medieval history at Cambridge, and of Professor Weiss in that of Italian at London. Dr Knowles reviews, with the serenest detachment, the entire field. You would never guess from this lecture where his special corner lies, or even that he had one. The extremely studied style with its literary echoes and allusions, and Latin quotations—introduced out of sheer love and in no way to *prove* anything—would suggest the scholarly humanist rather than the *savant* if the wide range of reference to historical specialists were not there to witness to the lecturer's learn-

ing. Dr Knowles is a fervent medievalist because he is first a fervent humanist—a humanist in both senses of the term, as connoting both a special, intense literary culture and a special, intense reverence for man. Humanism in both these senses may occasion certain oversights or exaggerations, and such might be found lurking even here by a zealously critical eye. But it would take some time to seek them out, and the seeker would certainly appear ungrateful.

In contrast to Dr Knowles, Professor Weiss is quite inellegant. There is nothing in his lecture except learning—no grace, no wit, no 'form'; only a mass of specialised knowledge about the pre-petrarchan Italian humanists. This term is here taken chiefly in its first or literary sense—a sense so narrow as to exclude Dante. Of course Professor Weiss is right: a new classicism did appear at the turn of the century and its contribution to our culture is very considerable. Only let us not over-estimate it. Dante, after all, had in practice already settled the issue as between Latin and the vernacular; and the wonder is that after the Divine Comedy Italians should still want to write verse in Latin. But if the ancient tongue still exercised a mighty charm it did so only because there were scholars eager to spend their lives on the study of it. It is with the circumstances and first effects of this renewed love of the classics that Professor Weiss very learnedly deals.

K. F.

CATHERINE SAINT OF SIENA. By Michael de la Bedoyere. (Hollis & Carter; 12s. 6d.)

'Apart from making a fascinating story in her own right as a woman and apart from her important place in the story of a curious age Catherine of Siena happened to be a saint. . . . It is extremely interesting for us in this materialistic age to consider how so rare a distinction as fanatical sanctity can inspire a woman to achieve universally acknowledged greatness.' The book therefore sets out to consider this. Catherine began with prayer. 'God, she meditated in her "cell of self-knowledge" is he who *is*. The creature therefore must be he who *is not*. From this basic argument the rest springs'. But 'these arguments are not likely greatly to appeal to our generation, which has largely lost not only its belief in the Redemption but even its belief in God as *he who is*'. So Catherine is 'a puzzling saint'. And her contemporary biographers are no less puzzling. 'These at best were men who looked to the normal and accepted tradition of Christian sanctity. . . . No doubt this accounts for the colourful description of Catherine's penances, visions, ecstasies and high mystical experiences, but it is surprising that they were not more troubled by her lack of status, her disregard of any superior, the quantity of criticism she evoked, her extreme self-assertion. . . . Clearly a brave attempt is made to bluff through these difficulties. . . . The only satisfactory answer is surely that they *knew* her and that in spite of their prejudices and conservatism they recog-