

Book Reviews

as hers shall not inspire the making of books, then why write books at all? Her five hundredth anniversary, which is being kept this year, will provide a welcome opportunity for the telling and re-telling of the marvel of her life and achievement. An insignificant child, a village girl, who knew nothing, 'neither A nor B,' just the *Pater*, the *Ave Maria* and the *Credo*, steps into public life and, with no human influence to recommend her, leads a great army to victory and accomplishes the incredible. Whence came the insight of this ignorant peasant girl? her knowledge of the complex condition of the country? the lay-out of the land; her minute understanding of the apparatus of war, of how to lead men, to manage artillery and all the contrivances of military organisation? How came she to be acquainted with the niceties of strategy, the complexities of politics, the under-currents and intrigues of a complicated society? Whence did she derive the wisdom which enabled her to speak with the technical accuracy of a theologian? There is only one answer—the answer she herself gave and the answer to which all the contributors to this symposium agree—that her voices were from God. Her truly supernatural vocation, her divine mission—there is the secret of her appeal to all manner of men.

This book *For Joan of Arc*, elegantly printed, beautifully illustrated and written by nine French Academicians, makes a good souvenir—a thing to hold for keeps as a reminder and a homage to the Peasant Girl, Soldier, Saint and Martyr who is among the most attractive and romantic figures in the world's story.

THE STORY OF SAINT JOAN : A BOOK FOR CHILDREN. By Clare F. Oddie. (Longmans; 2/6).

Another little book on the same great Saint, written at the request of a child and set forth in the style and idiom that a child will appreciate and take in, is to be praised as a conspicuous success. The fact that it is written for the young explains, perhaps, a certain diffuseness in the narrative and a very engaging, wandering sort of digressiveness. Its simplicity and candour will recommend it to many an unsophisticated adult who disdains not to be considered one of Francis Thompson's 'children of a larger growth.'

THE BESFORD COURT CATHOLIC MENTAL WELFARE HOSPITAL : Eleventh and Twelfth Annual Reports, 1928—1930. By the Resident Manager, the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Newsome.

The wonderful annual Reports of Mgr. Newsome always make me regret I have never had the opportunity of visiting Besford,

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which is certainly one of the most finished and efficient pieces of organisation we have in this country. Father Aidan Elrington by way of Introduction to this present Report gives his impressions of Besford and provides a very complete and lucid account of the whole establishment, its aims, the general routine, manner of government, and order of the day. Mgr. Newsome in his official Report takes us into the realms of Psychology, theoretical, experimental and very practical. He perhaps presumes in his readers a knowledge of the terms and jargon of the new Psychology which not all of them will possess; but it would be a pity if we were put off by the terrifying terminology. Fresh air, wholesome food, clean surroundings, human sympathy and Catholic charity are terms which we can grasp; and this Report eloquently attests that those factors are working the mental cures which Besford aims at and successfully achieves. Besford is a very courageous effort in education, because it deals with the very worst possible material and therefore it deserves all the support that Catholics can give.

CARMINA : No. 5. March, 1931. (Longmans; 1/-.)

Carmina is the occasional magazine of the Catholic Poetry Society, ably edited by Mr. Maurice Leahy. To the present number the editor contributes a glowing article on the Poetry of Gilbert Chesterton—the poet not of the return to Nature, but of the return to God.

Father Bede Jarrett's lecture, here published, on '*The Hound of Heaven*' as a *Retreat Book* suggests that the forms of mysticism which constantly refer to the soul's search for God are cheap and harmful. Francis Thompson in his *Hound of Heaven* puts it the other way round and says it is rather God seeking the soul, but seeking only that He may compel the 'strange, piteous, futile thing' to arise, clasp His hand and come.

A short article on Oscar Wilde by Lord Alfred Douglas clears up a doubt which has often been expressed about Wilde's Catholic end. Lord Alfred Douglas declares that he is convinced that 'Wilde's reception was genuine and valid.'

The number contains poems by Wilfrid Meynell, Evan Morgan, Carmel Withers, Wilfred Childe, Alys Trotter and Sister Mary Benvenuta, O.P.