

REVIEWS

execution, where both are in practice interdependent, it is difficult to see the value of calling in the artist to replace deficiency in craftsmanship. Theoretically the artist is someone who produces things that people do not want and the craftsman a person whose supply is regulated strictly by considerations of utility. This exhibition shows, what we all know, that there are in England to-day several artists of outstanding versatility. It shows also that never has English craftsmanship been at a lower ebb.

JOHN POPE-HENNESSY.

THE PLAY

MISS Clemence Dane deserves commiseration. In *Wild Decembers* she has written a sound, sensitive study of the Brontë family; Mr. Cochrane has been at pains to ensure a production of the very highest quality. And it is their misfortune that the play follows and coincides with Alfred Sangster's *The Brontës*. For, as the public have been quick to realise, *The Brontës* is the better play.

It is another instance of the advantage of the actor-playwright over the literary dramatist. Clemence Dane has an historical conscience; she selects and interprets but does not alter recorded facts. Mr. Sangster's conscience is a purely dramatic one; his approach tends to the symbolic rather than to the realistic, and, in a play, which must condense half a life-time into two short hours, that approach gives a paradoxical impression of truer values, as well as a coherence otherwise unobtainable.

Thus Branwell Brontë has more significance in *The Brontës*, where his brief role culminates in a wild prophecy that his disorders have been the yeast of his sisters' lives, that their books will live because of him, than in Miss Dane's more thoughtful study, in which she shows him as the real first begetter of *Wuthering Heights*. The character of Mr. Brontë, whom Mr. Sangster has made a rich part for his own playing, gets across better than Miss Dane's more human and probably far more truthful version. His Emily (though he has used his imagination freely) is the more convincing, and the more vivid, and if his Charlotte lacks certain elements of the Charlotte of *Wild Decembers* and of life, he gives the better impression of the poet and novelist.

In *The Brontës* the Brussels episode forms a comic interlude. In *Wild Decembers* it is treated in three scenes of much power, including the strange episode of Charlotte's confession. One is grateful to Miss Dane for her portrayal of M. Héger, that

BLACKFRIARS

high-principled and fervently religious man whose influence meant so much to both the sisters. She leaves him the pregnant utterance: 'Were you a Catholic, much could be done for you'—the verdict of Charlotte's finest biographer, l'Abbé Dimnet.

B.B.C.

MUSIC

A concert of particular interest was given by Miss Muriel Talbot Hodge, a young Catholic composer, at the Wigmore Hall on June 1st. A varied programme included Hilaire Belloc's *The Birds*, *Cuckoo* and *Noel*, sung as unaccompanied part-songs by the Tudor Singers with pleasantly medieval effect; three songs for baritone, with piano accompaniment, of which Walter de la Mare's *The Song of Soldiers* had an exceptional efficacy with its eerie cadence; and a Trio for Flute, Violin and Piano, of which the last number, *The Merry-go-Round*, brilliant in colour, and rhythm, stirred the audience to real enthusiasm. Curiously, Miss Hodge has 'jumped' the whole romantic period; she seems to have gone straight from the classical to the modern, with a result of clean-woven texture and unflinching workmanship. But the finest numbers of all were of a still earlier inspiration—a setting, for soprano and string quartet of the seventeenth century carol, *I sing of a maiden*, and of the thirteenth century Franciscan hymn, *My Fair Love Sleepeth on the Cross*, in both of which the spirit of the words was rendered with exquisite adequacy. While the crown of the evening was St. Francis' Canticle of the Sun, for baritone, soprano chorus, flute, clarinet, piano and string quartet. There was the very breath of the elements in the praises of Sun and Moon, Wind and Water, Fire and Earth, opening out into grave loveliness in the praise of Death, while beginning and close moved to a broad rhythm in which one had the impression of St. Francis himself, walking, walking in the blaze of the Umbrian sun.

If there is such a thing as Catholic music, here it is.

B.B.C.

BOOKS

LA DOCTRINE SOCIALE DE L'ÉGLISE. By Fr. G. C. Rutten, O.P. (Juvisy. Les Editions du Cerf; 20 fr.)

In this book are published the two Encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, together with a general discussion of the social teachings of the Church. Special attention is paid to those points on which the Pope lays particular stress. Fr. Rutten, a distinguished figure in social action and a Senator of Belgium, begins by discussing the question of private pro-