

## **Blackfriars**

### **INNOCENT XI AND THE REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.**

By Louis O'Brien. (Berkeley: California Associated Students' Store. Pp. vii, 232; \$5.00.)

The writer deals clearly and concisely with his subject. He proves that Innocent XI had no part in bringing about the Revocation, but that when it was published he approved of it as it stood, in the belief that persuasion and not force was being used. As soon as the truth was known he unsparingly condemned the whole business. Speaking of the *dragonnades*, the Pope wrote: 'The horrible thought of so many sacrileges which have been committed will cause me to shudder for the rest of my days. If I may be allowed to express myself, I do not know whether I should not despair of the salvation of a Christian who thus abuses the power of his arms.' Mr. O'Brien considers that Louis XIV's main motive was to induce the Holy See to submit to him in the dispute over the *régale*, the four articles of 1682 and the vacant bishoprics. This is an important and scholarly book: it deserves to be widely bought and even more widely read.

T.C-E.

### **SONGS OF THE LOVER AND THE BELOVED. Translated from the Spanish and Catalan by E. Allison Peers. (S.P.C.K.; 6d.)**

This little book contains translations of mystical and devotional poetry ranging from Ramon Lull through St. John of the Cross to Jacinto Verdaguer and modern times. Some of these have already been published by Prof. Peers, principally in his *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, but others make their appearance for the first time. It is idle to criticise a result which one could not have achieved half so successfully, but the adventurous translator of some of the loveliest poetry ever written cannot expect to please everybody. Certainly the renderings of the four poems of St. John of the Cross here offered are superior to those of David Lewis, if only because the reproduction of the original metre is far more suitable than Lewis's rather jingling measure, but at the same time they fall far short of the originals. The radiant glow is missing in a general prosiness. The beautiful sweep of the lines is lost in a somewhat choppy English which is badly marred by such words as e'en, o'er, 'twas, and the irregularity in the syllabification of certain verb forms: vanished, follow'd, scatterèd, belovèd, tak'st, quick'nest, putt'st, etc. Many lines are scarcely poetry: 'His only, his alone,' 'Well knew I whom or ere I forth did fare.' There are nice renderings of some phrases and stanzas,

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but others are not happy in their new garb, e.g., *ninfas de Judea*, 'daughters of Jewry'; or

*Nuestro lecho florido  
de cuevas de leones enlazado*

as

'Now blooms our nuptial bed,  
Safe-hid from men by lions' fortress-lair.'

*Con llama que consume y no da pena* becomes 'The flame consuming-fierce, yet painless-keen.' Or to take a whole stanza, so lovely in the Spanish :

*Oh noche, que guiaste,  
Oh noche amable más que el alborada,  
Oh noche que juntaste  
Amado con amada,  
Amada en el Amado transformada!*

'O night that led'st me thus!  
O night more winsome than the rising sun!  
O night that madest us,  
Lover and lov'd, as one,  
Lover transformed in lov'd, love's journey done!'

This is not poetry. But then, why ever attempt to translate St. John of the Cross?

A.A.P.

THE BURNING SOUL OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS. By Rodolphe Hoornaert. Translated by Algar Thorold. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd.; 3/-.)

What more delicate theme than the soul of a mystic? But the Abbé Hoornaert's valuable French rendering of the works of St. John of the Cross have given him months of intimacy with the saint and a claim to some qualification for his task. One could wish that no one, short of another St. John of the Cross, would try to analyse the saint's inner life. Such an attempt can only be guess-work, an effort to drag down to the plane of sense and thought those things of which it is already true that 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man.' So we are grateful to the Abbé Hoornaert for making his sketch mainly biographical. It is fresh and vivid, a worthy contribution to literature as well as hagiography.

It is interesting to find that the poetry of St. John of the Cross, said to be some of the finest in the Castillian tongue, is not, as probably most of us have imagined, the utterly spontane-