

## BLACKFRIARS

cons' are an addition and that the original entry referred to the temporary burial of the Apostles after their martyrdom. The German excavators did find one important thing, however, and that was the 'Domus Petri' on the walls of which were more than a hundred inscriptions begging the prayers of the Apostles; these are probably to be referred to the years following on the Peace of Constantine. Mgr. Barnes fancies he has identified the inscription placed somewhere in the collection of buildings by Pope Damasus in certain fragments picked up among the rubbish on the floor of the Platonica in 1909 and disregarded as being too fragmentary for identification. He may be right, despite the scantiness of the material provided, three complete and twenty tiny portions of letters. But even if not justified in his piecing together of the fragments his arguments for the thesis that the bodies of the Apostles for a short time only lay in the Platonica after their death and that they were placed there because they had lived there in hiding during the Neronian persecution remain unshaken.

The author holds that the *First Epistle of St. Peter* was written to converts of St. Paul, that the latter really did go to Spain, that St. Luke did contemplate a third volume. But why does he date St. Clement's Epistle twenty-five years after the martyrdom of the Apostles? We thought the date A.D. 98 was the accepted one. He says St. Augustine was misled into believing that the two Apostles died on the same day but in different years. I fancy he himself has been misled by Edmundson in his Bampton Lectures, *The Church at Rome in the Second Century*. St. Augustine says nothing about the year, but three times over he speaks of the day, e.g. 'consors sanguinis et diei Apostolorum Paulus,' *Sermo* ccxcvi. 5, cf. ccxcvii. 1 and ccxcviii. 1.

Mgr. Barnes has done great service if only by his courageous refusal to be carried away by great names and authorities. He has stood out against Mommsen, Duchesne and the whole of the Roman Archaeological School; while evidence was still lacking he was content to keep silence and wait. His patience has now been rewarded, and we trust that his work will meet with due recognition from his fellow-archaeologists.

H.P.

LITERATURE AND THE PULPIT IN MEDIAEVAL ENGLAND. By G. R. Owst. (Cambridge University Press; 30/-).

This great work by Dr. Owst is as valuable as it is vast. Foreign, but not English, scholars have examined the very extensive collections of our vernacular medieval homilies, and no one has ever before pointed out how they form an immense background to Medieval and even Renaissance Eng-

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lish literature. Dr. Owst has done this and consequently we shall have to re-write the whole of this part of literary history in England. The Preaching Orders, he points out, affect even language by bringing from foreign education or nationality, foreign words from abroad; and they prepare a common English tongue by disseminating and intermingling different dialects. The influence of the content of their sermons is two-fold: first, a literary influence and secondly a social—the word and the world. Dr. Owst examines the sermons and shows them to be the *main* spring of Allegory, of Social and Political Satires, Miracle and Mystery Plays, Biblical interest and, in their abounding detail from every aspect of medieval life, their humour, directness and raciness, they are the parents of Renaissance Realism. Secondly, in three great chapters (in all 260 pages long) the author shows the preachers, especially the notable Dominican John Bromyard, sweeping the whole of Church and Society with their indignation at the corruption of morals, the decay of the feudal social order and the misery of the poor. Dr. Owst shows how the Catholic Reformers are in no way behind the later Protestants in the violence of their invective against great and humble sinner alike. These three chapters reveal very clearly how far short the mass of medieval men fell of the ideals of medieval society. They knew, but had not assimilated them. Dr. Owst ascribes the Tudor triumph of the Crown over the Church and Nobility to the preachers' denunciation of those bodies and the callous immorality of the Renaissance, and the secession of the Protestants to the reiterated vehemence of a Church preaching the old Dispensation of Fear. But the Feudal Nobility destroyed itself, and the Church can hardly have lost her children both because her Prelates were immoral and her Preachers denounced immorality. A picture of the corrupt populace is enough to explain the fall of the theocracy; the mountain would not come to Mahomet, so he called it a molehill. Dr. Owst shows, however, considerable appreciation of the Catholic attitude as a whole and, in opening out this huge and fascinating field of study, he has made all lovers of English literature permanently indebted to him.

P.D.F.

SIR THOMAS MORE. By Joseph Clayton, F.R.Hist.S. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; pp. 144; 3/6.)

Is there room for another life of Bl. Thomas More? You would have said not; but read this charming biography and you will agree that certainly there was room for this one. It is written with a lightness of touch that yet mates with the spirit of reverence with which it is permeated. We can heartily re-