

Part four, a collection of tales, legends and stories of the saints, will have a general appeal; whilst the fifth is a selection of delightful carols for all seasons.

In the acknowledgements, Grail sources are quoted for a considerable part of the text, and this enjoyable family book reflects much of the spirit of that movement.

ROSEMARY HEDDON

CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY. By Frederick Copleston, S.J. (Burns & Oates; 18s.)

It is a little disappointing, after Fr Copleston's excellent full-length study of the philosophy of Aquinas, to find that his latest book is a collection of lectures and articles written originally for many different audiences. The largest unity within the book is four lectures on existentialism. Englishmen write little in this tradition, but they write excessively about it, despite its being so difficult to write about. Fr Copleston does not make the usual mistake of emphasizing extra-philosophical elements in these thinkers; he concentrates rightly enough on their metaphysics, yet hardly manages to convey its originality and importance in this brief survey. His other historical essay, on contemporary British philosophy, is even more drastically condensed. It is in the central chapters of his book where he talks philosophically rather than about philosophy that he is most interesting. He uses the technique of linguistic analysis with skill, as in the essay where he distinguishes noticing something or becoming aware of it from merely seeing it, and uses the distinction to explain how we become aware of existence: the starting point of metaphysics. In these earlier chapters Fr Copleston is perhaps slightly too concerned about justifying metaphysics: philosophers today are less against it than he seems to suppose. But the best thing in the book is his discussion of the meaning of the statements made about God. He shows it is first necessary to ask why we want to make such statements, and that is because of something we know about created being; only afterwards do we ask how the terms of the statement remain meaningful when used of God. He can then distinguish what he calls the 'subjective' meaning of the term, used of created things, and the 'objective' meaning used of God, though this meaning remains completely unknown. Better names might have been found to express this difference of *modus significandi*; but the discussion is clear. This is most refreshing after the nonsense talk about analogy usually produces.

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