

BLACKFRIARS

ness can only be truly gauged by a knowledge of his philosophy, and this the author neither conveys to his readers nor understands himself. The meagre account of his metaphysics is inadequate even for a popular work, and it is not always correct. Père Mandonnet contributes a preface, which to some extent compensates for the lack of philosophy in the pages that follow.

G.A.

ST. ALBERT THE GREAT. By Thomas M. Schwertner, O.P., S.T.L., LL.D. (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co.; \$3.00.)

It is the fate of most mediaeval worthies that their modern biographers, in the attempt to give a rounded and picturesque account of their heroes, usually succumb to the temptation to season *Wahrheit* over richly with *Dichtung*. In the case of a saint this, if skilfully done, may make for edification, and where the life is reasonably well documented does no harm, since the curious student of mere facts can by verifying the references separate the superimposed layer of fancy from the possibly meagre substratum of definite data. In the present compilation Fr. Schwertner's debt to the works of Fr. Hieronymus Wilms, O.P., and Dr. Heribert Scheeben is obvious, and in the broad lines he follows the latter's chronological conclusions closely; though here and there—*e.g.*, in his account of Albert's early teaching activities—he is a little more positive than the sources warrant. The same applies to some happy assumptions, for instance that the Saint's companion on his many wanderings in Germany was his beloved pupil, Ulrich von Strassburg. Half the book, which is well documented, gives a useful and popular account of Albert's achievements as scientist, philosopher, and theologian. If the author has not quite escaped the temptation referred to, his seasoning is generally palatable enough, and should help the book to achieve its purpose to arouse in the U.S.A. devotion to the great *doctor universalis* and *praedicator pacis*.

A.H.W.-G.

Admirable direction is evident in the recent policy of the publishing house of Desclée de Brouwer, of which the results already command congratulation and gratitude. And now a new collection of philosophy and letters has been launched to succeed the *Roseau d'Or* (1925-28). Profiting from past experience, it is designed to avoid any appearance of sectarianism. It will advocate no particular literary programme, be marked by no *étiquette confessionnelle*. But all the variety it hopes to include will agree in that order of Catholicism which is more easily recognized than defined; divine discontent with the temporal,

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a straining for the eternal things that are all about us. But in a mood of discovery, not of escape. The very title of the collection, *LES ILES*, bears the suggestion of sailing over the horizon. To prolong the analogy, the Age of Discovery ushered in that of Colonial Expansion. Catholicism, too, must have its Wolfes and Clives and Gordons, even its Jamesons as well. There is a point in the plea, 'Pitié pour nous qui combattons toujours aux frontières.'

The first volume, *COURRIER DES ILES* (pp. 90; 9 fr.), contains a general introduction to the series by M. Maritain; four poems by Jules Supervielle (half Carmelite, half Shropshire Lad—indulgence is begged for this first impression); personal and intimate recollections by Mrs. M. E. Cheesman of Mr. Gandhi. The writer, who is a recent convert to the Church, pays a generous tribute to the Mahatma's spirituality—incidentally we learn that his favourite hymn is *Lead, Kindly Light*, and there is a statement that should partially dispel the rumour of his hostility to Christian missions. Finally, and this is an important contribution, M. Etienne Borne starts from the apparent opposition between the philosophies of Labour and of Catholicism. The former emphasizes work and attachment to material things, the latter points to contemplation and detachment. His thoughtful essay does not attempt a facile conciliation, but suggests the philosophical principles which will integrate the two. It evokes profound thoughts—on the presence of activity and tension in heaven, for who desires a state of repose as it is commonly imagined? The volume is enriched by seven reproductions of delicate and gracious pencil drawings and paintings by Jean Hugo.

The second of the series, *PROMENADES AVEC MOZART, L'HOMME, L'ŒUVRE, LE PAYS*, by Henri Ghéon (pp. 484; 30 fr.), is an entrancing piece of work, an informal biography with many musical quotations. '“M'aimez-vous? m'aimez-vous bien?” Oui, cher Wolfgang Amadéo! autant du moins, qu'il m'est possible'—that is the key in which M. Ghéon writes, not as a musician, but as a lover of Mozart. His style is infected and runs throughout this considerable volume rippling and fresh, tender and grave. And other lovers of Mozart will laugh aloud with pleasure as they read this appreciation of gaiety not trivial, of sadness not muddy, of humility and innocence, of that *mourning* quality, which make of Mozart the *gratia gratis data* he is. He may have been a catechism Catholic, but M. Ghéon is not thinking of that when he says: 'Pas de Mozart sans chrétienté, sans catholicité, sans Rome.' And he substantiates it, though how sectarian and improving the quotation must seem out of its context.

N.W.T.G.