

and thence back across the Indian Ocean to Massaweh, and the settling of the nomadic court in the palace of Gondar, it met a heavy and impenetrable survival, a mixture, among other elements, of Judaism and a 'filtered' Byzantinism. There was the *coup* of the conversion of the Emperor Susenyos to Catholicism, but the Jesuit mission ended in failure. 'It was not the world of Bellarmine, but something more archaic, that would call to this ancient and unimpeded sovereignty'. In the years that followed, the throne was reduced to a shadow by the feudal barons, until power was centralised again by the Shoan Emperors a century ago. Their sanction was more practical, and less hieratic, more like that of the later medieval Kings of France, less like that of the Holy Roman Empire. The revival, tragic and fascinating in Theodore of Magdala, was triumphant in Menelik of Adowa.

There is a perception of scenery and weather throughout this study, 'the high thin air, the euphoria in blossom', the eye for detail, 'the light blue and silver of the Bombay Light Cavalry', and the turn of phrase: 'the *abuna* was an object of reverence, anxiety, and un-fatigued suspicion'. The pleasure of reading it is enhanced by the anticipation of more studies by Dr Mathew in African history.

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

EVERYMAN'S DICTIONARY OF MUSIC. Compiled by Eric Blom. (Dent; 10s. 6d).

To review 700 pages, double-columned and closely printed, is to attempt the unprofitable, if not the impossible. It is enough to say that Mr Blom's name is a guarantee of accuracy of definition and objectivity of comment. The omission of all living performers avoids the embarrassment of discrimination, and the space saved permits the inclusion of a new and valuable feature, namely references indicating the literary sources drawn upon by composers of all ages and countries. A key to the abbreviations used would have been helpful. It is at first a baffling business to entangle such arcana as 'Fr writer on m. & comp.' or 'Among the most common orch. insts. Eng. hns., cls., hns. and tpts. are T.I.'. But with familiarity *Everyman* becomes a friend, and it will be indispensable for that large public which wants to know just enough to give a piece of music its setting. And the definitions are masterpieces of economy and clarity.

J. S. B.

AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF WRITING AND LETTERING. By Jan Tschichold. (A. Zwemmer; 15s.)

The author introduces his subject with the words: 'The immense flood of printed matter which characterises the present day has not only diminished our reverence for *language*. It is also beginning to destroy our living sense for the visible representation of language, for *writing and lettering*'. But the seventy excellently produced half-tone illustrations, beginning with a vivid bison from the walls of the Altamura cave of some twenty or thirty thousand years ago,