

Book Reviews

causing suffering to the poor and to wage earners, upsetting every contract in the land.' The gold pound should be the sole standard. We are referred to Father Nolan's *Monetary History* for additional argument. The essay ends on a note of warning: 'Is the country living in a fool's paradise, burning its candle at both ends; living on its capital or credit or both?' For 'the beautiful golden sovereign, as a measure and pledge of value is now almost as extinct as the Dodo. It no longer circulates; it is hoarded or kept as a curiosity.' A vast amount of information is presented in a small compass and presented lucidly. Father Nolan is never dull.

J.C.

THE GOLDEN EPISTLE OF ABBOT WILLIAM OF ST. THIERRY. NOW first translated into English by Walter Shewring and edited by Dom Justin McCann. (Sheed & Ward; 5/-).

The seeker for the original of this letter addressed to the Carthusians of Mont Dieu will find it in Mabillon's edition of the works of St. Bernard, for throughout the centuries it has been frequently attributed to the great abbot of Clairvaux, though its preface and every elementary test of sane criticism prove it to have been the work of William, abbot of St. Thierry, the great friend and biographer of St. Bernard. Mabillon has successfully unearthed William from the oblivion in which his more than Boswellian self-effacement had buried him and established him beyond doubt as the author, and he remains established, notwithstanding the later attribution of the work to another writer, Guigo, fifth Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, to be found in Martene's edition of Mabillon and Migne's *Latin Patrologia*. The work, which is 'an eloquent and persuasive summons to the life of religious perfection,' has had a wide acceptance and a powerful influence among religious men from St. Bernard's time till now, and it is a matter for wonder that no previous English version has appeared. It is no extravagance to say that a standing reproach has been removed by Mr. Shewring after nearly eight centuries.

The book, like St. Bernard's century which it speaks for and symbolises, stands on the threshold of the golden age of scholasticism—the age of Aquinas, Bonaventura and the Friars. Dom Justin McCann confesses in his illuminating introduction that he feels tempted to speak of the golden epistle as the swan song of the old monachism, but he rejects the wistful and poetic image as unjust to the old monasticism: rather is it, in Mabillon's phrase, 'a pattern of perfect monachism.' The growth of the

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religious idea in the history of the Religious Orders has followed a progressive evolution which has not required the old to die in order to give place to the new. The golden epistle, the product of monasticism, is a fit guide for friars and other religious, who are but monks turned apostles, and we may add for all faithful folk who range themselves under this banner or that or none at all if they will, yet truly claim to be children of the Church which is immeasurably greater than all its parts.

The translator's work has been done with distinction. The English runs easily and naturally with no after-flavour of the Latin. The editor's notes and preliminary essay bear those marks of scholarly care which we expect from an acknowledged authority on the spiritual literature of the past.

B.D.

THE CATHOLIC DIRECTORY, 1931. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne; 3/6.)

There are some books which from their very nature will circulate without any artificial stimulus from reviewers. Breviaries, Prayer-books, Hymn-books, and Bradshaws, like tools, furniture and clothing, will inevitably be bought by those people who need them perhaps more than they want them. Among the Breviaries and Prayer-books there is, of course, a certain range of choice, and the buyer might be advised to select this one or that from the different styles offered; but *The Catholic Directory* has no rival, and the reviewer has but to say, Here it is. It still remains an indispensable guide for anyone needing information about the institutions, activities and personnel of the Catholic Church in England, Scotland and Wales. Its general accuracy is creditable to the painstaking industry of its compilers. The general statistics at the end are always of immense interest. To those who wish to compare this year's figures with last year's, it would be a help if the two tables were printed facing one another. This is not a serious criticism, but only an aside which we hope the editors may overhear.

THE CATHOLIC WHO'S WHO, 1931. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne; 5/-.)

Star differeth from star in *The Catholic Who's Who*. With diverse claims to distinction the three or four thousand people whose embryonic biographies are collected within these dark-blue covers, are all at one in professing the Catholic faith. Alfred Noyes in his Preface describes the book as 'a muster-