

Book Reviews

It is a good story, well told; and readers must not be prejudiced by the sentimental picture on the wrapper. Some of the characters are Catholics; some are not; they are all fine studies, arranged in careful perspective; the villains are not nauseating, the attractive folk do not strain one's credibility; Maude and Cecily and their mother make lively contrasts; indeed, there is an admirable variety of person throughout the book—and the tale of Lady Mary de Gifford tells something well worth hearing to those that have ears to hear. *When the Saints Slept* deserves a warm reception.

R. R.

NO. 8 JOY STREET. (Basil Blackwell; 6/-.)

Here is an open door to the golden realm of childhood. The stories are written by people like Mr. Compton Mackenzie, Mr. Algernon Blackwood, Mr. Laurence Housman, Miss Mabel Marlowe, Mr. L. A. G. Strong, and Miss Eleanor Farjeon, people who understand things as they *are* in the nursery—the *livingness* of the toy world, the reasonableness of *A Clean Sweep*, the real value of a *Guilderoybaconandeggs* affair, and the simplicity of faery. There's no grown-up nonsense about obstacles to acquiring an *Old Argo*, no tiresome explaining-away of a fisherman's metamorphosis into a heron, no oily condescension in relating the fate of party fare. And the artists know exactly what colours and what clean black lines are right. And those who make the verses make them specially well. You see, the Editor has chosen—not those dreadful people who 'understand children'—but people who understand children's *things*, to help him build Number Eight; so it's a Highly Desirable Residence. I've lived in it as long as I could, and now I give up my tenancy (leaving, I hope, not a finger-print, or speck of tobacco-ash behind) for the habitation of one 'of those children for whom only the best is good enough.'

R. R.

UNCERTAIN GLORY. By Margaret Yeo. (Sheed & Ward; 7/6.)

The popular press is asking for better novels, books that tell a good story and do not rely for success on sensationalism; Mrs. Yeo has written another of them: in it are all the elements the critics ask for—a story worth telling, briskly told, acute character-drawing, colour and plenty of incident. Mrs. Yeo spares us so much that we sometimes find tiresome in other historical romances; she chooses exactly the right moment to close the curtains on a scene, she writes in our idiom, and she

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draws upon a detailed knowledge of her period but never makes a display of it. The reign of Charles II provides her, in this book, with the rich romance of the Renaissance and Catholicism; a considerable number of characters, interesting historically and intrinsically, are painted for us, some in full-length portraits that live closely to us, others in lovely little miniatures; the background to James de la Cloche's adventures is made up of bourgeois life in Holland, court life at Whitehall, in Germany and in Rome, and Indian life in the New World. There is, as usual in Mrs. Yeo's books, a freshness like a good wind, a zest that gives strength, and a lyric note, 'it was an enchanted hour, swift as time, endless as eternity.' And the short descriptions of the English countryside are beautifully done. The people she writes about are people of flesh and blood. There's a fine courage about this writing. I won't reveal the plot, but I can say that the hero is worth the name, that the book is not a propagandist work, and that when you have finished it your interest will remain alive. By the way, didn't James ever meet Grey Panther again?

R.R.

ORIENTALIA CHRISTIANA, Vol. XVII-3, No. 60. HISTORY AND CARTULARY OF THE GREEK MONASTERY OF S. ELIAS AND S. ANASTASIUS OF CARBONE; II. ii. Cartulary, 1930. Pp. 200. This volume is edited with Notes and a Glossary of unusual Greek words and a list of the principal Byzantine officials, by Gertrude Robinson, M.A., late Scholar of Girton College, Cambridge; and published by the Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies.

It must have been a labour of love and one involving an immense amount of patient work and transcription. The documents cover the period between A.D. 1134 and 1195 and illustrate one side at least of the life of a great Greek monastery in Southern Italy during a period that is little known. They deal for the most part with disputes about property and various concessions made to the Abbey, for example: 'We give to thee Hilarion Abbot of the monastery of Carbone and to thy successors the present complete acquittal of our claim concerning the mules which the late Lord Rupert placed in the care of the church which later we secured from you each and all in good condition.' Perhaps the majority of the signatories can write, for they sign with their own hands; but we note that the soldiers generally 'signed with a cross.' John, nephew of John of Salerno, signs himself 'John the Great,' while several of the priest signatories