

Jesus has given to English Catholic life priests of such immense sympathy and discernment as Fr Robert Steuart and Fr Francis Devas. We must be equally grateful that their memory has been perpetuated by the editing of their spiritual conferences; those of Fr Steuart in Fr Martindale's *Two Voices*, and now those of Fr Devas in Fr Caraman's admirably arranged book. Fr Devas was well-known for his editing of Fr Considine's *Words of Encouragement*, and this could well be the title of his own spiritual teaching, for he had an extraordinary awareness of the real problems of men and women. He was never content with the formal reiteration of 'spirituality': rather did he penetrate to the individual's need, and with shrewdness and absolute confidence show how exactly that need could only be ultimately met by the love of God. One feels with Fr Devas that he understands in advance: he is never surprised, for he has long ago learned how infinitely various is the human situation—and no part of it without its providential meaning.

Fr Caraman has prefaced his selections with a too brief memoir of Fr Devas, but it tells us enough to illuminate his teaching. Plainly the doctrine was the man, and every page reflects his generosity of mind, his humour and his single confidence in God's mercy. His wisdom should be of special help to those who feel themselves to be outside the ordinary fidelities of Catholic life. 'If God never despairs, we must never despair of even the worst sinners. They are not finished, and done with until our Lord's patience is exhausted, and, though that patience *does* come to an end, it is inexhaustible as long as they live.' Again, 'Our Lord does not in the least shrink from helping poor people and sinners at the expense of the good'. But there is scarcely a sentence that is not quotable for its charitable wisdom. It is a book that can be recommended without reserve, and not least for its elegant appearance: its very looks declare that the spiritual life is not meant to be depressing.

I.E.

THE HAND PRESS. By H. D. C. Pepler. (Ditchling Press; 9s. 6d.)

There could be no better memorial to Hilary Pepler than the reprinting of his book on the Hand Press, originally itself set and printed by hand at St Dominic's Press. The new edition is enriched by a frontispiece of Sir Frank Brangwyn's portrait of Hilary Pepler and it includes facsimile reproductions of the original illustrations (including such joys as David Jones' engraving of 'The Printer's Devil at work' and Desmond Chute's engraving of St Dominic). The essay was first written for the Chicago Society of Typographic Arts in 1934, and, quite apart from its interest as an apologia for a craft which St Dominic's Press did so much to adorn, it is a delightful piece of incidental autobiography. Perhaps some of the hopes of the earlier Ditchling days

must seem nostalgic now, but their value remains as a reminder of an integrity and grace which our own time sadly lacks. The Ditchling Press has provided a handsome record of Hilary Pepler's achievement as a printer—and as a person, too. He was associated in so many ways with the fortunes of BLACKFRIARS that it is a special pleasure to commend this book.

### NOTICES

THE HOLY FOOT (André Deutsch, 9s. 6d.) is an altogether charming novel by Robert Romanis which tells of the finding of a strange relic in a south Italian village and of the extraordinary happenings that followed. It is set in the middle ages, but so direct is Mr Romanis' writing and so affectionate his understanding of Italian character (unchanging as one must suppose it to be) that one is never aware of 'period' or patronage. He writes from within the situation and with the complete conviction that comes from real sympathy—and wit.

MY LATIN-AMERICAN DIARY (Falcon Press, 7s. 6d.) is the brief record of a lecture tour made by André Maurois to Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Colombia. It is full of shrewd observations, though the statement that 'all the luxury products here [Buenos Aires] seem to be English' is certainly no longer true. M. Maurois is preoccupied with the problem of making French culture better known in Latin America and he has to regret some of the effects of the continent's new nationalism. Mr G. S. Fraser, in a most interesting foreword (which gives indeed a much better general picture than does M. Maurois' telegraphese), rightly points out that 'all generalizations about South America . . . are likely to contain more falsity than truth—except possibly the generalization that though it is a civilized continent, with its own extremely interesting culture, both that civilization and culture are still, much more than in Europe or the United States, in the process of taking shape'.

THE WEBSTER PLASS COLLECTION OF AFRICAN ART is now on loan to the British Museum, and an illustrated catalogue (published by the Trustees), prepared by Mr William Fagg, Assistant Keeper in the Department of Ethnography, is a handsome record of a very fine collection. Mr Fagg's introduction insists on the importance of relating African art to the philosophy it reflects and so of arriving at a positive conception of the differences between the European and the African traditions of art.

THE BASIS OF ST THOMAS'S MYSTICISM, by Conrad Pepler, O.P., is the latest of the London Aquinas Society's Lectures to be published (Blackfriars Publications, 2s.).