

the larger world of English Catholicism, a microcosm itself entirely English and Benedictinely Catholic and yet *sui generis*, unique. Here that small world speaks in its kindest and almost its wittiest tones; one recognises the serenity touched with irony, the wonderful tolerance, the blend—may one say?—of reverence and recklessness. Of course it is nostalgic, being a memory of happiness. It recalls things past; for that world had its time; it is not *simply* Downside. No doubt the tradition goes on, and the things that have been shed, more or less, were unessential as well as dangerous: I mean the air of great wealth and what Dom Hubert calls 'the tendency towards fastidiousness and grandeur'. But it is Downside in the 1920's, wealthy, self-contained, feudal and debonair, that is the setting for this portrait gallery; a setting that encouraged individuality because there seemed to be nothing to fear from it. Dom Hubert's portraiture, personal and humorous as it is, hardly exaggerates and does not distort.

So the general character of the place and the time vividly reappears here, especially in its virtues, in its happiness. And this (abstracting from Dom Hubert's charity) is natural enough. Every boy is sometimes unhappy at school; even the author suffered occasionally from something more than chilblains; but at Downside then, you were more likely to be unhappy if your parents were not well off, if certain social amenities were not what *you* could look forward to in the holidays. It was part of the character of that world: the shadow in its sunlight. Dom Hubert remembers the sunlight; and what a memory he has! Which reminds me that there is nothing better in the book than the memories of his childhood before he left Alexandria and Mr Carter.

K.F.

FLORENCE. By Edward Hutton. (Hollis and Carter; 21s.)

A SABINE JOURNEY. By Anthony Rhodes. (Putnam; 18s.)

Mr Hutton has long been known as the most authoritative of English guides to Italy, and there is scarcely a region of the country that has not been the subject of his exact and loving observation. He returned after the war to Florence to find it sadly scarred, but fundamentally unharmed, and his new book (for this is not merely an old guide-book brought up to date) is a mature and definitive account of a city of endless interest. Here is recorded not merely the immense wealth of Florentine art and the history of the city's greatness; there is also something much rarer to find in such a book, a sensitive *genius loci*, with a personal and always compelling account even of the author's prejudices. (A Dominican, for instance, will feel that Mr Hutton is much less than just to Savonarola.) The illustrations to a book about Florence are bound to be expected ones, but the twenty-two plates are excellently chosen and reproduced.

Mr Anthony Rhodes had the unusual idea of travelling to Rome in Holy Year through the Sabine Hills on a donkey. He is therefore in the lively tradition of mad Englishmen abroad, and has written a most attractive account of his journey. His book is full of 'characters' and of entertaining incidents, and the remoteness of his territory from the usual tourist routes gives a special freshness to descriptions of places and people. Mr Rhodes has scholarly interests besides: his appreciation of Horace's farm is particularly happy. There are good illustrations, but a very poor map does little to help the reader to trace so delightful a journey.

I.E.

**BROADCASTING AND TELEVISION SINCE 1900.** By Maurice Gorham. (Dakers; 18s.)

Since most of what has been written about broadcasting and the B.B.C. is reminiscence and gossip, it is gratifying to record that Mr Gorham has added to that short list of serious books which are innocent of anecdotes about announcers, celebrities, spoonerisms and what X said to Y. The author has carried out his brief. He has mapped the milestones which mark the winged progress of broadcasting in this country and traced the developments in organisation and administration which accompanied its expansion, from the era of the cat's-whisker to the triumph of the H-aerial.

Circumstance, and the overwhelming conviction and character of Lord Reith, combined to make British broadcasting a monopoly. Its formidable achievements are here analysed objectively and with real understanding. It is when he comes to references to the broadcasting systems of other countries and to the arguments of those who oppose monopoly that the reader may feel the lack of a book not yet written. Whatever one's opinions may be, it would be easier to think clearly about the future of broadcasting and television if there existed some serious and systematic survey of the effects of broadcast programmes on the life, thinking and habits of their vast audience. Our present knowledge is fragmentary. We know, as Mr Gorham says, that 'many acquire tastes that they would not otherwise have had, and take up all sorts of new activities from pig-breeding to making music, from writing poetry to going to football matches or horse shows'. But that barely touches the edge of an almost limitless field of fascinating and difficult inquiry, and until it is undertaken we must agree that 'it is open to controversy whether the growth of the radio habit has been a benefit or an evil to mankind'. It is, as Mr Gorham adds, equally open to question whether the change from listening to viewing will be a social evil or a social good. But the silent reader will draw little comfort from his argument that 'whether it is a good or a bad thing to sit at home and allow