

by inconceivable horrors. This mode of treatment frees the subject from that romantic and credulous aura which both its devotees and so many of its foes impart to it. In itself ritual magic appears—at least in the texts, which of course, represent the magic of the sophisticated—as a compound of superstition and greed productive of futility. The silliness of the magician is only exceeded by the dead dullness of his art.

Dr Butler, however, relieves the boredom induced by the study of the texts by introducing a series of interesting sketches of historic magicians.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.

THE BUGBEAR OF LITERACY, by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, with an Introduction by Robert Allerton Parker. (Dobson; 7s. 6d.)

This is a collection of essays by the late Dr Coomaraswamy, dealing in the main with the relationship between the traditions of the East—particularly India—and of the West. They exemplify the fundamental approach of the Doctor to this problem. The purpose of 'Am I my Brother's Keeper?' the first of the essays is to dissuade Western missionaries from 'barging in' upon the Indian world. The reason seems to be that it is impolite and the Indians already have a perfectly good tradition of their own. *The Bugbear of Literacy* is really an attempt to show that because the East cannot read, it does not prove that it is inferior to the West which can. This makes good reading for any Westerner over-satisfied with our educational system and the expenditure upon it. Yet it must be admitted that this essay has a cranky atmosphere and the reviewer for one would have preferred it much modified.

The third essay is the real meat of the book and is an old theme in a new dress. We are accustomed to our Protestant friends saying, after discussion of our differences, that we are all really going to the same end only by different routes. Here is the same idea only this time it is not Protestants and Catholics, but Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Moslems, who are all going up the same mountain from different sides. This is fundamentally an attack on the exclusiveness of the Catholic Church, but put so gently and persuasively that one is almost led to feel that the Church perhaps agrees with him. That is the danger. The Church emphatically does not agree with him. History has immense importance, because the truths taught by Christ were not only theories of how to go up the mountain. The truths he taught were also things he *did*, e.g. he died for all men, he gave himself as their spiritual food. The failure to realise this is the fundamental error of Dr Coomaraswamy, and his books must be read with caution.

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