

## Book Reviews

FRIENDS AND ADVENTURES. By 'T.' (of *Punch*). (Jonathan Cape; 10/6.)

'There are two kinds of books written about Jesuits: the first by Jesuits and philo-Jesuits, chock-full of "edification" and giving an impression of entirely inhuman learning, wisdom and universal sanctity; the other kind mainly by embittered ex-Jesuits or fanatical miso-Jesuits. Only the faithful read and believe the first. The outsiders read the second, while novels of the John Inglesant type will add for them some plausibly sinister colour.'

This is the view of 'T,' himself an ex-Jesuit, though neither embittered nor fanatical; and he thinks that the thing needful is a plain, simple record of some of the very humorous, common-room stories current in the Society and a chronicle of some of the pranks and larks that he and others perpetrated when he was a boy at Stonyhurst and later a Jesuit scholastic. Certainly he presents his old masters and colleagues in the most attractive light and the record of their very engaging human characteristics will be new and acceptable to a public which has been brought up to believe that the Jesuit is a low sort of ecclesiastical schemer, a strange blending of Chadband and the Artful Dodger.

'T' will correct misapprehensions precisely where they most need to be corrected; but 'T' was not typical and his own adventures as a Jesuit were not exactly normal. He had a rebel streak in his composition which not only unfitted him for a life of obedience, but also made it impossible for him later on to continue at Oscott; and even 'T' must now see the wisdom of Cardinal Bourne's refusal to take the responsibility of ordaining him. 'You will not be happy,' said the Cardinal and, on the advice of a Jesuit friend, 'T' took this as a sign that he had no true vocation. And then he set out on his strange adventures. He became a commercial traveller of a very unusual kind, bringing more of the qualities of the poet and artist to his work than those of the hard-headed man of business. The Agenda Club which 'T' initiated is symbolical of the spirit of the man. This was a Utopian effort to infuse chivalry into English life—national, political and social—an attempt 'to give to politics some of the devotion and single-mindedness which he had found among his Jesuit friends and teachers.' Although 'T' admits that he has drifted a long way from the ideas that held him when he studied as a boy and taught as a master at Stonyhurst, yet there is something of the idealism of his youth that he has never shed. It is apparent in his whole outlook—

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his indifference to wealth, his almost other-worldly attitude towards 'success,' his appreciation of what is good and beautiful, his hatred of shams and imitations; and in general the application of something higher than a merely material standard to every branch of life.

The book abounds in good stories about all sorts of people. 'T' has always had the gift of making friends and, being aware of his gift, he gives to his *Adventures* the truly personal touch which has more than a dash of not displeasing vanity. It is written in a rambling style in keeping with the wandering life of its rolling-stone of an author. There are one or two touches of unkindness which could have been easily left out—*e.g.*, the Turkish bath incident on page 45; but, for the most part, this is a friendly record of a man who is disposed always to put the best construction on everything, though he is sometimes hampered by the very human inability to conciliate charity with justice. We recommend the book as the very interesting and unusual story of an interesting and rare character. B.

AN APOSTLE OF THE LEPERS. THE VEN. PETER DONDEERS, C.SS.R. (1809-1887). By John Baptist Kronenburg, C.SS.R. Translated from the French Version of Léon Roelandts, C.SS.R., by John Carr, C.SS.R. With Map and Illustrations. (Sands & Co.; 7/6 net.)

This biography should encourage the ordinary and even the stupid. The son of a poor Dutch weaver, without resources and without even an average share of brains, Peter Donders had a conviction as strong as his desire that he would one day be a priest. Admitted to a preparatory seminary, first merely as a servant-boy and afterwards as a student, he became a butt for the boys' merciless ridicule, though in the end his almost unimaginable patience won him the day and a reputation for sanctity. In 1842, a year after his ordination, he went out as a missionary to Dutch Guiana, where he worked till his death in 1887, spending thirty years in tending the lepers of Batavia in soul and body with heroic charity. He also evangelised both negroes and Indians, journeying as many as two hundred miles by river and forest to the Indian camps. These expeditions imperilled his life by dangers of many kinds and he was several times within an ace of martyrdom. When the Vicariate of Surinam was handed over to the Redemptorists in 1866, he joined the Congregation and was from the first a model religious, obeying his superiors even when much younger and less experienced than himself, with childlike simplicity.