

Blackfriars

much of them go when it is seen in the concrete. Prince Blücher was a Catholic, and therefore shared in a European life too deep and old for the raw politicians of Versailles to appreciate. But this is not the sole explanation of how the decencies and graces could flourish in Hohenzollern Germany and Edwardian England. It is possible to desire and work for a new social order and yet regret the passing of the Hapsburg Empire. And not just sentimentally. On the ground of economics the achievement and promise of Central Europe is not particularly impressive. Politically, too, there is a strong case for the view that the advance of the Balkans up the Danube should never have been allowed, still less promoted.

Two chapters are devoted to the great-great-grandfather, Marshal *Vorwärts*, 'the Johnnie who was late for Waterloo.' It is pleasant to have some of the letters he wrote home from his campaigns; the scene of the old bear wanting to drink the brandy he was being rubbed with after having been ridden over at Ligny; and the remark, of our own day, 'But indeed in Germany it is difficult *not* to meet people who are connections of Queen Victoria.'

N. W. T. G.

CHRISTENDOM IN DUBLIN. By G. K. Chesterton. (Sheed & Ward; 2/6.)

Of all the tens of thousands who were in Dublin for the Eucharistic Congress only one could have written this book and, if it were not printed on the cover, anyone could give his name at the first guess—so unmistakably is it stamped with the marks of its author's genius and unique manner. Most of the vast mass of pilgrims, if asked to give their impressions, could only babble banalities or register ecstasy in a helpless manner like dumb people vainly struggling to speak. Mr. Chesterton somehow manages to give articulate expression to the massive mute wonder of that colossal mob of adoring humanity which made Phoenix Park on that historic Sunday look (at least in some respects) like the gathering of the nations for the general judgement. The book is not an exhaustive record of the Congress—fortunately! But one misses allusion to the marvel of the general Communion at the midnight Mass when all Dublin (or was it all Ireland and the rest thrown in?) went to Holy Communion and made a night vigil, unarranged for on the programme and quite improvised, most of the people kneeling in enormous crowds outside the churches.

This is a book to be kept if one would revive such memories and recapture the thrill of happenings not likely to be repeated

in everyone's experience. Mr. Chesterton was able to enter into the thing and he had eyes to see; but, more marvellous still, he has been given the power of telling us what he has seen.

B.D.

FICTION

JOSEPHUS. By Lion Feuchtwanger. (Secker; 7/6.)

This crowded canvas is planned upon that vast scale which Dr. Feuchtwanger has by now led us to expect. The first impressions confirm the expectations which *Jew Süß* has aroused. The work is everywhere informed by a modern spirit and the judgments are in no sense banal. The character of Nero is refreshingly presented, the Senator Marullus with his jade lorgnette, the politics of the Agrippine Ward. The lighting effects in these early passage are excellent, the Emperor left in shadow and the carefully staged entry of Poppæa, with her amber hair and dark eyelashes and the Coan silk of her thin stola. It is here that one first notices that characteristic which re-appears throughout the book, re-incarnation. How clearly does Poppæa call to mind 'Marie Auguste . . . with her young ambiguous smile.' And when the generals appear with those coarsely inefficient and clumsy movements which this author can so seldom spare them, there is an almost painful similarity of outlook between Rome and eighteenth-century Germany. It is perhaps because of this lack of sympathy with the military mind that the entourage of Vespasian and the movements of his reign seem so much less convincing than those of Nero. In fact, compared to all the other characters the Romanized civilians, like the Neronian ministers and Claudius Reginus, alone possess intrinsically convincing life. To this company there should be added a single Jew, Jochanan Ben Sakkai. Among the wider sections of the picture the subtle characterization of the Roman scenes stands out in contrast to the over-simplified reactions of Agrippa's Court, while the too-facile antithesis of Alexandrian life seem platitudinous. At the same time the careful adjustment and accurate observation of the multitude of material facts in this packed volume is everywhere apparent. The reason for the comparative failure of the present book when compared with *Jew Süß* would at first sight seem to lie in the wayward interpretation of its central character, Josephus. The description of his early days in Rome, the relations with Caius Bazaarone and the priests of the High Council in Jerusalem carry conviction, but a sense of strain is introduced by the account of Josephus' action during his Galilaean Commissionership, while