

able Ingres picture of Joan of Arc at Rheims Cathedral, which adds 'tone' to this dear little book.

Joan is the authentic voice of Catholic France. She is condemned by the tribunal of the Church. She is a saint. How are these propositions reconciled? 'Our Church is the church of the saints. The whole vast machinery of wisdom, strength, supple discipline, glory and majesty, is of itself nothing unless it is animated by love.' With all his customary fire and eloquence (indifferently served, it is true, by his translator) Bernanos gives the answer. I. E.

BEHIND THAT WALL. An Introduction to some Classics of the Interior Life. By E. Allison Peers. (S.C.M. Press; 6s.)

From St Augustine to Thomas Traherne Professor Allison Peers leads the 'ordinary reader of books', for whom he is writing, with unflagging enthusiasm and unflinching discrimination. His purpose is a simple one: to give some idea of what the great Christian mystics had to say, and why they said it, so that they may become available to all who would seek to go 'behind that wall' where, in the words of the Canticle, 'my Beloved standeth'.

The form of most of these essays (originally given as broadcast talks) allows for little development or subtlety of argument. It is, frankly, a popular book, and it is to be warmly welcomed as such. Even so, one is constantly aware (as in the essays on St Bernard or St Teresa) of the rich store of learning on which these deceptively simple pages draw. It is no small achievement to give in a few pages an accurate account, together with illuminating quotations, of writers so various as St Ignatius Loyola and Henry Vaughan, of the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* and St Francis of Sales. Professor Peers is able to do this because he sees so well the fundamental unity that joins all who have ever written of the spiritual life. Moreover he sees it not as a speculatively interesting idea, but as a truth and a vital one.

*Behind That Wall* will be especially valuable for the many people who appreciate the depth and joy of the great mystical writers, but have a sadly inadequate appreciation of their presuppositions. Professor Peers is a scholar who *believes* in the values of the writers his scholarship has done so much to reveal. And that is a great advantage. I. E.

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE. By Catherine de Hueck. (Sheed and Ward; 7s. 6d.)

This discursive, generous, breathless book reflects the work of its author so faithfully that it far outweighs more solemn theses on the Mystical Body and its implications. For that work is simply the Christian one of reconciliation, of breaking down the walls of partition (and here especially that of colour) which divide the unity that our Lord came on earth to establish, and which his Church is

ordained to exemplify. In practice, for the Baroness de Hueck, this means living among the poorest of American negroes, not with the patronising uplift of a social worker, but rather in the shared poverty of a fellow member of Christ.

The work of the various Friendship Houses—which is as various as human needs can be—is only possible because of the supreme faith of the Baroness and her fellow workers. In this country we are sometimes tempted to say hard things of American Catholicism, and especially of its attitude to the negro population. *Friendship House* is a corrective to rash judgment. As yet the movement it represents is small, but its inspiration is so firmly rooted in the Gospels, and in the life of St Francis and Blessed Martin de Porres, that no Christian can doubt its ultimate triumph. As ever, the transcendent truth of Catholicism is not a proposition to assent to merely: it is a life in which to be incorporated. And in Friendship House we see what is, in the end, the only answer to the reproaches of the unbeliever: the unity of the redeemed is a truth to be *lived*. And that imbues the whole story we are given in this most evangelical of books.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

RELIGIOUS TEACHING OF YOUNG CHILDREN. For Parents and Teachers.

By S. N. D. (Sands; 5s.)

This is a new edition of a book that has already done good service. Originally intended for the Infant School, it has now been adapted, apparently with the Westminster Scheme in mind, for juniors or at any rate for lower junior classes. Each lesson begins with a scene from our Lord's life and concludes with a series of questions and suggestions for activity and practical work. Some of these seem to us a little advanced for infants but perhaps they are not meant for them. A second part gives lessons on a little more advanced doctrine, a third on prayer, the Mass and the liturgical year, and a fourth on First Confession and Communion.

The whole book is written with the freshness, inventiveness and simplicity that are characteristic of S. N. D.'s work and is an indispensable aid-book to any teacher (or parent) who takes her job seriously. A table of contents would facilitate quick reference.

J. D. C.

EVERY COMMON BUSH. By Hilary C. Boyle. (Sheed and Ward; 6s.)

The only satisfactory way in which a book for children can be judged, I think, is to read it to them and study their reactions.

When I told a class of boys and girls of various ages that I wanted their help to review *Every Common Bush* they were delighted, but their faces fell when they heard it was a collection of flower legends.

The collection contains fourteen stories; several old favourites and others little known this side of the Irish Sea. They are filled with the essence of a lively faith and possess the power of transmitting to