

from the aridities of utopianism. His allegories are profound essays in the folly of human pride and in the inexorable law that at last defeats it, but they respect the rights of a person, they never ignore the twists and shifts of situation and character. So it is that against the imposing background of *Men of Stones* there plays the comic light of a Mr Goat, the English intellectual on a cultural mission, or the Quixotic action of a Captain Nicholas, with his immense repertoire of anecdotage. Perhaps the climax of the novel is resolved too rapidly: a mad divinity is too peremptorily destroyed. But that is a tiny limitation in a novel that so consistently exposes a radical element in man's tragedy, and achieves it with such unflinching grace of style.

I.E.

EARLIER DIPLOMATIC HISTORY, 1492-1713, by Sir Charles Petrie, Bt.
(Hollis and Carter; 18s.)

This book is a companion volume to Sir Charles Petrie's well-known *Diplomatic History, 1713-1933* and is written according to the same plan. The author gives us here a clear and detailed summary of events; he underlines such definite trends as may be detected in the policies of the various Powers; and even diplomatic history becomes a little more intelligible than a mere tangled mass of wars and treaties. It is very easy to over-simplify and rationalise in relating the course of events: it is to the credit of the author that he has never been tempted to do this and that he has written throughout, purposely it seems, in a low key. The method has of course severe limitations, but if these are appreciated, if the purposes of the book is borne in mind—that it is not meant to be all-embracing—then it will prove invaluable both to the student of history and to the ordinary reader.

The date chosen as the starting point of this history is, of course, arbitrary—the medieval order was passing away and little but the façade remained—but the year 1492 is significant because it marks the sudden emergence of Spain as a great power, with the conquest of Granada, the expulsion of the Jews and the discovery of America; 1492 saw also the beginning of the Treaty of Etaples between England and France, and left the French monarchs free for their Italian adventures; and in the same year Alexander VI succeeded to the Papal throne. With 1713 comes to an end a period which may well be described as the Spanish era in European history, during which Spain was at first the leading power and then ceased to be so, but continued for long to be so considered. The Treaty of Utrecht, which ended the War of the Spanish succession, saw France established as the chief power of Europe and England well on the way to ascendancy.

The reader will find useful for reference purposes a number of

coloured sketch-maps, as well as a list of contemporary rulers and a select bibliography at the end of the book.

F. M. MIFSUJ.

ARABIC-ANDALUSIAN CASIDAS. Translated with an Introduction by Harold Morland. (Phoenix Press; 5s.)

This is a selection of short lyrics and fragments dating from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. These literary arabesques, as they have been called, are an eloquent testimony to the excellence of Arabic civilisation and, together with the parallel culture of Languedoc, provide a striking contrast to the relatively barbarous Frankish north. It was nothing short of a tragedy when these cultures went down in an orgy of blood and fire. As it is, we are grateful for the opportunity to enjoy in a delightful verse rendering these remnants salvaged from the wreck. We find ourselves in a world of courtly love, where one hardly cares to distinguish between a passion and a love, and grace is all in all. At the same time, the whole is enriched with an imagery (a legacy from the days of desert wandering) which is always vivid, often poignant. The lance 'seems the rope with which I draw blood from the well of his heart'; the Divine command of chastity is the muzzle which keeps the camel's thirsty colt from the breast; the beloved is compared to 'a shy gazelle'; daybreak is like the parting of lips showing the white teeth of nothing, and so on. Mr Morland also contributes an introduction which contains much useful information, including an account of the historical background to the poems.

F. M. MIFSUJ.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Arthaud*. H. Passaic: Le Dieu de Sartre, 260 frs.
Blackfriars. Contemplations, 7s. 6d.
Geoffrey Bles. O. Fielding Clarke: Introduction to Berdyaev, 15s.; Francesco Perri: The Unknown Disciple, 12s. 6d.
Cambridge University Press. Peter Katz: Philo's Bible, 25s.
Chronique Sociale de France. Réalisme Économique et Progrès Social, 500 frs.
Dacre Press. Wladimir Weidle: The Baptism of Art, 3s. 6d.
Eyre and Spottiswoode. Daniel-Rops: Israel and the Ancient World, 16s.
Faber and Faber. Alfred Duggan: Knight with Armour, 12s. 6d.; T. S. Eliot: The Cocktail Party, 10s. 6d.; Walter Oakeshott: The Sequence of English Medieval Art, 35s.
Fathers of the Church Inc. (U.S.A.). Fathers of the Church, Vol. 7, n.p.
Heinemann. Francis Scarfe: Underworlds, 8s. 6d.
Herder (Vienna). Dr Hildebert Tausch, o.s.b.: Benediktinisches Monchtum in Osterreich, n.p.
Herder (Freiburg). Benedikt Baur, o.s.b.: Werde Licht, n.p.
Hodder and Stoughton. Columba Cary Elwes, o.s.b.; Law, Liberty and Love, 10s. 6d.
Hutchinson. E. O. James, D.Litt.: The Concept of Diety, 18s.
Kunstverlag Abtei Ettal. Richard Egenter: Kitsch und Christenleben, D.M. 4.80.