

the chalice from him. After offering it to the people, St Peter stood for an instant, holding the chalice as at the offertory, whilst our Lord momentarily stood as he had done for the crucifixion. Then, to the sound of trumpets, he ascended the steps of Heaven, and turned, blessing his apostles, as the last words were spoken: 'And the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God' (Mark xvi, 19) and the angels, worshipping once more with their vibrating movement, sang: 'The Lord is gone up with a joyful sound.'



REVIEWS

THE HOLY INNOCENTS AND OTHER POEMS. By Charles Péguy. Translated by Pansy Pakenham; foreword by Alexander Dru. (The Harvill Press; 15s.)

PÉGUY. By Alexander Dru. (The Harvill Press; 15s.)

Péguy is a difficult author to grasp, not because he is dense and tight but because he is so diffuse. If a Shakespeare sonnet is a *magnum in parvo*, Péguy's *Mystères* and *Tapisseries* may be called *parva in magnis*. His writings are like those foods which one has to absorb in huge amounts, to the point of indigestion, in order to receive sustenance therefrom. It is necessary to read him for hours, to travel with him many miles through jungles of platitudinous chatter, rich in repetitions, to begin to understand what his work is about. If there is a way of saying in fifty words what can be expressed in five, be sure that Péguy knows it; only Gertrude Stein has excelled him in this. So fatiguing a procedure is held in check in his poetry by the limits imposed by French classical prosody and it is there that he is most accessible.

Mr Dru's admirable study might be called *Péguy Made Easy*. One who knows our author will realize how much compression has been needed to bring his thought within tolerable limits. Mr Dru's plan has been to depict the political background of his early years and in particular the Dreyfus affair. The chapter devoted to the ten years covered by this episode traces rapidly the history of the conflict between the two branches of the French tradition, the Revolutionary and the Catholic, throughout the nineteenth century. These pages, though condensed, neither deform nor over-simplify the facts, though perforce they cannot include everything.

Mr Dru treats Péguy's work chronologically and follows the

development of his thought from the foundation of the *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* in 1900 to his death in 1914. Prose quotations are given in English, verse in French. Certain chapters, such as that on the Commentary on *Ève*, demand some previous knowledge of Péguy's work, but on the whole this lucid introduction will be useful to the reader who knows nothing of him and it will certainly spur many to tackle his writings.

Lady Pakenham's volume of translations contains three extracts from *Ève*, four poems, and most of the *Mystère des Saints Innocents*. What can have prompted her to choose this latter, one of Péguy's most tedious and repetitive longer works? The poems include the jewel, *Présentation de la Beauce à N. D. de Chartres*, perhaps his masterpiece, whose smooth, billow-like quality is impossible to render in a language with a strong tonic accent like English. The *Saints Innocents* is easier to translate; its flaccid style sets no problems; all one seeks here is accuracy and this translation, as far as I have tested it, fulfils this condition. Péguy's reiterated 'siècles des siècles' may call for different translations in different contexts, but the usual English rendering is 'world without end', not 'through centuries of centuries'. Generous cuts have been made, wisely, but Péguy's taste for iteration is still well reflected. Mr Dru's introduction is a condensation of his longer study.

CUTHBERT GIRDLESTONE

THOUGHTS FOR DAILY LIVING. By Fulton J. Sheen, PH.D., D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of New York. (Browne & Nolan; 15s.)

This is a book for Everyman: fifty-nine chapters, which vary in subject from 'Does Happiness consist in Glory, Reputation and Honours?' to 'Is Religion an Ambulance?'. Anyone who is confronted with the inevitable busy day—shopping, office, children, parents and grandparents—and longs to read to learn something about the Faith, or something to help life on a bit and make a pattern out of all the odd pieces, cannot do better than acquire this book. It would also be useful as a jumping-off board for study circles. Take the chapter on 'Rash Judgment', for instance—'no man can ever know his own garden who is always looking over the wall' and, again, 'Never admitting his own faults, he acts towards his fellow man as a judge rather than a brother'—what a useful hour or two could be spent on dissecting this chapter. In vain does one search for other people's scars when his own wounds are bleeding. . . . Some people seem never to be happy until they have their fingers in other people's sores, opening them afresh, never allowing them to heal, as if they were carrion rather than human.

This is a book which will have an immense appeal to the public, who will find in its pages many helpful and stimulating messages from an eminent and brilliant man.

K. J. BARTLETT