

guarded treatment prepares the way for an *a fortiori* argument should historical facts prove more than the minimum necessary for the defence in the natural order of the postulates of revelation.

SILVESTER HUMPHRIES, O.P.

THE LITANY OF LORETO. By Richard Klaver, O.S.C. (Herder; 28s.)

'A book about our Lady' can mean so many things, on a dust-jacket, in an advertisement, even in the mind of the author who sets out to write one. In this case we are left in no doubt. It is a 'Mariology'. Father Klaver says in the foreword that he has aimed at 'a more or less complete Mariology in a novel guise'. It is a presentation of doctrine commonly held, Thomistic, relying in some points on Scheeben and Garrigou-Lagrange. The form—an essay on each of the titles of the litany—preserves it from the stunning effect of a text-book, and the matter is, by and large, as good as a text-book.

Two things matter, then, about this book. Is there plenty of good solid doctrine about our Lady? Is it readable (will it do for spiritual reading)? The answer in both cases is a decided affirmative. The book is good for the mind and the soul and the heart. What more could we ask of a book about our Lady?

A criticism or two, in the light of this, should not dissuade anybody from reading it. The terminology, generally very good (it is exceptionally difficult to be both accurate and readable on some points of Marian doctrine), wavers on the question of mediation. At first glance one might think it implied more than one can claim for our Lady—i.e. for any creature. The cautionary phrases are there, but single phrases, out of the context, would lend themselves to misunderstanding. Fr Klaver does not seem to be *au courant* with the recent controversy about the death (or alternatively immediate passing to heaven without death) of our Lady.

There is no index—a defect in so solid a book; and very little bibliography. Perhaps a future edition will remedy this. If so, one would like to see some reference, for the history of the Litany, to the work done by the American Servite, Mr Jacobosky, about twenty years ago.

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.

THE MOUSE HUNTER. By Lucile Hasley. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

Mrs Hasley is a gay and witty person, exuberantly American, fundamentally serious, in love with life and with her Faith, profound and yet uncomplicated. She was a Presbyterian who should have been a Catholic, and when she stumbled into the Catholic Church, it was without that soul-wrestling with which we are so familiar in conversion stories. In the same almost inevitable way she stumbled into

writing the essays, articles, and latterly even short stories that she has been writing ever since, about American life illumined by the Catholic Faith. She had no difficulty in finding a Catholic editor, she tells us, and we are not surprised; for she writes with refreshing zest, with a lightness of touch and a humorousness that is sometimes purely Thurber. She is no theologian, as indeed she is the first to admit—yet it seems she cannot go wrong.

Of the stories that make up the final selection of this book, the only one that can really claim to be called a 'short story' is the first—'I Remember Mama'—and that has a poignancy both startling and moving. There is the making of a story in the one entitled 'The Little Girls' that makes one wonder what Katherine Mansfield would have made of it. But for the rest, Mrs Hasley's stories are still almost essays; they haven't yet 'arrived'. They lack something of that incisiveness, that general vision, that mixture of the personal and the universal in looking at people, that heightening of a situation into a drama, that the short story requires.

They are nice little stories for the parish magazine, but so far that is all.

ERIKA FALLAUX

HEROIC TALES FROM MANY LANDS. By D. E. Burton. (Sands and Co.; 9s. 6d.)

These stories of saints and heroes through the ages will surely serve to give the Catholic boys and girls for whom they are written some sense of the universality of their Faith. The stories range from St Tarcisus, the boy martyr of the catacombs, who died to protect the Blessed Sacrament which he was carrying to the imprisoned Christians, to our present-day Group Captain Cheshire, V.C., the bomber ace and modern hero, whom horror of atomic warfare drove to caring for the sick and homeless, and thence to the Faith. History and even literature link up with the Faith in the story of the eleventh Century St Margaret of Scotland, who married Malcolm, son of that King Duncan who was murdered by Macbeth—and who, as Queen of Scotland, brought the Faith once again to that country. These and other stories are written simply, yet not too simply. Throughout one has the feeling that careful research has been made to ensure historical accuracy; and one is grateful for a very matter-of-fact manner of story-telling that is blessedly free from sentimentality and hero-worship. These saints and their Faith are left to speak for themselves, as well they can.

ERIKA FALLAUX