

MAN AND MATTER. By F. Sherwood Taylor. (Chapman and Hall; 15s.)

Can science be a vocation? Dr Taylor has no doubt that it can, and one might add that his own example, not least in the present collection of essays, does much to prove the truth of his words. But he rightly says 'we need more Catholic scholars . . . laymen who will carry out research in a Catholic spirit—in a true spirit'.

Those who are concerned with Catholic education will find here some admirably practical suggestions for the reform of the school science course. Dr Taylor wants to see even elementary science a genuine piece of research having as its end 'the getting acquainted with nature . . . the real groundwork of all science, which must never be book-learning'. Children can then be taught a true notion of scientific law and method, showing its limitations as well as its power, and will no longer be an easy prey for the bad philosophy of the 'popular scientists', as they are at the end of the present abstract and artificial courses, useful only to those few who go on to a university.

The essays directed against materialism wisely never try to minimise well-founded scientific positions, but show that the apparent conflict with religion disappears when each side is properly understood. Evolution receives an especially good treatment.

The scope of the apologetic is in some places too narrow: many people who do not accept materialism are for all that not convinced that the supernatural is possible. The body-soul relationship is conceived too dualistically to stand up to logical positivist attacks. But the only serious criticism is against the inclusion of an essay on mysticism which treats too superficially a subject difficult enough for theologians themselves.

L.B.

FATHER LUIGI GENTILI AND HIS MISSION (1801-48). By Denis Gwynn. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 16s.)

If Wiseman was the most outstanding character of the Catholic revival in England, and Father Dominic the most saintly, Father Gentili may be described as the most exciting. His life indeed resembled a flame setting fire to others whilst it rapidly consumed itself. Dr Gwynn here tells the story of this brilliant young Italian lawyer who, heart-broken and almost despairing at the breakdown of his romance, turned to God and flung himself with the uttermost abandon into the mission of converting an unresponsive England. His impulsive nature although restrained, even with harshness, by his superior Rosmini, who yet loved him so well, was never fully tamed, and showed itself in every event of his apostolate from the moment he landed in England to the day of his death in Dublin, when he had yet not completed his forty-seventh year.

The greatest figures of the Second Spring all came into contact with

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him and all received his help. Like Father Dominic, he preached 'in season and out of season', with an eloquence very little hampered by a *foreign accent*. *The good he did in his short span was incalculable and was witnessed by the holiest souls of the day, including Mother Margaret Hallahan who did so much to assist him during two extraordinary missions he gave in Coventry when he scarcely left the pulpit or confessional by day or by night. He firmly planted in this country his own order, the Institute of Charity, which since then has done so much for English Catholicism.*

Like other apostolic men, he was tempted much to depression on seeing so little apparent success attend his labours, and experiences at Loughborough which so saddened him may be taken as an example of the contradictions he continually encountered. In this town, where his fellow-religious who succeeded him reaped the fruits of what had seemed to him work done in vain, he saw his converts turned out of their employments, and tradesmen who embraced the faith driven out of business because their fellow-townsmen declined to patronise them any longer and in not a few cases refused to pay their debts.

Gentili had long received urgent requests to undertake mission work in Ireland, and at length, in September 1848 he agreed to preach a mission in Dublin in a crowded and poverty-stricken parish, rampant with fever. Although he succumbed to the infection he characteristically refused to stop preaching and hearing confessions, until he was forced to leave the confessional and died within a few days.

WALTER GUMBLEY, O.P.

ENGLISH MEDIEVAL SCULPTURE. By Arthur Gardner, M.A., F.S.A. The original handbook revised and enlarged with 683 photographs. (Cambridge University Press; 55s.)

Mr Gardner's book has wisely kept its handbook quality: storehouse rather than pleasure. The illustrations are well chosen for the text, a running commentary less needed had the plates all been up to the best: 'the fact that most of the blocks for the original [were] available' may not have proved an unmixed blessing. The text is a masterpiece of sobriety, though a little more distinction of style might have avoided occasional ambiguities and bathos. 'Considerable attainment' applied to the splendid capitals in Canterbury Crypt is a gem of understatement. Such unemphatic justice is meted out to all, from 'the stone-mason striving to translate into stone the traditional subjects . . . set him by his monastic employers, to the skilled mason or marbler of the XIIIth century, the specialised imager of the XIVth and finally to the . . . contractor of the XVth' (p. 20).

The wide sweep given to the word *medieval* allows the author to trace the sources of Pre-Conquest art to 'cloister crafts' (p. 2), from the