

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 pleasance. 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

Vith-VIIIth century Crosses in the North to the great *Raising of Lazarus* groups at Chichester (Pl. 77-8), and the noble Bristol *Harrowing of Hell* (Pl. 76) in the South. 'Primitive art does not look to Nature for models at first but works in accordance with tradition. . . . We may therefore look to such lesser arts for [its] origins' (p. 62). Thus he will relate the 'wire-drawn' grotesques of Kilpeck (Pl. 88-89) to the Gloucester candlestick (Pl. 90).

It was time we should recognise Anglo-Norman sculpture as inferior to Saxon and 'the first efforts of the Norman sculptor absurdly childish in comparison with the Saxon products of the Winchester school' (p. 52). Yet the 'rough vigour' of those held more promise than 'the quiet elegance' of these (p. 74).

The author's method is chronological throughout. Thus we witness the rise and decay not of craftsmanship only, but of creative imagination as well. Angels from 'the great heavenly beings of the XIIIth century . . . become little more than fairies' (p. 260) and end up as *compères* in feathered tights out of the Mystery Plays (Pl. 513). So it is with monumental sculpture, which in this country enjoyed an almost unparalleled continuity (for English iconoclasm spared the dead)—from the early set types, 'bold and firm' in the Purbeck effigies (p. 101; Pl. 285-310), smooth and poised in the Angevin (Pl. 362, pp. 422-4), *parvenu* and pretentious in the Lancastrian (Pl. 473-6)—down to Torrigiani's humanistic portrayal of dead Yorkists and Tudors (Pl. 587-9) amid the commercialised stage-properties of Henry VII's Chapel (Pl. 473-493). This art, as dead today as that of stained glass, had a tradition greater and no less peculiarly national than that of the 'alabaster-men', on whose craft Mr Gardner is a noted authority.

On one small point only is his vast knowledge at a loss. The 'Madonna holding the child straight in front of her' (Pl. 506) is not so 'curious' as he supposes (p. 260), but belongs to a tradition widespread in European art of the early Middle Ages—the *Theotokos* as *Sedes Sapientiae*, though rarer maybe in England where iconography tended early to grow less and less doctrinal. A variant of it may perhaps be discovered in the miraculous early fragment *SCA MARIA* from York (Pl. 74).

English sculpture in its prime, though prone to the pretty-pretty and the coarse (one head here reproduced *twice* [frontispiece and p. 182] manages to combine both), could be noble, homely, ornate, simple, ingenious, lovely, gracious, blissful; at its best it breathes 'a stillness that is almost Paradise'. Such an air makes Wells loveliest among cathedrals. A nice balancing of insular iconoclasm against continental nonchalance may, and does, convince us that that great West front was a unity no less dogmatically complete than any abroad (pp. 3-4), yet it does not wring from us that tribute of awe we pay at first sight to Vézelay or

Chartres: *terribilis est locus iste*. Was the gap between Malmesbury and Wells never filled (p. 137)? Or has iconoclasm alone deprived us of the dread majesty of the French Dooms? Northumbrian culture had known it. Whither then was it fled?

DESMOND CHUTE



## NOTICES

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS by E. Royston Pike (Allen and Unwin; 30s.) is an omnibus of information from Ab (the fifth month of the Jewish year) to Zwingli. It could scarcely be expected that it should be infallible, and it is noticeable that the compiler acknowledges the expert help of representatives of every sort of religious body, from the Church of England to Jainism, but makes no mention of any Catholic scrutiny of the numerous entries which deal explicitly with Catholic teaching or history. Such scrutiny might have avoided some of the (usually minor) 'errors of fact, treatment and of manner' which disfigure such references, for instance as those to 'lay brother' ('a monk who has not taken the usual vows') or 'Dominic' ('founder of the order of Dominican monks'). And slight ambiguities are to be found in the entries, among others, on 'Mass', 'Predestination' and 'Thomas Aquinas'. But on the whole this is a useful and excellently arranged compendium.

DOMINICAN STUDIES, Volume IV (Blackfriars Publications; 15s.), now appears in its substantial annual form. The volume for 1951, consisting of nearly 250 pages, contains such varied and valuable material as Fr Daniel Callus's survey of recent medieval research, Fr Sebastian Bullough's study of 'St Thomas and Music', Fr Ivo Thomas's 'Farrago Logica' and Fr Columba Ryan's important paper on 'The Reach of Analogical Argument'. Critical notices and numerous reviews complete the volume.

THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM is a reprint of a collection of sermons by Mgr Ronald Knox. (Sheed and Ward; 8s. 6d.)