

perforce, a Roman. There is no echo here of the Council of Trent.

But the book takes its character from the woman who died while preparing it. It is a woman's book, after all. And that perhaps is why the section entitled 'The Family Circle' is the largest and the liveliest; that, and the very deep Italian attachment to the family. All the letters that have to do with children—and they are numerous—are characteristically warm, and frequently witty too. Along with the ardour and melancholy of the great artists, of Tasso, Michelangelo, Politian, it is the wary and practical affection of Italian fathers and mothers that one remembers best on closing this book.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, 1788-1792. By Gaetano Salvemini. Translated from the Italian by I. M. Rawson. (Jonathan Cape; 18s.)

The first version of this important book was published in Italy as far back as 1907. The author thus became well-known on the Continent—for even French historians acknowledged the value of the book—long before the advent of Fascism, of which Professor Salvemini proved a staunch opponent no less than a well-informed critic.

The present edition, excellently translated by Mr Rawson, has been revised by the author himself who up to a point was able to incorporate more recent research. All the same, the reviewer finds himself in something of a dilemma. Is he to apply the standards of 1954 or rather those of almost half a century back when the idea of the book under review was first conceived and the first edition brought out? For there is no doubt that the standards are different and that Professor Salvemini has not fully contrived to bring his interesting study up to date. This criticism applies particularly to the chapter on the intellectual movement that led up to the French Revolution. Apart from this aspect, the author's account of the origins and early years of the Revolution is still very useful. The chronological limitation to the short period from 1788 to 1792 makes it possible to throw into relief what Professor Salvemini and, incidentally, also Hilaire Belloc considered the paramount issue, namely the abolition of the monarchy, the significance of which sometimes tends to be minimized in recent pseudo-sociological works on the Revolution. The role of the individual in history is stressed when the author insists how time and again Louis XVI failed to live up to the country's expectations. The book is equally stimulating in its analysis of the pre-revolutionary class structure. At the same time facile sociological abstractions are avoided, and indeed we are reminded that no single formula will cover that motley crowd of revolutionaries, 'able and incompetent, disinterested and self-seeking, resolute and cowardly, the criminals of September and the stalwarts of Valmy'.

Even if one admits that the restriction in time had in this instance its undeniable advantages, one cannot help wondering on the other hand what kind of similarities the great historian of Fascism might discover between the French Revolution and Fascism if he could now carry his investigation further into the later stages of the Revolution.

H. G. SCHENK

POLITICS OF BELIEF IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE: Lacordaire, Michon, Veuillot. By Philip Spencer. (Faber; 25s.)

Mr Spencer has attempted to do for English readers a service which has already been done supremely well by M. Adrien Dansette for the French public—to give an account of the history of French Catholicism during the last century, and it is impossible not to compare these two works. If Mr Spencer fails, at least partially, where M. Dansette has succeeded, it is not only because Mr Spencer's task is a far more difficult one; it is also due to his choice of method. 'It is of course', he says, 'an arbitrary choice, to pick out Lacordaire, Michon and Veuillot', but was it really necessary for the choice to be such a bad one? Lacordaire was undoubtedly the greatest orator of his time, but his triumph was ephemeral and he did not succeed in influencing his age. As for Michon, he was not a very interesting or edifying clerical oddity, no more significant than Lamartine's *protégé* the Abbé Thions, and Mr Spencer's only excuse for introducing him appears to be that he was 'the professional rebel, the predestined insurgent, the protestant Catholic'.

The only two Catholics who had the prophetic insight to understand the real significance of the world in which they lived were Lamennais and Ozanam, because unlike Dupanloup, Montalembert and other Liberal Catholics, they realized that the modern world with which the Church should be reconciled was not the bourgeois world; and that it was the social and not the political problem which was to dominate our times. It is their failure to understand this which made the Liberal Catholics so futile and ineffective. Even their stand against the proclamation of papal infallibility was a mistake, and it is Pius IX, Veuillot and the *Intransigeants* who, paradoxically enough, took the first step to reconcile the Church with the modern world, by strengthening the spiritual authority of the Holy See, a strengthening which made possible, eventually, the abandonment of temporal power. This was the great work of the Vatican Council and it did not, as Mr Spencer suggests, 'kill for good' the chances of Christian reunion. It merely dispelled a number of illusions, never seriously entertained, at least by Catholics, such as that 'dissentient' Churches could 'claim parity' with the Catholic Church.

Mr Spencer is fascinated by the character, and above all by the